

# Maine Alpaca Association

## Meeting Minutes 03/19/05

Present: Alpacas @ Choice View Farm, Anita Cooper; Blueberry Farm Alpacas, Abby Fitzgerald; Chase Tavern Farm, Cindy Lavan; Chickadee Ridge Alpacas, Charlie Lavan, Fiber Fields Alpaca Farm, Dawn Brooker; FireSide Ridge Alpacas, Earlene and Bob Ingram; Friendly Acres, Kathy Belisle; Grand View Acres, Brian Cramer; Half Horse Farm, Paul and Tammy Cheney ; Indian Ridge Farm, Pat Welles and Bob Welles; Kindred Camelid, Kate Martin, Kylie Card; Long Plains Alpacas, Marcia MacDonald; Longwoods Alpaca Farm, Pam Harwood; Mountain Brook Farm, Cindy Mingle; NEWAIM Farm, Al Maloney, Nancy Williams; Oakhill Alpaca Ranch, Donna and Robert Ferrera; Pamelamas, Pam Drew; Raini Ridge Farm, Lorraine Blowers & Brad Perry; Stonewall Alpacas, Carole Bacon; Sugarloaf Alpacas, Kim Toomey; Sunday River Alpacas; Jeff Erickson; Tripping Gnome Farm, Ursula Munro; Tuck Farm, Mary Wright ; Village Farm Alpacas, Bonnie Callery.

*The meeting was called to order at 11:30 a.m. by Cindy Mingle, president.*

### **Secretary's Report**

The secretary's minutes from the last meeting were accepted as read.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer, Al Maloney, stated that he has sent out reminders to members that have not yet paid their dues and those that owe the increase in due, that was voted in during the last meeting. Most farms dues are current.

There is \$2004.00 in the veterinary education fund and \$5139.00 in the general fund.

Currently, membership is approximately 55 farm members.

The Treasurer's report was accepted as read.

Cindy Mingle requested that the members present bypass the normal order of business to hear statements from Pat Welles. This was accepted.

Pat Welles spoke about the pending legislation LD-1309, sponsored by David Trahan, R, from Waldoboro, which will provide an exemption for working livestock guardian dogs (LDG) from the local "barking dog" ordinances.

Currently, our LDG are some what protected under the Right to Farm laws. This law still allows for nuisance complaints, which must be investigated to determine if the dog is working or not. The dog is not exempted if it leaves its owner property. Some sheep breeders that have remove dogs due to excessive noise have shortly realized a loss of animals.

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Pat indicated that her local rep. and Animal Control Officer are supportive of this bill.

LD-1309 is currently in the Agriculture Committee for review. Pat urged each farm to contact their Representatives and ask them to support this bill.

Cindy Mingle asked Pat if there is something specific MAA could do to help. Pat stated that writing a letter of support for the legislation would help and agreed to draft this letter for the association.

On another topic Pat stated the State Bureau of Taxation does not view the alpaca industry as eligible for all the normal farm exemptions.

### **Old Business**

### **Website and Marketing Committee**

Cindy Lavan reported the work that the committee has been doing. She indicated that the Board of Directors has developed a budget for the year, which leave very little cash reserves. The committee has come up with ideas for raising money.

- 1) One suggestion is to offer, to members, sponsor space on the home page. The image would be 150x50 pixels at a cost of \$30.00 per month. Each farm could reserve 2 months at a time with a one-month off. If on the third month there's a space available that farm could purchase another space. This would give the opportunity to everyone interested.
- 2) The second idea was an on-line auction with revenues going into the MAA general fund. Cindy Lavan offered the auction services for \$1000.00 using getalpaca.com. There was much discussion on this topic. Suggestions were to have items of at least \$500.00 in value, such as, breedings, gift certificates for fiber processing or farm/alpaca related items. Concerns and questions from the floor included
  - a) We are already being asked to contribute to the MAA raffle at the Fiber Frolic and the Coastal Classic.
  - b) The burden will fall to the larger farms
  - c) Many of us do not have studs with a national reputation.
  - d) Is getalpaca.com a national organization? It is a URL owned by Cindy Lavan and she "rents" the auction software.
  - e) Small farms could group together to buy an item for the auctions
  - f) How will the monies be handled and is there any liability? All monies go directly to MAA. All breeding contracts are between donator and purchaser, with no liability to MAA.

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Jeff Erickson made the following motions:

Cindy Lavan may canvas the members to see if there is enough interest, and if there is, she will proceed with putting the auction together.

After brief discussion "enough interested" was qualified as 10 –15 participants.

Vote – 16 in favor

5 Opposed

Motion passed

Cindy Lavan will communicate with the membership via the yahoo group.

### **MAA Logo**

Cindy Mingle told the group that the Board of Directors will be finalizing the logo within the next week. Laura Osgood has created variations, which are of an alpaca head on the outline of the State of Maine.

When the Board narrows the list to 2 they will be posted on the website for comments. The plan is to have the image completed in time to use it on material at the Fiber Frolic.

### **Brochure**

Marcia MacDonald has created a rough draft of a brochure for MAA. The final logo will dictate the color scheme. There will be information about MAA and a list of "Alpaca Facts". Format will be tri-fold with the center back blank for mailing address. They will be used at the MAA booth and be available for farms to purchase as well.

