

Maine Alpaca Association

Board of Directors Meeting

December 2, 2008

Applebees, Portland Maine

Call to order – Raini Perry

Secretary's report – Pam Harwood moved to accept, Pat Houde seconded

Treasurer's report- Pam Drew realized that she had made an error with the report and will revise it.

The report was not accepted.

Membership Drive-

We know that there are alpaca farms in Maine that are not MAA members. We need to cross check with AOBA/NEAOBA for missing farms. We need to highlight the benefits of being a member: educational opportunities after our meetings, networking with other members, marketing and promotional opportunities. Other benefits we may be able to offer our members could include discounts with Blue Seal, Poulins or Stillwater Minerals. We need to ask Cindy Kilgore if she knows of any discounts that might be available to our organization. Pam Harwood is working on redoing the MAA handout and it will include a mail-in application.

Volunteer Incentives-

We discussed again the need to offer incentives to encourage our members to volunteer. Some ideas that were offered were free classified/banner ads on the website and free admission to the Fiber Frolic. These should be given to people who help with special projects or events like the Maine Ag Trade show.

Field Guides-

MAA BOD voted to buy up to 20 manuals at \$117 each. This edition will most likely be the last one. It was agreed that it is important for all of our vets to have a copy of this book.

NEAOBA Holiday Tour

The Marketing Committee will put together a plan for the 2009 Holiday season. Some ideas that were suggested were a listing of farms open for the holidays. For a nominal fee, farms can have a listing on the MAA site showing that they offer special hours/events during the holidays. Also, the marketing committee will send out a press release with information about visiting farms during the holiday season.

Nominating Committee

We need to form a nominating committee. Some names that have been suggested are Nicole Carter and Diane Townsend, Pat Perry. Pam Drew, Amy Grant and Pat Houde both agreed to stay on the board if the membership elects them. It was agreed that the process to elect the board should be by paper ballot at the January meeting and that there will be no motion to elect the board en masse. The paper ballot allows for write-ins.

MAA website

It was agreed that the classified ads on the MAA website will now cost \$20/year for members and \$65/year for non-members. Banner ads are \$30/month. The marketing committee will put together a form for both types of ads.

There appears to be some confusion about how inquiries about MAA through the website are handled. Requests for the newsletter go to a separate Yahoo group called Maine Alpaca News. We agreed that we need to get more information out of people who inquire about membership so that we can use those inquiries as a marketing opportunity. We also need to ask people who inquire if they welcome information from individual farms. Leads generated by the website will be posted in the members' only section of the website. Pam Drew suggested that the password access the members' only section is changed on 01/11/09 and anyone who has not paid their dues by the membership meeting in January will not be furnished with the new password.

Meeting Attendance and Membership renewal-

Since attendance at the meetings is continuing to wane, some suggestions were made to improve it. Suggestions included keeping the business meeting to less than 45 minutes, encouraging anyone who has new business to submit the item before the meeting so that it can be put onto the agenda, and offering door prizes. Another idea is to ask the membership at the January meeting if they would like to hold two of our meetings at member farms. We will ask for volunteer farms and then choose two farms "out of a hat". We agreed that we need to divide the state into north and south and choose a farm from each area to avoid having two meetings in southern York County, for example.

Pam Drew will be sending a letter concerning dues renewal. We agreed that we need to add a checkbox for "I would like to help with..." to help increase volunteerism. It was also suggested that we offer a free banner ad if dues are received by 12/31/08.

Abusers of the Yahoo Group

It was agreed that abusers of the MAA yahoo group will be dealt with in the following way: if a member violates the rules they will be put on moderator status for 6 months (meaning that any post they make will be reviewed by the moderator before it is put out to the entire group). If they violate the rules again after the initial 6 month period is over, they will be put on permanent moderator status.

Fundraising-

The board discussed some ideas to raise money to replenish our marketing budget. One idea is to start work on a party type of event. It would include a party with a live auction and a silent auction. Also, we could sell a limited number of high priced (\$50-\$100) raffle tickets and we would have enough \$50-\$100 prizes that the odds of winning are close to 100% with a big grand prize. Ideas for raffle and/or auction items could be alpacas, Red Sox tickets, a weekend stay at someone's vacation home, sea kayaking lessons, etc. It was agreed that if we choose to do this it will take most of 2009 to organize and that we should shoot for a February 2010 date.

Other Business:

Raini Perry proposed adding a "member at large" who would be MAA representative at the state. She also mentioned that the Maine Farm Bureau's full time lobbyist/exec secretary, Jon Olson, is retiring next year and they don't know if they will be replacing him. This is the person on their staff who lobbies for the farming industry at the State House in Augusta. We are going to include information about joining the Farm Bureau in the next MAA newsletter.

BOD members attending:

Lorraine Perry, Raini Ridge Alpaca Farm

Pamela Harwood, Longwoods Alpacas

Pam Drew, Pamelamas

Pat Houde, Alpaca Fields

Amy Grant, Good Karma Farm

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Grant

Secretary, Maine Alpaca Association

December 14, 2008