

Minutes of Quarterly Meeting of NM Alpaca Breeders

March 6, 2010

Present: Leslie Stoddard, Marilyn Knudsen, Melinda Tossani, Bob & Louise Hazen, Linda Kahlich, Mary Ann Andrews, Tehani Hogan, Dan & Sally Wright, Sandy Liggett, Bob & Cindi Wargowsky, Peggy Ruston, Bob & Cheryl Louie, Diane & Tim Blackburn, Deirdre Murphy, Anne Stallcup, Kent & Susan Sasser, Barbara & Larry Roybal, Rosemary Metcalf, Rock Shuster, TJ Patton, Bill & Kathy Herman, Mickey Wright and Evelyn Simons

Leslie – **President's Report:** The bad news is that we did not make money on seminar as it takes about 25 ranches for a seminar to be profitable. (-\$1382.43) We had 18 attending and most were from out of state. We charged \$180 for the seminar. The good news is we made money on the fair. \$513.00 Details in the treasurer's report.

Anne Stallcup voiced concerns that we were paying bank fees. Also, membership felt that the money in the account should be invested in some short-term interest-bearing situation like a CD or Money Market so that it was working a little better for us. Leslie indicated that she would pass the information on to Mark and he will report back to us at the next meeting in June. The treasurer's report was approved.

Melinda's Membership Report:

She is still collecting renewals and doesn't know how many members we have total, but 42 have renewed so far. Not everyone responded. We lost one to California. Melinda will take checks! There was discussion about a deadline for renewal of membership. A suggestion was made to tack on a late fee for incentive to pay on time. Suggestion was made to call people and remind them it is \$100.00 regardless of when they pay their dues during the year. Resolution of the matter will go to the board.

The tri-fold brochure will be updated and will be made available to the membership on line for downloading and printed copies will be available at the next meeting. NMAB brochures are available for marketing purposes to membership. Copies of the amended by-laws are available.

Anne is going to check links for minutes and agendas for accuracy. She will also make sure the by-laws listed on the website are current.

First order of business: We need to talk about volunteers in general. We are a small volunteer organization and rely on everyone stepping up to the plate. Another election is

coming up in July. We'll have to elect a new President, Treasurer, Membership Chair and Event Coordinator. All positions will be open. The Event Coordinator is not an elected position but must be appointed. Someone must volunteer just like all the other positions. Leslie encouraged members to step up to take a rotation. Leslie will not carry on as President for another 2-year term and will take over Secretary if Marilyn can't hear well enough to do it. We will have one meeting in June before the election, with the election in July. A list was created for people who will serve on the committee and run the election. Susan Sasser will chair the committee.

Leslie proposed a discussion about NMAB - about its role, purpose and direction in general; the organization has and is changing, based on the number of breeders in the group. Leslie suggested a roundtable discussion about that and the kinds of things we, as a group, want to happen. We have two main events: the State Fair and an educational seminar. The website also requires someone to keep it updated, active and running. Leslie stated it is helpful to her business and has increased traffic at her ranch. How are people feeling about that, or anything?

There was a brief discussion about the status of the mission statement project and Bob Hazen will report on that at the next meeting.

There was a discussion about venues for more interactive informative exchanges of information amongst the group itself. Bill Herman volunteered to look into various sources for accomplishing this such as a WIKI or yahoo group etc.

Mickey mentioned that they were putting on a seminar up at their ranch with Steve Hull with special rates for the organization, and asked if everyone in the group could email someone they know to advertise the seminar.

Anne – It behooves us to support each other. If we get new people looking around, they may ask why they should join an industry barely hanging on. As business associates, we need to support each other as much as we can. I may not have what someone is looking for, but I can refer a customer to one of you because I would know you have what they are looking for, etc. We need a way to communicate to each other what we have available – who's for sale, etc. as we can't go memorize all the different (member) websites.

Anne – Our website is a good resource. If you don't have your farm description on it, you should. I'm continually amazed by how much activity our website gets. In March we had 331 visits, and it's only 6 days into March. And I mean visits, not hits, people opening the website. Between Sept and October, it was huge, probably because of the Fair. In January we had 3,351 visits! So, be sure to advertise yourself!

Bob H – There's an area for herdsires and ranches. Just on our own website, we got 254 hits. People have come to our ranch because of the web presence. Access is so important. We're going on Facebook. People just google it, google alpacas. If you need something on herdsires, everyone needs to update their info so it shows up there.

There was discussion on hiring someone to help manage and develop an interactive component of our website so members can enter some of their own data rather than relying on Anne to do it. Suggestions for people willing to do this and their fees are being forwarded to Anne Stallcup.

Leslie – We have a couple of State Fair items. Leslie contacted the Deputy Manger of the State Fair to talk to Roger Beimer about a composite show next year. Maybe we could pull in more people from Colorado at the Fair. Roger did not feel that we would have to go through the Board, but he never got back. Leslie contacted him again but still has not received a response. She will pursue this to increase numbers coming to show. Leslie will continue to pursue this as we only need one judge now who would come in and judge the fleeces. Mail-in would work the best. The judge could do the fleece judging on Friday. The fair would have to pay for one more day and provide the space.

Rosemary – Ric needs to know if we're doing a composite. Polly agreed to be judge again. Ric is doing a composite show in May and will give us feedback. There will be one judge. Keep in mind that fleeces have to be mailed in and collected, and 3-4 volunteers are needed to set up before the show. Boxes are available in Oklahoma, but maybe someone more locally has them. We can get box size. Boxes must arrive prior to show.

Anne – Security - Until they close the gates at midnite, someone should be in the barn, but overnight is not needed. Barn was full of people after dinner last year, and Sheri stayed overnight there with no incident. She does not have to do that again this year.

