Government and Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom)

Meeting Minutes
June 25, 2014

Meeting: Conference Call—June 25, 2014, 7:30 p.m. EDT

Present: Joan Clappier (absent)
Dr. Pat Long
Brion Smoker

Board Liaison: Bonnie Potter

Staff Representative: Darby Vannier

Meeting called to order at 7:35 p.m. EDT.

1.0 Meeting Opening

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

Potter updated the group on news of importance from AOA. She discussed several items including that the Board of Directors is having a face-to-face meeting in Lincoln in July to cover a variety of issues including nationals, committee structure, committee member selection process, strategic planning, goal setting, increasing membership value, and several other things important to the function of AOA. Potter also discussed some of the newer communication methods that AOA is utilizing including an Online Community, Executive Director blog, Affiliate Leadership Council, and newsletters.

Vannier updated the committee on new marketing, *Alpacas Magazine*, and the move of the Nashville office to a smaller location.

2.0 Industry Related

2.1 Alpaca Livestock Designation Update (B. Potter):

Potter discussed her research and contact with the USDA with the regard to the alpaca designation in the new 2014 Farm Bill. Correspondence from USDA has confirmed that alpacas are still designated as livestock although they are not mentioned specifically in the 2014 Farm Bill. Potter is continuing to follow-up to see if she can get information on where it is defined in writing. She is still waiting to hear back from them with regard to that.

Smoker brought up that an alpaca owner in Virginia has told him that they received a letter back from the State of Virginia stating that alpacas are not livestock. Smoker suggested that we should put together a response as a group to that. Smoker will send out a copy of the correspondence to the committee to review, so that a response can be drafted to get approval from the Board of Directors.

3.0 Health Related

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

Long stated that there is a lot of activity on mosquito borne diseases but none in alpacas. There are several cases of EHV1 throughout the US. MERS continues to be an issue. There has been some evidence that camels may be carriers, but there is nothing conclusive on that.

Potter mentioned that there was a piece on Murray Fowler in a USAHA alert and that his death is a big loss for the alpaca community.

Vannier stated that he has been working with Long to get information to the Nebraska State Veterinarian about TB and Brucelosis because Nebraska requires tests, which will be something that people need to be aware of for the National Show next year. Vannier forwarded several publications to the state veterinarian for review to see if the state would consider removing these test requirements for alpacas, because very few states require them.

4.0 Government Related

4.1 Development of "How to Lobby" Information for Individual Members (B. Smoker):

Smoker will work on the talking points that he drafted earlier and will work with Potter to further refine that document.

4.2 IRS Farm Audits—Article (B. Smoker):

Smoker discussed some recent audits that have gone on and the fact that most all of the issues relate to Hobby vs Business. He mentioned that farms MUST have a business plan because that really hurts the audit process if they don't have one. We need to put together a document with "Lessons Learned" so that members have information about what they need to do every day to experience less problems if they get audited.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Committee Chair/New Members (B. Potter):

Potter explained that the AOA Board of Directors is going to discuss committee member selection for all committees and how that will be done at their face-to-face meeting in July. Then we will have the process to begin moving forward with selection of a couple new members for GIRCom.

6.0 Approval of 4\23\2014 Minutes

Long made a motion to approve the minutes. Smoker seconded the motion. Motion passed 2–0.

7.0 Meeting Wrap

7.1 Review Action Items:

7.2 Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held July 23, 2014, at 7:30 p.m. EDT.

7.3 Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned.