

Membership Meeting

June 27, 2004, 11:00 a.m.

Maple Hill Farm B&B

Hallowell, ME

Present: Androscoggin Acres Alpacas, Jeff Erikson; Alpacas @ Choice View Farm, Anita Cooper, Colonial Thyme Alpacas, Wendy Eaton; Fiber Fields Alpaca Farm, Dawn Brooker; Friendly Acres Farm, Kathy Belisle; Gentle Blessings Farm, Elizabeth Badorek; Half Horse Farm, Paul and Tammy Cheney; Indian Ridge Alpaca Farm, Pat and Bob Welles; Kindred Camelid, Kate and Kylie Martin; Lakeside Alpaca Farm, Frank and Geri Gabriel; Longmeadow Farm Alpacas, Pam Harwood; Midcoast Fiber Mill,! Joe Gabriel; Mountain Brook Farm, Cindy Mingle; New Aim Farm, Al Maloney and Nancy Williams; Pamelamas, Pam Drew; Raini Ridge Farm, Lorraine Blowers and James Perry; Royal River Alpaca Farm, Claudia Raessler

Lunch served at 11:00 a.m.

Meeting called to order by Dawn Brooker at 11:40 a.m. and a quorum attendance was determined.

Old Business

1. Secretary's Minutes: May meeting minutes accepted
2. Treasurer's Report accepted
 - a. \$3217.47 paid to LaRue Johnson
 - b. Additional \$4.75 paid out for Fiber Frolic Raffle
 - c. \$859.50 now in the Vet Education Fund
 - d. Current balance \$2681.00
3. Committee Reports

a. Education Committee: Becky Smith will speak after the next meeting about animal training (Mallon). The November meeting speaker will be a CPA to discuss taxes and financial matters to keep in mind. A representative from the Dept. of Agriculture will address the membership in early 2005 regarding marketing options in the State of Maine. Members are encouraged to continue offering their ideas for future speakers.

b. Marketing Committee: Members should complete the marketing survey if not already done. So far 16 out of 44 responses have been received. These respondents indicated that their farms are 1) had animals/end products to sell, 2) operated as ½ breeding/1/2 agistment entities, and 3) wanted marketing leverage on the web, with brochures, and with integrated sales lists to promote different parts of business and events.

i.

Those present unanimously approved the use of the existing marketing budget to be used for the development of the association's "look and feel", the branding logo, phrases, colors, signs and overall image to be applied to all printed media from the association. It is important to develop and consistently use association identification in addition to carefully maintaining the individual identities of each farm.

ii.

The first project using this look and feel will be a brochure of some sort to advertise Open Farm Day. Suggestions included a tri-fold with room for individual farm stamps/business cards and/or "rack cards". It was suggested that more than one brochure may be necessary, one of a more generic format that directs people to the website which in turn will direct people to individual farms, and another brochure for the tourist-type customer to be picked up at information centers.

iii.

Jon West was suggested to print, since it would be using someone/resources within the camelid community. The association will always attempt to employ the talents of association members first and the camelid community of Maine next whenever services are competitively priced. Please e-mail Claudia Raessler with any suggestions regarding individuals and ideas to work with.

iv.

Website leverage was the #1 concern.

v. !

The marketing committee was instructed to develop a plan of action for rest of 2004 to present to the membership.

c. Website Committee: It was discussed that a specific member should become a director of the website in order to ensure continued up-to-date information, logos, etc. If members have any pictures of barns, fences, fleece, or other items of interest (and of

course alpacas) please consider submitting them for consideration for the website. All photos should be free of farm names and other identifying words/logos so they can be used in a “generic” format suitable to represent all members of MAA.

d. FAME Committee: This committee is to work with the MLLA (Maine Llama Association) committee to address the vet shortage in Maine and bring it to the attention of FAME (Finance Authority of Maine). A head of the committee needs to be appointed to facilitate writing of a joint letter.

4. NMAA: Discussion with NMAA members indicated that the group is not in competition with MAA. Some people are members of both groups. This group was set up as a tool to deal with the special marketing needs of the northern part of the state.

5. Mission Statement: The mission statement was unanimously approved.

The mission of the Maine Alpaca Association is: To provide support for the alpaca owners, breeders and enthusiasts of Maine through education, camaraderie and cooperative marketing efforts. To educate the public about alpacas, their fiber and the many advantages of operating sustainable alpaca farms and fiber operations.

New Business

1. SART: Al Maloney and Anita Cooper participated in a planning seminar for the State Animal Rescue Team. Maine is complying with a mandate to develop plans for animal rescue to be part of the Emergency Management system. This system will provide information concerning animal needs, rights, available local expertise and needed equipment/shelter/etc. and disposal needs/requirements. The SART steering committee needs livestock owners and groups to work from the “bottom up” in developing plans to become the basis for the statewide system without any one owner or group becoming a “lone ranger”. It is to the benefit of the membership to help develop a plan and volunteer as field agents to ensure the safety of alpacas in case of natural disasters, accidents, and disease outbreaks.

a. MAA will set up a committee to begin development of an alpaca rescue system within the state.

b. Even before the state system is in place, it was agreed that some sort of calling tree for assistance should be developed.

c. Since many emergencies are events such as accidents (vehicular) or other event in which owners are or become unable to speak for their animals due their personal injury or absence, it is important to develop personal plans to be carried on trips. The committee will set up guidelines to assist members in developing such plans.

2. Vet Ed Fund: The BOD determines the distribution of funds up to \$200.00 per requesting party while keeping in mind regional needs and retaining part of the current year's budget amount for future seed money. Eligibility criteria for consideration of funding include a) must be a camelid vet currently practicing in Maine, must be sponsored by a member of MAA to be considered for funding, and 3) funds must be used for classes/education, not towards equipment. The BOD welcomes the solicitation by members on behalf of their vets.

a. Dr. Dale Allarding in Windsor is the first vet in Maine to be approved for \$200.00 assistance from the MAA Vet Ed Fund.

b. The association needs to continue increasing funds through raffles and other venues at NECC, Fryeburg Fair Fiber tent, Common Ground (as permitted), GALA, the November Spin-off, Open Farm days, Spin & Spa, etc. Large and small ticket items including hand made items, Kubota mule/gator should be considered. Members are encouraged to offer ideas of ways to increase this fund. Members should sell raffle tickets from booths at fairs/shows.

3. Ian Watts Fiber Seminar: Ian Watts will be presenting a seminar on July 10 & 11 at Royal River Farm in Yarmouth. He will discuss husbandry, pasture management, economy of breeding, knitting, felting, skirting, and other related topics. A lobster dinner will be served Saturday night. The Raesslers have offered to give 20% of every MAA member's registration to the MAA Vet Ed Fund.

4. Other:

a. Next year brochures (MAA and individual farm) should be available at the MAA Fiber Frolic tent.

b. Raffle tickets are not tax-deductible as a contribution. Consult your accountant regarding whether they are deductible as a business expense in your situation.

c. It was suggested that a small % of some raffles be given to other causes such as the Cancer Foundation as a method of promotion.

d. Discussion on West Nile immunization produced commentary on whether 1) they should be done three weeks apart beginning in March before mosquitoes come out. (Estimates of \$45 for the 1st year, \$15 for subsequent yearly boosters), 2) most camelids seem resistant, and 3) some insurance won't cover death if the animal has not been immunized.

Meeting adjourned at 2:40.

The Vet from Wells did not show up due to an emergency.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Cooper, Secretary

Please send any corrections/additions to: acooper@gwi.net