

Virginia Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association
Monthly Board Meeting Minutes
August 2, 2010

Attendees:

Sue Ives – President
Tonya Urban, President Elect
Russ Pond – Treasurer
Hank Boyd – Director at Large
Donna Higgason – Director at Large
Robin Watson – Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 7:37 pm.

Minutes from meeting of July 12th, 2010 and the 2010 Annual Meeting Minutes were approved.

First Order of Business: Appoint Director to take the place of the Past President term of one year: The Board went into Executive Session for discussion at 7:42 pm. Out of Executive Session at: 7:53 pm. Sue motioned to appoint Marian Holmes to Director at Large position and the motion was carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report:

Beginning Balance: \$43,673.01
Available Balance: \$41,934.12

Russ will be working to put all information into QuickBooks Pro software. He has received 6 new memberships. Hank motioned to accept the Treasurer's Report, Sue seconded and all agreed.

Committee Reports:

Youth Committee: (No report – volunteers needed).

Education Committee: Below is the outline the education committee Joanie Pond and Pat Hamilton have submitted of the potential seminars and education activities considered for delivery in the coming year. This will be updated frequently as the membership is surveyed and additional educational activities are planned.

We're anxious to hear the feedback from the board meeting and how we may go forward.

THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE REQUESTS THE VAOBA BOARD CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. Survey the VAOBA membership with list of our current planned seminars (both the VAOBA mini-series and the 6 we've identified) asking them to prioritize (1 being the most important and 6 being the least) with the additional request to provide input on other educational sessions they would be interested in.

2. Request from VAOBA webmaster is to set up a best practices area where we could post docs - we can directly link some of the great articles from the ARI Academy site <http://www.alpacaacademy.com/>

3. Provide some 'post fiber symposium' highlights. Make that a contribution to the website under our 'best practices' area. Interview attendees and develop and submit a 'key findings' document.

4. I'll set up a visit to VA State University's Camelid program for the education committee to learn more about what they're working on and how we might use the facility within the education committee's responsibilities.

5. I would like to suggest we talk with Judy Howe about adding one more element of 'education' for the VAOBA show - if we could get each of the attending judges to agree to set aside an hour each day to give people 10 minutes for \$10.00 to give a personal evaluation of that single animal - not judged against any other. Someone mentioned VAOBA did this one year and it was a huge success. I would personally love to do so - if the judges have the time. we would have them register for that and pay up front to ensure we don't waste judges time - judges get the money, not VAOBA. Let me know what you think.

6. Below are our six potential seminar topics. (Non-VAOBA Show)

Pat as lead:

Hay and Feed - How it affects your animal's fiber?

SHOWING ALPACAS - How to show and win - what are the judges looking for?

THE MILL - now I have this fleece - what should I do with it?

Joanie as lead:

Fiber Analysis Project Update from VA State University and Texas A&M AgriLife Research (EPDs, Histograms, Emerging Alternative Measurement technologies)

Neonatal Seminar - What to expect when the cria is coming and once it's on the ground (location options: Dr Karen Baum, VA Tech and potentially VA State University)

Parasites - internal and external nuisances and dangers and how to treat each (VA Tech and VA State University)

Seminar Steps (please check these and add what I've missed!)

Location

-multiple to cover geography

-cost

-access/parking/other amenities

Presenter

-cost (including travel if necessary)

-Presentation - what form? power point, printed, etc?

Staging

- projector and laptop if necessary
- seating
- lighting
- refreshments
- handouts
- attendee materials required?

Attendance

- VAOBA membership email and newsletter
- location promotion for local awareness
- public service announcements

Registration

- cost?
- collection prior to and at the door
- confirmations and reg lists

Evaluations

- printed and as follow up emails

Board Discussion: Tonya asked if VAOBA has an education budget. Sue stated that VAOBA does not have a specific budget for education although it is the affiliate's goal to educate its members. The Board thought it was a good idea to have the education committee send out an email to survey the membership about what seminars they would like to have for next year. Action items to include: have Janet set up an education page on the website, post educational opportunities and articles on the website and in the newsletter. After acquiring information from our membership the education committee can begin planning seminars for next year along with - who, when, where held, cost for speakers, cost per member and non-members. Robin thought it was great to have an education committee again. Hank accepted the education committee's report, Donna seconded and all agreed.

Fiber Committee: Fiber Committee Report for VAOA, Submitted August 1, 2010 by B-J Ellis:

In June, we hosted the National Alpaca Fiber Symposium in Richmond, VA. Our display of fiber arts remained up through the whole conference. It attracted a lot of attention.

