

Virginia Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association
Monthly Board Meeting Minutes
March 1, 2010

Attendees:

Ken Crews – President
Fred Obenchain – Treasurer
Hank Boyd – Director at Large
Les Fuller – Director at Large
Robin Watson – Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 7:37 pm.

Minutes from meeting of February 1st, 2010: The minutes from the February 1st meeting were approved pending input from other Board members. (The minutes are already posted on the website – did anyone have any changes?)

Treasurer's Report:

Beginning Balance: \$35,759.45
Available Balance: \$33,803.17

There was much discussion about the Treasurer's Report for the VAOBA Annual Meeting. Fred stated that the membership does not have to approve the budget but that it is nice for them to see and that we need to project what we can afford at the annual meeting. Les stated that the 2010 projections show a loss of \$2650 and that if we lose \$7-8,000 this year at the show like in 2009, we need to be creative across the board and be very protective of expenses that got out. Fred said we need to have an educational program at the show. There are proposals coming from Judy. We need activities to raise some funds or have seminars charge more money to cover expenses. Les said we need to be more frugal to make sure education at least breaks even. Hank said we need to cut back on the number of judges this year. Fred stated that senior judges are more attractive to larger farms and that we have 2 less judges already, a savings of \$5,000. Hank stated that he is concerned about the budget. Les moved, Hank seconded and all approved the Treasurer's Report.

Committee Reports:

Youth Committee: No report submitted. (Need Volunteers). The Spotsylvania 4H Alpaca Hummers has a request. [I don't think we talked about this].

Education Committee: No report submitted (Need Volunteers).

Fiber Committee: The Fiber Committee report was respectfully submitted to the Board in writing by B-J Ellis as follows:

VAOBA Fiber Committee Report, 1 March 2010

In Feb. 2010 we did the following:

1. Continued to discuss and brainstorm ideas presented at the Special Fiber Meeting 23 Jan 2010 as well as at the fiber mill afterwards. VA Finest: We continue to consider various ways to resolve different philosophies within the committee and the Membership. We recognize that the guidelines should be “simple and inexpensive”.
2. “The Fiber Corner” for the Feb. Issue of VAOBA Newsletter was submitted and published. The theme put out by Gracie, the Paddock reporter, was the value \$\$ of preparing shorn fleece (skirting) for grading and sorting before going to the mill, 2 business opportunities, and a good source of real rug yarn (with cotton cord center) from your fleece.
3. Started to brainstorm ideas for what is needed for educational workshops to get the membership prepared to meet the VA Finest Standards that may include sorting and grading (at home, by the producer).

DISCUSSION FOR BOD (RE: Workshops for Grading and Sorting):

- (1) We are creating additional educational goals besides learning to grade and sort. Who can we work with while planning these educational endeavors? How many workshops can we have? Who has the leadership skills to accomplish this? Locations throughout the state? Timing? Costs for members & non-members? Can we get a budget?
- (2) Since this will involve travel (outside of travel to our show), how can we compensate our own members who step up to serve as leaders for some of these workshops?
- (3) This State-wide project should probable include the Education as well as Marketing Committees . Who can function in these roles at the present time? We would like to include these individuals in our brainstorming, IMMEDIATELY.

All accepted B-J's Fiber Committee Report.

Board Discussion: In regards to the Fiber Committee's request for a budget, Ken suggested that they present what they want to do, how they will pay for it and the Board will approve it. Les stated that whatever they do, they need to break even. He suggested they use a member and non-member fee structure which may entice farms to become members. Regarding sorting and grading, Fred stated that he would like to see a program so members can learn how to sort and grade their fiber. Les wondered if farms would still be eligible for the Virginia's Finest certificate even if they do not go through the program. Fred approved the fiber report, Hank seconded and all approved.

