Government and Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom)

Meeting Minutes
November 5, 2014

Meeting: Conference Call—November 5, 2014, 7:30 p.m. EST

Members: Joan Clappier
Erin Egan (absent)
Jan Hamby
Dr. Pat Long
Brion Smoker

Board Liaison: Bonnie Potter

Staff Representative: Darby Vannier

Meeting called to order at 7:33 p.m. EST.

1.0 Meeting Opening

1.1 AOA News of Importance (B. Potter, D. Vannier):

AOA has started a strategic planning process, working company Leadership Resources, the company they have previously worked with. A preliminary meeting has been held. A questionnaire will be created to get input from members about what they would like AOA to be doing. A face-to-face meeting has been scheduled for February. AOA wants to identify more ways to help members, many of whom are struggling since the economic downturn. There is increased interest and involvement in alternative products among the membership.

AOA plans to survey the membership about their attitudes/desires regarding AI and ET. Allowing either or both of these techniques would require a vote of the membership, so a survey would be a preliminary exploration into membership interest.

National Alpaca Farms Days in September: Farm sign-ups were down this year. Many people have indicated they had great success. This year AOA did a lot of advertising online, using social media such as Facebook and other electronic means. A total of 7,000–8,000 impressions were recorded. AOA is looking at possible changes for next year.

AOA staff is currently 11 people and is expected to remain at that size.

The new Show Handbook will be ready in next month or two.

Changes to *Alpacas Magazine*: A new look that is more in line with the AOA brand, more advertising options, reduced pricing.

New EPDs will be coming out soon.

Halter show in March: Stall fees are being reduced from $200 to $150, cost of putting an alpaca in the auction is being reduced from $1500 to $1000, and the house minimum has been reduced to $2500. Free evaluations will be available for all alpacas at the show. These will be done by an AOA certified judge, giving people who "got the gate" the opportunity for oral feedback on their animals. There will be a gala dinner Saturday night with entertainment by the Dueling Pianos.

National Fleece Conference announcement will be made shortly. It will be June 26–28 in Denver, Colorado. More details will be announced in coming months.

The new software is close to launch. In addition to incorporating all of the features and capabilities of the former ARI and AOBA websites, it will have a nice new design and be both user-friendly and tablet-friendly.

17–18 applications were received for five positions on the Alternate Products Committee, with quite a variety of experience and backgrounds. The Board has selected five people. Wayne Jarvis will be the AOA liaison.

Fiber Committee has gotten going. One of their goals is to produce a resource directory.

The latest *Alpacas Magazine* has an article which Darby has written describing the merger process over the past couple of years, including steps and challenges of the transition and consolidation.

2.0 Industry Related

2.1 USAHA Meeting Report (P. Long):

The USAHA meeting was held October 18 – 22 in Kansas City, Missouri. Dr. Pat Long has been attending these meetings for a number of years to represent the camelid industry. He is now Vice Chair of the Cattle, Bison, and Camelid Committee, as a step towards chairing the committee. He feels this level of involvement will keep camelids more visible and present more opportunity to select speakers and ensure that camelids don't get lost in the larger community of livestock.

USAHA is an international forum where producers join state and federal regulators and researchers/scientists from a wide variety of specialties to discuss issues affecting the health and welfare of livestock species and wildlife. The annual meeting gives the camelid representatives a chance to talk with state veterinarians, US Dept. of Agriculture, Animal Plant & Health Inspection Service (USDA/APHIS) personnel and researchers about issues of concern to the camelid community.

Thus far the MERS virus (beta coronavirus) has not yet been found in S.Amercan camelids.

Pat attended a presentation about BVD in cattle. There is a test that has been validated in cattle that can be done on the farm. Pat will check to see if it will be effective for camelids and possibly replace the current laboratory PCR test which is required for shows.

There is a blood test being used in Europe on camelids for TB. The skin test done in US not very accurate for camelids.

Presentation on porcine corona virus: Initially the USDA considered it an industry problem and was not involved, but as the scope of the disease was fully appreciated the USDA did step in and help with the outbreak. There is now a vaccine. The swine industry has implemented a program to monitor swine diseases in other parts of the world to prepare for them if they hit the US. This virus has not affected camelids, but the process of dealing with it is educational for all species.

Animal welfare meeting: Discussion of neglect/abuse situations, responses to these situations all the way through the court system. There are resources available to help. Nine states now have a "standard of care" for animals, and hopefully more will do it

A friend of Pat's who is a veterinarian and an alpaca owner works for the Illinois inspection service (meat inspection). Pat will try to connect him with the Alternative Product Committee because he may be a good resource.

3.0 Health Related

3.1 USAHA Alerts (P. Long, B. Potter):

Nothing striking of relevance to camelids to report this month. There are still a few cases of EEE in NJ, rabies in NC. Talk continues about antibiotic resistance There was a documentary on PBC in mid-October about the antibiotic "problem."

The USDA awarded $4.5 million to 51 American veterinarians to help pay their school bills in exchange for them working in under-served rural areas.

4.0 Government Related

4.1 Development of "Talking Points" for Members (B. Potter, B. Smoker):

Bonnie incorporated some of Fred Obenchain's information into Brion's document. Brion will make a couple of corrections and then it should be ready to send to the GIRCom members. This document includes information about livestock citation for alpacas and where it is noted in federal legislation. There is a note at the end about alternative/end-of-life options. Now that the Alternative Products committee has been created, do we want to leave that in this document? After we have finalized it and gotten it approved by the AOA Board, how should it be distributed? Go to affiliates? Go to all members? Post on website?

4.2 IRS Farm Audits — Problems with Co-owned Breeding Males/article (B. Smoker):

This article will include "lessons learned" from audits that have been performed and from discussions with the IRS. The IRS now has an audit package guideline for farmers.

Discussion of if breeding is service or inventory: In the cattle industry, semen is inventory. Argument was made that the semen "delivery" system shouldn't change the classification, and based on that the IRS is agreeing that breeding is inventory. Agisting, however, is a service. Semen delivery is inventory, agisting is service.

The document will include a chart of how to handle co-owned herdsires. Example: X & Y co-own stud; X does a breeding with the stud and receives $1000 breeding fee. X gives Y $500. X must give Y a 1099 for the $500.

5.0 New Business

5.1 eBlast: Conferences January thru June 2015:

Bonnie sent Pat a copy of last year's list. Pat will work on the list. Pat and Bonnie will prepare a current list, send it to Darby for formatting, then out to the membership.

6.0 Approval of Minutes

Pat moved for the minutes to be approved, Jan seconded, and the 10/1/14 minutes were approved.

7.0 Meeting Wrap

7.1 Review Action Items:

Bonnie will send Pat's report of the USAHA meeting to the GIRCom members.

Brion & Bonnie finalize talking points document.

Brion & Bonnie finalize IRS/audit document.

Pat/Bonnie — get a symposium schedule ready for January – June 2015.

7.2 Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be Wednesday, December 17, 2014, at 7:30 p.m. EST.

7.3 Adjournment:

Joan made a motion to adjourn and Pat seconded it. The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m. EST.