At the June VAOBA business meeting,

1. our annual report was shared and discussed with all in attendance.
2. we welcomed the new Education Committee to overlap and assist the Fiber Committee with several projects: (1) footwork involved in reaching our VA-college students to learn about alpaca and enter in the Aoba fiber arts competitions (fashion design as well as textile design). (2) Sorting workshops.

In July, we started to prioritize a work-list of fiber issues that needed our attention.

Several of our VAOBA members helped with the Continental Fiber Show of 2010.

Status of Virginia's Finest Standards: Since VDACS had a special meeting in July, we are expecting to hear from them any day, now. We will be sending out word when the amended standards are official; farmers and artisans can apply for VA Finest and be in the state (VDAC for alpaca fiber) directory.

Sue accepted the fiber committee report, Hank seconded and all agreed.

Industry Relations: The following report was submitted by John Ferrante, July 25, 2010: The attached draft Brochure is intended to be sent to VA government officials to provide information concerning the status of the alpaca industry in Virginia. It is included here to solicit the help of VAOBA Board members and the membership in general. The format of the communication is Questions and Answers that address the more important descriptors of the VA alpaca industry.

Government officials have little time to wade through long and detailed descriptive information, thus the Q&A format that is informative and focuses their attention on the message - How Can They Help!

I have included a preliminary list of questions for your perusal and comment. I am also looking for additional questions to choose from and to make a final selection ASAP. Once the final selection is made I will then formulate the most informative (and brief) answer to each.

That is where everyone can contribute. I will need supporting information to incorporate in all the answers. The following is a list of preliminary questions: Please note that I am limited in the number that can be included so as you provide feedback please indicate a high, medium or low priority for inclusion.

Questions (not in any particular order):

- WHAT IS AN ALPACA? (I will include Family, size, breeding info., etc.)
- WHERE DO THEY COME FROM? (The origin of alpacas is important to understanding the animal itself)
- IS THE ALPACA INDUSTRY VIABLE AND SUSTAINABLE IN THE US? (This is probably the question that will be targeted most by recipients. They will not want to support an industry that is not sustainable or with little potential for growth in VA)
- WHAT ARE THEY USED FOR (WHAT IS THE PRODUCT OF THE ALPACA INDUSTRY)? (I will include fiber statistics for VA as the primary product + any other folks consider important)
- HOW MANY ALPACA FARMS AND ALPACAS ARE IN VA? (I need accurate numbers here)
- HOW DOES THE ALPACA INDUSTRY FIT IN AND SUPPORT THE VA AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY? (It would be nice to have some financial statistics here, not only for alpacas themselves but also how alpaca farms support their local communities and businesses throughout VA)

- WHAT IS VAOBA AND WHAT DOES IT DO FOR THE VA ALPACA INDUSTRY? (I will include Officers and Board of Directors + telephone numbers for the primary contact people)
- HOW CAN VA STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS AND REPRESENTATIVES HELP PROMOTE THE VA ALPACA INDUSTRY and WHO DO I CONTACT? (Suggestions are needed here so I can identify specific actions that can be taken).

These are some questions (plus their answers) that I believe are pertinent to educating VA officials and for creating opportunities to solicit their assistance and support. Some are incorporated in the draft fact sheet attached, undoubtedly there are others. I would like some feedback from as many VAOBA members as possible because this is all our industry and we should have an opportunity to contribute. I would like to finalize the material as soon as possible so we can have it printed and distributed.

We will also need to create a list of potential recipient types - any suggestions? If anyone has questions please feel free to contact me. My e-mail is always open for suggestions and you can call me at 540-587-6766 (home and office) or 540-525-0965 (Blackberry).

John G. Ferrante - JFerra745@aol.com

Board Discussion: The industry relations brochure was seen at the annual meeting and will appear in the newsletter for member contribution. Hank motioned to accept the industry relations report, Donna seconded and everyone agreed.

Marketing: (No report - need volunteers).

Donna asked what would be the duties for the marketing committee. Sue stated that the marketing committee was intended to help market VAOBA and the benefits of becoming a member, including helping with seminars to help farms learn to market themselves. Hank reminded that we need to get the governor of Virginia to approve National Alpaca Farm Day again this year.

Membership: The following report was submitted by Hank:

Thus far, there are 52 members who have renewed for the coming year. I have begun making phone calls from our prior membership lists to encourage renewals, and have reached or left messages for approximately 40 farms to date. The ones that I have reached have said they were busy, forgot and would renew - no one has said they were not renewing. I'm continuing through the list. Tonya motioned to accept the membership committee report, Donna seconded and all agreed.

