

VAOBA Annual Meeting  
July 21, 2007

Meeting called to order at 3:05pm by Linda Polak.

Sue Ives was announced as new VAOBA president; thanks were given to past president.

Linda reiterated that a major priority for VAOBA was education. In the past year, VAOBA sponsored a neonatal clinic by Cheryl DeWitt at VA Tech, subsidizing the attendance of VAOBA members at a reduced cost. VT sponsored the rental of the facility. VAOBA also holds an ongoing book drive for VT – members are directed to bring their no-longer needed books and magazines to VAOBA events for donation to the vet school's library.

VAOBA board meetings are held by conference call – we have an 800 # - and meetings will be announced on the website and in the newsletter.

Another VAOBA priority is the ongoing statewide alpaca marketing effort. The first of these state-wide ads will be geared toward the fall show, will be placed into the Sept 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the Farm Journal (144,000 statewide distribution) and point to the VAOBA Fall Expo website. Thanks to Patty Fuller for her work on this ad! Future ads will be more generic towards VAOBA and be more continually running.

There are currently two separate VAOBA websites – one for VAOBA and one for the show; these are being tied together and redesigned. Mark Bisson will continue as our webmaster.

The next newsletter is currently under construction and will feature a message from the president on the front page. Members are encouraged to read the entire newsletter for information on upcoming events and opportunities.

The AOBA Affiliate Congress will be meeting next week in TN; this is a good opportunity to create and strengthen ties between the affiliates and AOBA. The major achievement of the Affiliate Congress so far has been to push AOBA to bring the breed standards issue to an up-or-down membership vote. Linda Pollack and Sue Ives are attending and will be evaluating whether the Affiliate Congress is something VAOBA should continue to attend/support.

September 29<sup>th</sup> is Alpaca Farm Day – Linda Polak, Glenda Hertless and Sue Ives collaborated on the materials needed to submit to the governor's office for the proclamation. It has been hand delivered to Governor Kaine's office and we are awaiting word. The membership will be notified once we hear back from the governor's office.

Membership Chair Hank Boyd gave a report.

VAOBA currently has 96 members in Virginia; 27 have failed to renew their memberships. Membership forms are available online at [www.vaoba.info](http://www.vaoba.info). As VAOBA is only 2 years old (and unlike many affiliates, put on a show in our first year), we really are doing very well and have a very hardworking group of people. Even so, there are currently 255 ARI herd codes in VA, so members are encouraged to promote other VA farms to join VAOBA.

Education Committee Chair Dawn Dolpp gave a report.

During last year's meeting, the membership reported education needs as being on fiber, genetics, and neonatal care. VAOBA has sponsored seminars in the past year to meet all these needs.

The neonatal clinic at VT took place this spring – thanks to Patty Fuller for taking care of most of the details for this seminar. It went off great! We will try to repeat the seminar, but the committee will need as many event dates as possible to try to avoid conflicts. VAOBA also supported the attendance of approx. 15 vet students – this hands-on experience is a great asset to our future vets.

Ian Watt gave a seminar in June to teach us about elite fleece and how we can evaluate our alpacas' fleeces to advance our breeding program. Approximately 45 people attended.

Dr. Andy Merriwether attended today's meeting and presented a seminar on genetics.

The Education Committee is currently working on seminars for the upcoming show and requests input from the membership.

Keli Herald from the Marketing Committee gave a report.

She is currently looking for marketing reps throughout the state.

Keli would like to do a fashion show in conjunction with the 2008 VAOBA show, with a focus on high-end fashion. She will be looking for models as well as donation/loans of high-end items to be featured in the show.

Another focus of marketing will be to the VT extension agents – we should encourage attendance of these folks so they will be better able to understand the needs of alpaca farmers. Additionally, we need to work more closely with the VA Agribusiness Council.

The Committee is looking for volunteers – many people are working already but they are always looking for more!

Discussion moved to the 2007 VAOBA show.

Membership assistance will be needed with the Banquet and Concessions, Educational seminars, and fleece show. (Entries for fleece show are needed!) Donations are needed for the VAOBA silent auction. Show ring volunteers are also needed.

VAOBA will be running a farm store; Catie and Gerry Dutcher are in charge of this. The emphasis of the store is VA-grown alpaca products but all farms are invited to contribute any of their alpaca inventory. Volunteers will be needed; they are trying to work out the details to take credit cards at the booth. More info will be coming on this.

Sponsorships for the show are still available both for the show and for classes.

Spin-off entries close on August 31. Members are encouraged to submit entries and are reminded to make sure that their entry makes the full 2oz submission weight!

Election results were announced:

Joanna Maas was elected the new VAOBA Secretary.

Sherry McEvoy was elected the new VAOBA Treasurer.

Keli Herald was announced the 2008 president elect.

A Certificate of Appreciation was given to Glenda Hertless as first president of VAOBA.

Sue Ives gave a report to the membership.

Sue expressed a concern with “clusters” of members in parts of the state and the concern that all parts of the state are represented on committees and in events. She proposed a plan of “districts” to mirror VT’s extension service, with the goal that each committee have a member from each district and moving events around the state so that all members may benefit from VAOBA events.

Sue also expressed her goals for VAOBA: 1) to increase overall VAOBA membership; and 2) to increase awareness of alpacas and alpaca farms in VA. More information/ “fleshing out” would come in the August newsletter.

VAOBA website will have a Members Only section and include the posting of general meeting and board meeting minutes, typically held on the second Tuesday of each month via conference call.

Mike Hertless spoke about VAOBA’s presence at the VA State Fair. The fair provides space in the McDonald building. He stated that approx. 100,000 people attend the state fair and 80% pass through the McDonald building, so it is excellent, free advertising. A farm is needed for each day of the fair, but need only come for a single day.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joanna Maas