Government & Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom) MINUTES March 12, 2018

Committee Members: Bonnie Potter, Chair
Deborah Bailey [absent]
Joan Clappier
Dr. Pat Long [absent]
Brion Smoker

Board Liaison: Andy Merriwether [absent]

Staff Representative: Dan Huntley

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm ET.

1.0 Meeting Opening

1.1 AOA News of Importance — Merriwether / Huntley

- The big focus right now is Nationals. The staff are making all of the last minute checks to be sure everything will be there on time.
- Numbers for the show are good. It will probably be comparable to Denver with public traffic and interest.
- Approx. 300 entries for Walking fleece, they will be splitting a ring and doing walking fleece judging all day Friday and Saturday.
- With the advertising moved in-house for Alpacas Magazine, there is a big push for that.
- AOA is hitting all goals
- After Nationals the office will take a deep breath and begin pulling together the Fiber show.
- Membership renewal still underway
- Paid memberships are good but not where they want them. The staff and board members are phoning people who have not yet renewed, including some from prior years to try to get them back.
- Brion suggestion: Send out bills. If they phone in response to receiving the bill to say they aren't renewing, the staff will at least have an opportunity to ask them why not. Bonnie will take that idea to membership committee.
- The response has been good for sponsorships and marketing packages.

2.0 Health/Government Related

2.1 USAHA Alerts — Long / Potter

- Not much in recent weeks. Don't see much in cold weather
- EEE and EHV have been reported.
- Not much recent comment on antibiotic issues.
- Nothing on ELD mandate.

3.0 Unfinished Business

3.1 Alpaca Business Benchmarks — Smoker/All

- Bonnie worked with the spreadsheet and sent an edited version to the committee.
- Bonnie talked again to person who is making good money without factoring in alpaca sales. He's working on his taxes and will have more info later He averages $2000/mo in tourists and product sales, charging for the 1-hour tour. Other sources of income include agisting and breeding. They are transitioning from 50/50 resale vs. value-added products to a higher percentage value-added.
- Brion: there are a lot of fairs and events in his area where good money can be earned with product sales.

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- Bonnie changed "sales" to "sales/other farm income", e.g. store. They have also sold some hay, which they purchase by tractor-trailer load, and they earn money breeding and boarding.
- Other sources of income: shearing, transporting, selling manure, offering classes, and agritourism, e.g. farm visits, walk-abouts (paying to take alpacas for a walk around the farm).
- Bonnie: Lodging was listed twice on Brion's spreadsheet. Brion clarified that the first lodging was on-the-road food vs. taking clients to dinner.
- We need to keep refining the information that we want to request from members and put out some sort of questionnaire or form. Dan will talk to Dee about setting up a data input portal. Brion pointed out that this project is definitely a membership benefit.

3.2 Education of State/County Officials — Potter

- Bonnie sent her thoughts about what we might do. We had a general discussion about what we are trying to accomplish, which is to be sure that government officials at all levels who may have any contact with or involvement with alpacas should know what they are, what they are used for, and that they are livestock. The committee agreed that we should pursue this. Bonnie will write an initial draft of a paper.

3.3 ELD Mandate Follow-up — Potter/All

- Brion's opinion: most alpaca people will be exempted for various reasons. Horse and cattle industry representatives will work with government officials. The alpaca industry is too small to have a seat at the table.
- Dan is not aware of any response from the letter we sent to government.

4.0 New Business

4.1 Microchip Requirements — Long/Potter

- Defer to next meeting

5.0 Approval of Minutes (Minutes for approval: 2-12-18) — Potter

- Joan moved that the minutes be accepted and Brion seconded the motion. Motion passed.

6.0 Meeting Wrap

6.1 Review Action Items — Potter

- Bonnie: Prepare the start of a paper for education of government officials
- All: Continue looking at benchmark study Bonnie: keep talking to member who has good success with income sources.
- Bonnie: Ask Bud if we got any response re ELD

6.2 Next Meeting Date will be: 4/9/18 4:30 — Potter

6.3 Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm ET. — Potter