Newsletter: The VAOBA newsletter is distributed quarterly. Sue would like to see Board participation in the newsletter. New membership applications need to go to Hank first since he is the Membership Committee Chair. Then Hank will let Russ know about new membership and Russ will maintain the membership list. Sue will make sure that the new membership form that is on the VAOBA website has current contact information.

VAOBA Expo Show Report: 2010 VAOBA Expo Coming up SOON (October 16-17) by Judy Howe, Expo Coordinator

Preparations for our 5th Annual VAOBA Alpaca Expo are almost complete. We anticipate another great show this year and hope that with the economy coming around a bit, that we'll grow in size. Details regarding the show are posted and being updated weekly on the show website www.vaobaexpo.com. Please check the website often for the latest information. Our registration software this year will NOT be the same as last year, but will be the registration website you are most familiar with. We are hoping to have the credit card payment option available. REGISTRATION WILL OPEN IN EARLY TO MID-AUGUST. We will announce the opening and give reminders via email.

Here are some things to expect this year:

Herdsire Breeding Auction & Fashion Show: This new event is still in the planning stages. We are intending to have an auction of breedings to some of the finest males available. This will occur on Saturday night instead of the dinner. Food will be available as well as a cash bar. Some lovely alpaca fashion items will also be displayed as well as auctioned off. Proceeds of the auction will go to education and research. So bring your checkbooks and bid often, I certainly will...

Judge's Choice: An opportunity to see which alpaca in the show is judged best overall. This is a competition among the champions selected over the course of the weekend (male/female/huacaya and suri). Minimum criteria are 400 huacaya and 150 suri registered animals plus 6 championships in each. So exhibitors, bring lots of animals, and get your fellow owners and breeders to come too.

Special Fleece Awards: When you're signing up for halter, don't forget to sign up your fleeces as well, especially if you didn't make it in time for the Spin Off competition. Have your full fleece judged this fall, and then send it to Spin Offs in the spring. The fleece show will have the following special awards: 'Best Prepared Fleece', 'Judge's Choice', 'Best Hand', 'Best Brightness – Huacaya', 'Best Luster – Suri', 'Best Crimp – Huacaya', and 'Best Lock Formation – Suri'.

Seminars: Some of the many seminars to be offered include: Alpacas 101 by Sandra Buckery, Fleece Seminar by Mary Kearney, Estimated Progeny Differences: A Breeder's Tool by Darby Vannier, ARI's Executive Director, Report on the recent Camelid Conference by Virginia Tech Vets, and perhaps more. See the website in August/September for a full listing.

Sponsorships: The sponsorship opportunities are very good this year. The benefits are the same as last year, but the prices (especially for Platinum) have been reduced. This offers a great opportunity to get your farm visibility and to help your affiliate cover the cost of the show. We will also accept sponsorships from 'marketing groups' of farms, so pool your resources and use this great marketing opportunity to promote your group and individual farms. So please consider your sponsorship TODAY! Thank you to our sponsors who have signed up so far – we really appreciate you.

Vendors: We have a small group of vendors already signed up, along with corporate sponsors. We are expecting quite a few more and encourage you to get those applications in soon. The earlier the application, the better your location!

VAOBA store: We will be having a 'store' again for farms. Contact Brenda Breedlove or see our website for details. We're going to try to get some of those VMI parents to come to the show and buy holiday gifts from our store and vendors.

Accommodations: We blocked 140 rooms, most of them in Lexington. See our website for the names of the hotels, phone numbers and their price per night. Please remember to ask for the "VA Alpaca Expo" block of rooms to get the best price.

Board Discussion: Tonya talked to Joe and we have 12-15 herdsires lined up already, the goal would be to have 20. There are 4 platinum sponsors and we need 6 more. Hank asked whether there were certain criteria a herdsire had to meet to be entered. There seemed to be some confusion over this - Tonya said there was not a standard however they need to be a first place ribbon winner, Sue added that they are looking for proven males, no show record was necessary but they needed to have excellent fiber statistics. Hank was going to give Glenstone Farm a call to see if they had any interest in donating a male, since they donated a male last year. Sue thought it would be a good idea to find a suri farm to do the same – possibly contact Paige Nitterhouse. The VAOBA show is up against the Vermont show this year – they are both on the same weekend. Hank asked where VAOBA will be holding the show next year. Sue thought that maybe phase 3 at the State Fair would be done so we could all be under one roof. We will discuss the show venue at our next meeting. Donna accepted the show report, Hank seconded and everyone agreed.