Industry Relations: The Fiber Committee report was respectfully submitted to the Board in writing by Dr. John Ferrante as follows:

February Activities

The committee has been busy reviewing Ag - Council reports as government committees are formed and activities identified that may lead to issues or opportunities for the alpaca community

in Virginia. Where opportunities are identified they will be highlighted to the VAOBA board for consideration. Keli and I will be developing a "contact list" of appropriate people to work with as the Commonwealth government structure matures and we identify individuals with authority to make things happen. I am also drafting an "Alpaca Fact Sheet" that can be used to educate government officials. This is in response to my suggestion (and the Boards request for action) in the January report to put a higher emphasis on educating Legislators and others, like the Ag-Council to the value of alpacas in the Virginia agriculture community. Although this information may prove helpful I again strongly suggest that all VAOBA members actively engage in educating their government representatives and members of the State agricultural agencies. I will be drafting an article on alpaca education for the next newsletter to hopefully stimulate the process.

As a proactive action I would like to solicit issues and ideas from all the VAOBA membership on spreading the word about our industry in Virginia. They can contact either Keli or me and we will formulate a strategy. This brainstorming activity can be fruitful if members take it seriously.

Board Discussion: Fred stated that every county in the state of Virginia has a State Agriculture Extension office and that the House wants to abolish extension offices in urban areas. This means a loss of lots of jobs is the proposal comes to pass. Les motioned to approve the Industrial Relations Report, Fred seconded and everyone approved.

Marketing: No report submitted. (Need Volunteers).

Membership: Hank stated that we have 1 new member this month and someone already paid their dues for 2010-2011. He suggested that the membership dues should all go to Fred for ease of accounting. Everyone approved the Membership Report.

Newsletter: Fred would like to see more member input, Hank said there need to be more articles. Les motioned to accept the Newsletter Report, Hand seconded and everyone agreed.

Show Report: Judy Howe presented the Board with the 2010 VAOBA Expo Sponsorship Packages and a list of questions for the Board as follows:

1. Budget to pay presenters for Seminars.
2. Approval Needed - Judy's Proposal 1: Having Brett Cayson out would cost us \$500/day (his fee) plus his expenses. Travel from CO and hotel. He could do one seminar on each day and spend the rest of the day doing evaluations, for which we could charge. So we could recoup part of his fee in the evaluations for exhibitors. I would estimate his total cost to be in the ball park of \$1,700 with probably a recoup of at perhaps \$500 for evaluations making it an out of pocket of about \$1,200. Now, that \$1,200 could be charged to the education committee INSTEAD of the show, since we don't seem to have much education lined up for the year. Then if we go with proposal 2 (the herdsire auction) he would do the commentary for the auction for free.
3. Approval needed - Judy's Proposal 2: No out of pocket costs to VAOBA. The breedings would be donated. VAOBA would provide the food (heavy appetizers, pasta bar type food) to attendees for free. We may want to hold it on the vendor level of the coliseum. We would need to have exhibitors send in info on the breedings and we will make displays for each animal that

would be set up on the side opposite vendors. We will have a printed auction book that would cost some money that would go in exhibitors packages. Auction breedings will also go on the website. Joe can get a bluegrass band for \$500 if we choose to go that way. Set up the food and cash bar there too, where we had the chili last year and then set up an auction area. The proceeds from the auction would cover our costs. If we got an average of \$600 per breeding and had 30 breedings, our revenue would be approximately \$18K. Costs would be less than 5K and we would donate the rest to the vet school, or research or both, whatever is decided.

4. Approval Needed: Fashion Show

5. Approval Needed: This is not part of the proposal, but very important....

I also have some heavy hitter volunteers that I would like to compensate in some way. If we go with this, Joe is going to need some serious assistance and he has a person who has said she would like to help. Tonya Urban who helped him with check in last year is ready and able to work with him. Joe and Tonya would be taking on the auction, and farm sponsor coordinator duties in addition to the barn manager he already does. I would like to offer Tonya a silver sponsorship.

