

Virginia Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association
Monthly Board Meeting Minutes
September 7, 2009

Attendees:

Ken Crews – President
Ray Tubbs – President Elect
Fred Obenchain – Treasurer
Hank Boyd – Director at Large
Les Fuller – Director at Large
Robin Watson – Secretary

Committee Reports were submitted in writing by: Keli Harold, Judy Howe and Sue Ives.

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 pm. The minutes from the August 3rd meeting were unanimously accepted.

Treasurer's Report:

Beginning Balance: \$59,138.98
Available Balance: \$61,928.50

Fred reported that show expenditures were being made from the show account while routine expenses such as the newsletter and the Symposium were being made from our regular account. Ray moved to approve the Treasurer's report, Hank seconded and it was unanimously agreed.

Committee Reports:

Youth Committee: Ray reported that the youth will be competing in the Display Presentations on Saturday, October 3rd starting around 3:30 in the afternoon at the Ablemarle County Office Building (the same place we have our annual meeting). He will be providing a meal to all that participate. Ray requested \$300 to buy pizza, drinks, and paper products for this event. Each club is providing dessert for this. Hank motioned to accept Ray's request and it was unanimously accepted. The 4-H clubs are going to be available on Friday to help farms unload their animals at the show. All the clubs are very excited about the EXPO. Two other extension agents say they have other farms interested in starting 4-H clubs. That would make 6 clubs by November. Fred reported that they have 19 new members in their 4-H club. Ray's report was accepted and unanimously agreed upon.

Education Committee: No report submitted (need Volunteers).

Fiber Committee: No report submitted (need Volunteers).

Industry Relations: (Additional Volunteers welcome). Keli reported that September 26th and 27th have been declared Virginia Alpaca Farm Days by Governor Tim Kaine. She submitted the necessary information for the declaration over the summer and received the official declaration

in the mail with the Governor's seal last week. She would like to create a Constant Contact email to distribute to the VAOBA membership advising of the declaration and work with VAOBA President Ken Crews to provide marketing and press for those farms that will be hosting events for Virginia Alpaca Farm Days.

Keli was given the task to recruit 2 new members for the Industry Relations committee. Ray accepted the Industry Relations report, Les seconded and all were in favor.

Marketing: No report submitted (need Volunteers).

Membership: No updates (Additional Volunteers welcome).

Newsletter: Ray reported that he sent out 40 reminders for members to renew their membership.

Show Committee: Ray reported that there will be more performance entries coming. Fred reported that the llama people are not coming back and that there may be one more platinum sponsorship for the show. He was approached by Light Livestock to be an exclusive equipment dealer. Les asked if vendors had this agreement at other shows. Fred did not think we should do this. Hank will be setting up panels downstairs and has a signed bid and contract with Judy. Light Livestock should be asked not to bring any panels but can sell all their other products. Embroidery people wanted to be downstairs where the alpacas are walking by but there is no electricity so they were told they could not do that. Vendors need to be located in the mezzanine by the food. The show manager should have authority over this but the Board of Directors felt that the members should be aware of the situation.

Judy reported that registration continues to go slowly. She said we will be extending registration past September 10th but asked that if anyone wants to be in the program, they need to be registered and get ads to Fred by September 15th. She said we have cut a lot of costs to the bone, but unless we get a lot of folks registering late, we will probably be in the RED on this show. She felt it was good we had a healthy balance in the bank. Judy does not think we could have anticipated this, and although it will be a smaller show, she felt it should be just as nice as last year. She thinks all the shows are having the same problem.

We need volunteers as usual. Debbie McLeish should be starting her phoning around soon.

Hank would like some assistance with getting donations for the silent auction. It would be a shame to miss this opportunity to get some extra money in. If anyone has a well known herdsire, they should be encouraged to put him in the show.

Judy felt that as soon as the show is over, we need to talk about whether we want to continue at this venue for next year. She thought we could do a small show at the State Fairgrounds, or look for still another place. Ray saw the State Fairgrounds and thought it could only accommodate a Level IV sized show. Fred wondered how many stalls there are. He thought we could limit the number of stalls per farm and raise the stall fee, which would give us a chance to grow again. Hank will be heading over to the Fairgrounds later this month and will check out the facility. He felt we should attract VMI parents to the VAOBA show by putting some signs out. Sue said the

State Fairgrounds would be more expensive, but might attract more farms. We should also think about whether this date is good because the northern and Ohio farms have some problem with late shearing and making the 2 inches fleece length for halter. Fred wondered if there was a date conflict for using the Fairgrounds. Les was concerned about the cost per stall.

Sue reported that using the new show software is somewhat of a challenge. She is somewhat concerned it could be part of the problem. She had a few calls this week asking where the forms are but those people have since registered so all is well in that regard. She wonders how many haven't called. She has spoken with the programmer when she gets feedback from people and he pretty much wishes they (AOBA - past board and show administrators) had hooked him up with people who actually run shows from the get-go. Eventually it should be okay.

Reports are still not pulling with all of the information that we would like and need from the budget standpoint. She is keeping track of the actual registrations once they get mailed in with the checks. She is happy to report that the mail has brought entries every day this week - not many but some each day.

One observation that she made is that while people seem to be cutting back on the numbers, they are still supporting the show. An example is that four now have entered one alpaca, are sharing stalls with others and taking the member discount.

As of September 3, 2009:

- 1 Fiber Arts entry
- 22 Fleece Entries
- 136 Alpaca Entries
- 18 Performance Entries
- 3 Herdsire Showcase Entries
- 68 Stalls
- 11 Dinners (adult)
- 3 Dinners (child)

The Show Committee report was approved and accepted by all.

Action Items from Previous Meetings:

Virginia's Finest: The Executive Committee had a historical review of the Virginia's Finest Program. It was motioned and approved by all for BJ Ellis to chair the fiber committee. She was also assigned the task to recruit 2 new members, possibly Tanya Urban and Judy Shroeder. Both the Industry Relations and Fiber Committees were assigned the task of developing a formal plan of action to address the Virginia's Finest program and give a report at the November 2nd meeting. It was motioned and all were in favor.

Student Design: Fred reported that BJ talked to art school in Washington, with a branch in Fairfax, VA., as well as to Ruth Fuqua about a modified design program for the 4-H clubs so they might compete in a junior division of the Fiber to Fashion contest. Ken motioned to have the student designs handled by the Fiber Committee, all were in favor.

Discussion and comments on the feasibility of VAOBA marketing for its members (providing a sales page on the VAOBA website so that our members can sell their products and livestock.):

Fred talked about members pulling fiber together into grades and making it into yarn. A Maryland group makes and sells product and after costs, the balance goes to the membership. Pennsylvania has nice yarn as a state product, equivalent to Virginia's Finest. Ken saw that out west a group was selling alpacas as part of their website. Fred felt that looked as though as a group we were going out of business, distressed prices. Les said that it is not our business to generate commerce, and wondered what were the tax implications of doing that. He thought that could cause some potential problems and felt there were other ways to help members. Fred thought maybe we could start a Virginia Co-Op and point farms to this instead. Ken thought the marketing focus was to direct people to the VAOBA website to find other farms.

New Business:

Agribusiness: Virginia Agribusiness Council Membership Renewal. (Fee \$550.00) Fred was concerned about the cost and suggested we hold off until we see what our income is from the show.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Watson
Secretary 2009-2010