Website: Sue reported that Janet our webmaster will be given new board member updates and committee updates to post on the website. All members that did not renew will have their information removed from the website. Sue asked Hank whether he wanted to create an email to current members to send out this info and Hank replied that he would work on an email and get back to Sue with the information. He wanted to make sure that members knew they were allowed to have a 200 word write up about their farm on the website. Sue said that if no information was submitted, that Janet was pulling information from each farm's website to include on the VAOBA website.

Old Business Not Covered Within Committee Reports:

Public Comment Period for Importation Regulations: Sue stated that the Virginia Register comes out every 2 weeks on Mondays. There is a public comment period coming up regarding changing the importation laws for bringing alpacas into the state of Virginia for shows, etc. We would like to eliminate the blue tongue testing and allow alpacas from TB and Brucellosis free states to come into Virginia without additional testing. This would help with getting out of state exhibitors for the VAOBA show. Sue will send out an email when the comment period opens up. Donna thought this information should be included in the newsletter and also send out an email to the membership to try to get members involved.

Possible Appointment of Liaisons to VA Higher Education: At the last meeting, there was a suggestion to name Patty Fuller as a liaison to VA Tech, specifically the Virginia Maryland Medical College. This was tabled at that meeting so there could be discussion amongst the new

Board members. The Board decided to form a Liaison Committee and Patty was appointed Liaison to VA Tech. Sue suggested that this idea be expanded to include liaisons to other higher education venues that we could find a reason to tie in with; such as the design schools for the AOBA SDC; VSU which has the grant to study the parasite issues in the state. Donna and Tonya decided they would put something together for the next newsletter. Hank will have Linda call Donna and Tonya to discuss the student design. Participation by other members with connections to colleges are welcomed and it does not have to be health/vet related, it can be design schools (SDC), agricultural programs, pasture management, etc.

New Business:

Affiliate Report: Sue stated that the affiliate report is ready to go. She will send it in and if we are approved, we could receive grant money. VAOBA did receive grant money from AOBA in 2006 and 2007.

Bylaws: Sue asked everyone to go over the Bylaws for discussion at the next meeting.

The Green Project: Teri Phipps has requested help with signage and printing to create a display for the State Fair that can also be used for the VAOBA Expo. This display will be setup in the Commonwealth Hall at the State Fair. The concept of the display is to educate: alpacas are a an earth friendly livestock – easy on the land, oil spill demo of alpaca booms to show environmental usage of fiber, fashion show, etc. Individual farms would not be promoted, Russ thought if VAOBA was going to help pay for the display that the signage should include verbiage such as “Sponsored by VAOBA”. Hank thought that Teri would not have a problem with that. The request was for \$650 but Hank felt we should extend that to \$1,000. He brought forward the fact that Terri has spent a lot of her own money to help promote the alpaca industry at the State Fair, how educational this could be to the thousands of people that attend the Fair each year. Sue thought the signage could also possibly be used at the Virginia Classic show. Donna motioned that we donate up to \$1,000 for The Green Project with the understanding that VAOBA will be listed as co-sponsor and that the display would also be used at the VAOBA Expo and everyone agreed.

Education of State Agencies with respect to animal neglect and abuse cases needed

immediately: Sue reported that a situation currently exists in Chesterfield County involving a non-member farm who as of this date still has a herd of unshorn alpacas. Although Animal Control was called and made a visit once in June, they will not return because there is nothing in the statutes of Chesterfield County that states these people are breaking a law. Who monitors livestock abuse? FYI, several attempts have been made by member farms as well as non-member farms to offer assistance to these people. They have either been ignored or rebuked with the owner stating they were trying to steal her alpacas. In this case it most probably has to play out however it will unfortunately since people have to consider they could be sued and accused of interfering. VAOBA as an association cannot act but we can undertake a joint project between the Government & Industry Relations and Education Committees to educate the general public, veterinarians, and animal control agencies within the Sheriff Departments in each county on what the Minimum Standards of Care for camelids are.

See: www.camelidcare.info/MinimumStandards.htm . Perhaps VAOBA can have this booklet printed up at Staples or Kinko’s to have a generous supply on hand at the State Fair as well as for distribution to vets and animal control.

Sue has tabled this topic to be discussed again at our next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Watson
Secretary 2010-2011