Brenda Breedlove, who did SO MUCH last year is ready to take on even more. She will be doing the Store, Silent Auction, Corporate Sponsors and Vendors. Basically everything on the second floor. I would also like to give her a silver sponsorship. These people are putting many, many hours into this to make it work and the actual cost to us is VERY minimal (basically one stall and a quarter page ad).

6. Approval Needed: I have worked up a new sponsor list of packages, with the prices reduced from last year. With the economy down, I would rather have lower prices and get more sponsors, than only the few we had. The price was reduced mostly on the platinum package, from 2,000 to 1,500. This brings it more in line with other shows. The gold went from 1,000 to 950 to make it SEEM lower (plus there are no dinner tickets included in these (as we hope to have the other event instead of a dinner).

Board Discussion:

Regarding Judy's Item #1, there was discussion on vendors, seminars and fees paid out. Fred stated that there should be no repeat of any seminars. VAOPA spent \$2,000 last year on seminars. He would like to see Judy provide us with ideas, who and costs – give the Board some categories for approval. He said that Brett Cayson will be at Double 'O Good March 27-28th for their customer appreciation sale and Fred would talk to him there. Fred would like for Judy to go forward with the proposal for Brett Cayson with the limitation that he will be teaching/judging conformation only and not fiber. Les stated that last year the slots filled up and people wanted more. There was a \$10 charge, perhaps we should make it \$20 this year.

Regarding Judy's Item #3, Fred stated that we will have lots of overhead with Brett and food, he questioned how much it would be for breeding to elite males and should it be combined with the fashion show. Les stated that it should all be integrated together and that we need to advertise it. Fred felt that seating may be a problem, we need to find chairs at a reasonable price.

It was moved that we approve points 2,3,4 and have Judy come up with an integration plan that includes the fiber committee, along with a budget for seating and tables for the better comfort of

our members during the event. It was moved that item 5 be approved and that Judy has the option of providing both the Barn Manager and the Corporate Sponsor with a Gold Sponsorship. It was moved that item 6 and 7 be approved with the checks going to the superintendent and that the show superintendent will follow up with the treasurer with the progress of each sign-up. All agreed to the above motions.

Action Items from Previous Meetings:

Conflict of Interest Policy: Fred would like to have the input of our new President-Elect on this matter.

Education and Fiber Committee Budgets and Educational Seminars Required to Maintain our IRS Status: Fred stated that we need an Education Committee Chairman – this group usually helps Judy come up with seminars at the show. Les will ask Patty if she knows someone in education or the state extension office that may be interested. This issue is tabled for our next meeting.

VAOBA possibly establishing a small grant at the Vet School for students/residents for further education: Fred does not want to encourage a small grant. Les thought we could earmark funds for 2 students to go to the conference at Ohio State and that they were open to us funding any of their costs. Hank motioned to give Virginia Tech \$600 to support 2 students to go to the conference at Ohio State with the understanding that they would provide a report to us upon their return. It was moved that we give Virginia Tech \$600.00 to send two vet residents to the OSU camelid conference to be held on March 25th. All approved the motion.

New Business:

Go Daddy Website Renewal: Go Daddy has been renewed. Hank would like to highlight new members each month on the VAOBA website. He stated that Maryland, Kentucky and Empire websites all contain a section called “Service Directory” where members can advertise for their particular occupation, members could advertise their farm stores and mills could be added as well. He thought we could charge \$25-\$50 for this resource. He will call the IRS to find out if that is something we could do.

Budget and documentation to comply with AOBA Affiliate Requirements: Fred feels we have met their requirements and that the documentation was sent in for 2008-2009. Hank stated that they need to know who is on the Board, how many members we have and minutes from our annual meeting. Hank said we have received grants for seminars from AOBA before but that we would not be able to get any grant money from AOBA until these requirements are met. Ken asked if we can email the info and Hank stated that he has an email address that we could use for this. Fred will put together what we need to be in compliance.

Ballots: Les reported that 40 members responded to the President-Elect election.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Watson
Secretary 2009-2010