

# Leadership Council Agenda

May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017

## MINUTES



### **Hosts:**

Norm Johnson, *President*

### **Attendees:**

AOA Affiliate Presidents

### **AOA Operations Leadership:**

Bud Synhorst, *AOA Executive Director*

Deb Hill, *Alpacas Magazine Editor*

Cindy Berman-Morrow, *AOA Public Relations*

Margie Ault, *Show & Marketing Division*

*Administrator*

Dan Huntley, *Customer Service Manager*

Becky Farley, *Conference Manager*

De Monson, *IT Manager*

### **1.1 Roll Call** – Dan Huntley

Affiliates in attendance:

The Suri Network

Alpaca Breeders of the Rockies

CABA

CALPACA

Kentucky Alpaca Association

North Sound Alpaca Association

Great Lakes Alpaca Association

Alpaca Association of Western Washington

Maryland Alpaca Breeders Association

MAPACA

TXOLAN

Our apologies if we have missed anyone.

### **2.1 Meeting Opening** – Norm Johnson

Norm opened meeting, welcoming everyone to the call. He explained how important it is to keep AOA Affiliates up to date on current goings on.

### **3.1 Outlook / General Update** – Bud Synhorst

Bud is currently in Ohio, touring AOA's DNA testing laboratory, DDC. Bud discussed the issues with Sen. Jeff Flake (AZ) and AOA's measured response. AOA was able to get ahead of the media and issue press releases in response. CBS News picked up the story and sent a crew to Nebraska to film at an alpaca farm, interview Bud and some alpaca owners. The story was to have aired 2 weeks ago, but as of yet has not been released.

American Farmer on RFD-TV has begun working with AOA on a project. More information will be coming over the next several weeks and months.

The AOA election is underway. The office has thus far received positive feedback about the ease of our online voting process. We have received one or two questions, which were able to be quickly answered.

We continue to make progress on the AOA Fleece Conference in Sacramento. Planning is underway.

### **3.2 Show System Update** – Bud Synhorst (for Margie Ault, absent)

Last weekend 2017 spring shows concluded and summer and fall shows are now gearing up. If your affiliate has a 2017 fall show or a 2018 spring show planned – please make sure to get the show application to Margie so she can work to get the show advertised on the show locator on [alpaca.info.com](http://alpaca.info.com). If your show is planning on the

walking fleece competition – that will be found on the fleece application. Overall Spring show numbers have increased over last year – a trend we hope to see carry on into the fall.

Remember to contact Cindy for ideas on drawing in the public to your shows. Get your community excited about alpaca events by trying something new. As you come up with ideas – please share them with the show office and we will in turn share them with other shows. This year nationals did an alpaca selfie booth – public loved it – shared their pics all over social media. Feel free to give Margie a call if you need to discuss competition schedules as one of the show weekend goals is to create a schedule that works best for exhibitors, judges, and show personnel. Show door is always open to support your show.

### **3.3 Registration / Transfer / Support Hot Topics – Dan Huntley**

Make sure that when transferring alpacas that the seller of the alpaca is the one listed on the certificate. This will help save time and money in cases where AOA and the buyer have to search for the correct owner to give signatures, and/or to correct the transfer record to include the seller.

This also helps registrations go smoothly, since AOA needs the correct owners-of-record on file at times of conception and birth (and now, with AI/ET, at times of sample collection/embryo transfer). Pausing the registration progress to track down the correct owner takes time and resources from AOA and the registering owner.

It's important for AOA, the Affiliates, and alpaca owners in general, to create a good first impression with the new farms/owners/buyers. It's important to establish a mentor relationship with people new to the industry because we want their experience registering and transferring alpacas (especially the first time!) to go as smoothly as possible, and that starts with sellers/buyers ensuring the information on the certificates is correct, including the name(s) of the registered owners.

Also, we took a call from a breeder upset with AOA over the number of DNA tests we required to complete her cria registration. Without going into specifics, AOA had to verify the identity of the sire; once complete, there came a question as to whether the female purchased was the one she got papers for. A new DNA test verified the dam's identity, but the cria still failed to qualify. We requested a new sample from the cria, which proved that the cria's original sample came from a different alpaca. The case was solved, but we had to follow the process of elimination to get to the solution.

Some cases take specific steps to solve, like peeling back an onion, to get to the truth. AOA understands that new blood is not cheap or easy; it costs time, vet visits, money, stress on the animal, etc. AOA does not take lightly the need for new blood and will only request it when we absolutely need it to solve your registration mysteries.

In fact, the number of requests for DNA has dropped significantly over the last year as science and technology continues to improve. In most cases, registrations fail because we are given the wrong blood on the card, or the wrong parents on the application. And, more good news, even these cases have declined as members' record-keeping appears to be getting even better.

In those cases where another test may be needed, know that AOA understands the costs involved, but know also that you have an experienced staff who will work tirelessly to help solve the issue. If you or your affiliate members hear complaints of registration troubles, please have the member contact the AOA office (or Dan directly) for assistance!

### **3.4 Technology and EPD Update – De Monson**

Newest AlpacaLink was mailed to all paid members and is available online for all members in a pdf format. Encourage everyone to read through it as there are important deadlines and association information included.

EPD deadline is July 31 to get your data included in the 2017 calculation. For a dollar a test, payable to Yocom-McColl, historical test data can be included in the calculation (<http://alpacainfo.com/resources/dyn/files/579906zc3f22167/fn/historical-histogram-data-request.pdf>). Trait data can be submitted all year. The shear report guide is located online (<http://alpacainfo.com/resources/dyn/files/579908z244a0c60/fn/aoa-shear-report-guide.pdf>).