Mickey – Should that be on my volunteer list? That is, someone to stay in the barn until midnight when they close the gates?

There was lots of discussion and suggestions for how to handle the entry fees for the performance class which is currently being paid by the sponsoring ranch. Bob Wargowsky presented a summary of the history behind the prize money structure. It was suggested to make it a sponsorship option. All suggestions will be review by the board and a decision will be made and reported on in June.

Leslie – There's an ARI industry study coming. I tried to send out email. ARI contracted with CSU research to study industry. They are collecting background data and history of the industry in USA. The study is still 4-6 months out. In 2007 there was a negative article by Dr. Richard Sexton at UC Davis. That is still out there and negative. Currently, a series of articles appeared

in several small California newspapers in the Bay area in Feb of 2010. Written by Allister Bland, a food and wine critic, it went out and it's fairly negative. Copies of the article were provided for people to read at the meeting. Overview, it paints a negative color on entire industry. We hope this ARI study gives us a real and objective status and is timely in this economic climate. I will keep you posted as far as the study. I don't think we can do anything to counter the negative.

Les – Convergence - What our options are: For people who don't know, the Hand Weavers of America are having a convention here at Convention Center, July 18 – 25. A booth costs \$600. It's for a lot of days – a real time commitment. If people are interested, you can have a booth. If a lot of people want to do it, we might get an NMAB booth. We must decide today as the deadline to apply is March 31st. Basically it's fiber-oriented, but it would be nice to have some alpaca fiber present. It's about any kind of textile. There will be vendors. It's done every other year and a big deal; was in Florida last time. The decision was made to have a booth and staff it with volunteers through NMAB. An addition booth with products will be secured and paid for collectively by participating members. A committee was formed with Anne Stallcup as the chair. Cheryl Louie volunteered to provide the booth backdrop for the event.

Leslie – Marilyn and I had the pleasure of going to Snowmass auction last weekend. The prices of the animals in general were pretty good. Lots of people were there from all over country buying animals, and it was positive overall. Only a few sold high. Some animals were pulled because they didn't reach the minimum. One cria sold a little \$9K. So, it was interesting. So, it made me think about our educational seminar and what we would like to do. Last year's seminar was mostly out of state people, on EPD's and herd assessment. I need to know what kinds of things we'd like to bring in. Maybe Anne can speak a bit about her opinion of the TxOLAN animals.

Anne – TxOLAN was very evident that the alpacas, at that show anyway, had taken a quantum leap forward in fiber quality. We didn't see much junk. It was a big show - a good one - but it's taken that next step up. Some farms were new, and really nice animals got the gate. There was a lively discussion about the fiber industry.

Leslie – I did talk with Al Cousill and Jude Anderson. They are very experienced and knowledgeable, doing this a long time, and open to coming here to do a seminar for us. We could design it so that some of the things you're talking about are addressed. As far as the whole fiber thing and resources, they'd be a great seminar. They bring a global perspective on what we as an industry should do. Their price is \$1000 a day for both of them. \$500 for each traveling day, then the advertising and event expenses. Depending on where we'd have it, they would be open to staying at someone's house. I think we could get people from out of state to come in. Leslie – So many seminars are geared to new people and we are interested in other

things. They would also be open to doing herd evaluations for a fee. I am considering doing that. Al and Jude will be contacted for an exact date.

Rosemary – Told everyone about Rayleen and the Colorado Llama and Alpaca rescue effort. She needs financial and moral support. See Rosemary for her blog or email. The group decided to send her a check for \$500.00 with the idea that more would possibly follow at a later date.

Susan – Mary Black’s mom died last Sunday, and this is hard for her. Her dad needs some supervision, so they are talking about selling all their horses and alpacas and moving to Albuquerque. She asks that people check their website.

Marilyn’s added note - Check out these websites, or call, the following NMAB members who are also selling off all or most of their herds: **Altiplano Alpacas** (Marilyn @ 505-771-0754); **Turquoise Trail Alpacas** (Jennifer Fasano); **Danda Luz Alpacas** (Deirdre Murphy). We all need to sell all or most of our lovely alpacas ASAP!! Our loss is your gain - thank you!

Anne – Girl Scouts now have a badge for “alpaca farm visit”!! We’re official!! General discussion had about Girl and Boy Scouts in area. Next year the Boy Scouts may want to involve alpacas in their activities.

Leslie talked about the concept of leasing herdsires. It’s another option for a small farm.

Cheryl Louie announced that Anne Stallcup had been elected to the TxOLAN board at this year’s membership meeting.

Round table discussion and adjourn.

Next meeting will tentatively be at Anne Stallup ranch Que Sera Alpacas on July 10th. (We now have a confirmed date of June 19-20 for the educational seminar with Alan and Jude. Therefore, we had to reconsider the original meeting date set at the March meeting.

NMAB – EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR 2010

List of Volunteers

Dan & Sally Wright

Robert Louie

Susan Sasser

Barbara Roybal

Bob Wargowsky

Marilyn Knudsen

Cheryl Louie

Leslie Stoddard

NMAB COMMITTEE FOR CONVERGENCE 2010 (FIBER):

List of Volunteers

Anne Stallcup – Board Liaison

Susan Sasser

Peggy Rustin

Cheryl & Robert Louie

Deirdre Murphy

Diane Blackburn

Barbara Roybal

Evelyn Simons

Rosemary Metcalf

Kathy Herman

Melinda Tossani

Linda Kahlich

Louise & Bob Hazen

Dan & Sally Wright

Sandy Liggett

Leslie Stoddard