### **Education Committee**

Dawn Brooker spoke for the committee. They have decided topics for the next 2 meetings. One will be Becky Smith who will speak about Aberrant Behavior Syndrome (ABS). The other will be a Livestock Guardian Dog breeder to discuss the types and use of the dogs.

The committee asked the membership if they would be interested in attended seminars? The topics given for considerations were, Nutrition, Farm and Field Management, Marketing.

There was much discussion on this topic. Some questions/suggestions included:

- Are there other seminars already planned that we could attend? If so, should we expend funds for another seminar. (All the seminars will be self funding.)
- The AOBA website has a list of speakers and their schedules.

There was an informal vote taking to indicate interest in a November seminar. 17 farms were in favor.

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It was suggested that we take advantage of the local University and Cooperative Extension advisors who are familiar with the Maine soil and climate.

Dawn presented a list of topics and asked people to vote for 2, so the committee will have an idea of the topics of most interest.

<i>Topic/Presenter</i>	<i>Number of votes</i>
Nutrition with LaRue Johnson	9
Farm and Field Management With Steve Hull	9
Marketing with Wassin	2
*Dr Van Saun	5
*Genetics	12

*\*These presentoers/topics were added from the floor prior to the vote.*

### **Veterinarian Shortage**

Dawn Brooker brought us up-to-date with the plans of the joint MAA and MLLA (Maine Llama Association) committee. Hillary Ware has been the spearhead of the project. They have drafted a letter describing the camelid vet shortage. There is a meeting planned with the State Veterinarian. There are plans to develop and distribute a resource packet to large animal vets in the State.

The project is 2 fold. Part one is to encourage vets to move to Maine and part two will be to provide educational opportunities and printed material for the vets that are already here in Maine. Dr. Barbara Perkins has expressed interest in helping provide education for other vets.

Dawn explained that Tufts, in MA, has a program that sends students out to work on farms to get some hands on experience with large animals. She asked if there were farms interested in sponsoring a student. Most raised their hands. The student would come for learning experience not to be a "vet", but could assist with toe trimming, inoculations or just handling the animals.. We might be able to coordinate with several small farms in the same geographic area, so the student could get a lot of hands on with alpaca.

Dawn asked the group for a show of hands for each of the following questions:

1. Farms that currently have a camelid vet that does farm calls. **18**
2. How far does your vet travel to you
  - 15 minute drive – 2
  - 30 minute drive – 13
  - 45 minute drive – 5
  - 1 hour or more – 1

An additional question was added from the floor.

3. How many farms have a vet that will come to the farm in an emergency – 15

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Dawn had a list of large animal vet from Maine and read the list and asked us to identify those who would see camelids.

### **SMART**

There is no new information at this time.

### **Maine Fiber Frolic June 11 and 12**

Brian Creamer distributed volunteer applications to each farm.

Donna Ferrara indicated that last year the total number of vendors was 75 and we already have 60 applicants, so encouraged everyone to get their applications in right away.

There will be alpaca events on both days, including the Beast and Buddies parade which is the annual kick off for the 2 day event.

See [www.fiberfrolic.com](http://www.fiberfrolic.com) for a list of workshops. The premier workshop leader this year is Alden Amos. He will conduct 2 workshops on Saturday.

There are animal talks scheduled throughout the weekend. The focus will be on the basics.

Listen for our advertisements on NPR during the Prairie Home Companion Show, Saturday nights from 6 – 8 p.m.

### **MAA Display Booth**

Jeff Erickson handed out a layout and list of items he felt should be included in the booth that could be used at events, such as, the Maine Agriculture Show in January, the Maine Fiber Frolic and NECC.

It was suggested we display samples of only Maine made alpaca product, since we are trying to promote Maine alpacas. Maybe include a notebook with pictures from the farms throughout the State. If electricity is available we could show a video.

After the list of items to include in the booth was discussed, a member asked who was going to store the equipment between events.

We discussed a location of the booth at the Frolic and decided that we should request a booth area in the barns with the animals. Some of the equipment needed will be donated, for the booth at the Frolic.

### **Raffle**

Marcia MacDonald told us that she has received many donations for the raffle.

The plan will be to display each item. When a person purchases a raffle ticket they will place their ticket in the jar next to the item they wish to win. This way a person won't win something they don't want.

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### Maine Alpaca Open Farm Weekend

The only weekend without a major "alpaca" conflict is October 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. This is 2 weeks after NECC.

Cindy Mingle asked for a show of hands to accept this date. 17 were in favor with 1 opposed.

### New Business

Raini Blowers announced that she will be hosting 3 – 5 Mallon Method Training Clinics at Raini Ridge Farm in Palermo. Becky Smith will conduct the clinics.

The schedule is as follows:

April 30 and May 1 – General Mallon Training

June 25<sup>th</sup> – Training for children

Aug. or Sept – a session for vet covering the handling and assessing health issues in camelids

Another may be scheduled for owners to bring a "problem" animal to train with.

*The meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.*

Speaker of the Day was Christine Maccchi Director of Maine Fiberarts. Christine gave us a history of her involvement with Maine's fiber artists. She told us of Maine Fiberarts accomplishments and plans for the future. In 2006 she is planning a Map of Maine listing the location of fiber artists and fiber farms. In 2007 there will be another State of Fiber booklet produced.