NAFD registration will open in July

Election - Voting Deadline is June 12th. All voting members will have received directions in their email this Monday. If any voting member didn't receive their instructions or are having problems, contact De at the office. All election materials and candidate statements are posted online. You can find the link on your dashboard under the Member Documents Section or go to <https://www.alpacainfo.com/members/organization/election>

The required forms for alpacas born as a result of ET or AI are now posted online on the forms page. The policies have also been updated online. Policy 05-01 and 05-02 cover ET and AI.

Photo Contest Deadline in June 30. The Judges Choice winner will be featured on this year's AOG cover and all winners will be featured in Alpacas Magazine and at the Fleece Conference.

Next rollout is scheduled for the second week in June. Among other improvements and bug fixes, two things I think members will be excited about. We are fixing the registration certificate so they are similar to the old style and more readable. And we are adding a new search feature to the show results. You will be able to search by a color group, in addition to each individual color. For example you can search for the color group Brown, and it will include all results for Light, Medium, and Dark Brown.

### **3.5. 2017 AOA Fleece Conference in Sacramento, CA – Becky Farley 2017 National Fleece Show, sponsored by Epic Alpacas, is right around the corner.**

#### **July 14-16 at the lovely Marriott Rancho Cordova - Sacramento**

Here's a few things to pass along to your members and encourage their involvement:

- Fleece Show Registration - Early Bird Extended to June 12th and General Registration until June 30
- Photo Contest open until June 30. Details at [www.alpacainfo.com/photo-contest/info](http://www.alpacainfo.com/photo-contest/info)
- Conference Attendance \$150 (including luncheon at annual meeting and reception on Saturday evening with fashion show and auction).
- Still time to become a sponsor -- until June 16th! [www.alpacainfo.com/nationals/fleece-sponsorships](http://www.alpacainfo.com/nationals/fleece-sponsorships)
- Free Alpaca Selfie booth offered for promotion to the public
- Watch the fleece judging LIVE on monitors throughout the entire judging event
- Spin-Off, Cottage Fleece, Fiber Arts displayed w/ awards presented
- Fleece to Shawl Demonstration by local artists
- FREE - One on one opportunity to meet with AOA's Public Relations Consultant, Cindy Morrow (by appt only)
- A couple of Vendor tables are still left -- great opportunity to set up wholesale accounts and for networking with attendees. [www.alpacainfo.com/nationals/fleece-vendors](http://www.alpacainfo.com/nationals/fleece-vendors)
- Meet our new executive director, Bud Synhorst
- Meet Kathy Garver of Family Affair, as well, as Celebrity Artist Dr. Nicolosi
- Hotel Group Rate still available until June 14th

Thanks to Calpaca for all of their support in planning and executing this show! It's been a joy to work with them!

### **3.6. Public Relations Update – Cindy Berman**

- National Show media relations recap
  - Great local media support and presence
  - National media included:
    - USA Today
    - MSN
    - New York Post
    - RUPTLY
  - Covered in several different markets/different states
  - Received international coverage (India Today)
  
- Response to Senator Flake's Response
  - Response was drafted and sent to the association's national and regional media contacts as well as on the wire
  - Additional negative stories were prevented or minimized
  - Positive stories continue to run
  - Washington Post responded with a story that leaned to the Senator's side but recently ran a positive story
    - Encourage affiliates and members to continue to get positive news out there and to think through reactions to media when it doesn't go in your favor. You may end up working with them in the future.
  - CBS This Morning
    - Running a story regarding Sen Flake's report. It has been delayed due to breaking news. Members will be updated via social media as we find out more information
  
- American Farmer Series
  - Great opportunity for affiliates and members to run PR campaigns to piggy back off of the coverage
  
- Assist reporter re: PCI Compliance for Growing Magazine
  - Sometimes we can get media attention through topics we don't usually discuss
  
- Assist with Regional Show PR
  - Buckeye Alpaca Show
  - GWAS
  - Southern Select
  - CABA
  - MABA Fiber Fest : Upcoming
  
- Articles for Alpacas Magazine
  - Looking for members who have worked with educational institutions
  
- 2017 AOA Fleece Conference
  - Show PR
  - Meeting with participants for individualized PR plans
  
- Thinking ahead to National Show 2018
- Researching area interests and media for pitches

### **3.7. Alpacas Magazine Update** –Deb Hill

Summer issue is underway and will be in people's mail boxes in a few weeks.

Now working on Autumn issue, deadline is July 5. Affiliate leaders are encouraged to submit information about their affiliate's activities for publication... it's good for other people who don't have affiliates to see all the activities that are going on, and it's good to show outsiders what our industry does.

Affiliates might want to consider buying gift certificates for state or federal legislators, as the more people in authority know about our industry, the harder it is for others to make unsubstantiated claims stick. We never know who reads each issue, but on the assumption these magazines are used in ways we can only guess about to promote our industry, the magazine team makes every effort to have each story told with a positive note. The publication reflects well on the U.S. alpaca industry, including affiliates.

Anyone with a story to tell is welcome to contact me: [alpacasmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:alpacasmagazine@gmail.com)

### **4.1 Contact Us** – Norm Johnson

For any questions or comments, as well as your affiliate success stories or suggestions for topics we should cover in future calls, please contact the AOA office and/or Norm Johnson.

### **4.2 Next Meeting** – Norm Johnson

The next affiliate call will take place in September.