



President's Message

~Steve McCarthy, Spruce Ridge Farm

In the past two post-Extravaganza newsletters, my "President's Message" focused on the excitement and success of the Extravaganza. Unfortunately, this Extravaganza had some serious problems and was not the typical Empire Alpaca Extravaganza that, over the years, we have all grown to love and enjoy. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I sincerely apologize for the problems experienced during this show.

There appears to be some confusion and misinformation about what happened, so I will try to lay it out. When you register for a show, your info goes into a "registration system" developed and maintained by Don Tompkins. The show superintendent downloads that information into his or her own "show" system – each superintendent has developed his or her own database or system. Late changes, including the color changes done at the show, are done on the show superintendent's system, not Don's. The problems we had had nothing to do with Don's system.

This year, we had a new show superintendent because Melissa Young-Crozet, our past superintendent, was due to give birth shortly before the show. The new superintendent had her own system, an Excel spreadsheet-based system that she had used at other shows. At about 4:45AM on Saturday after she had input the last of the color changes into her system, the system crashed and the data were all jumbled. Scott Young phoned Melissa and asked her to supervise the show, while the show superintendent tried to fix her system problem.

When we started the show Saturday morning, we had nothing other than the number cards the exhibitors wear in the ring! No printouts, no listing of animals, nothing! Melissa Young-Crozet and Cindy Vars got the show going literally from nothing. With the help of volunteers like Kelly Zanella, Polly Michaelis, Kevin O'Leary and Ann Merriwether who organized the halter and performance rings, we started the show. I don't know what we would have done without these super people who saw a problem and took action to resolve it. Our announcer, Jim Cobia, was crucial in getting everyone where they should be – he did a tremendous job. Thank you, Jim.

The exhibitors were absolutely sensational. People knew there was a problem that we really could do nothing about other than work through it. Thank-you so much for your patience, understanding and help to get the show running. You were great!

No sooner did I get home from the show and think all the troubles were behind us when a vet in Connecticut circulated an email saying an animal at the Empire show had BVD and anyone who was at Empire should not go to other shows and should test their herds! This was a few days before the Vermont show was scheduled to start. My phone lines were burning up! I literally had people on both home telephone lines and my cell phone at the same time asking about this. The issue was diffused – with the truth – and things calmed down. What a week that was!

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Barb Rossi ~607-387-7122
Bel Canto Farm

I hope to see you in February in Syracuse at the Symposium & Fleece Event. Again, thank all of you for your support as EAA members and for your help during the Extravaganza. Happy Holidays and have a great 2009!

An Extravaganza to Remember

~ Scott Young, Hilltop Alpacas, Extravaganza Show Coordinator

The 2008 Version of the Extravaganza is a wrap, part of EAA lore, one that will be remembered forever and one that will be a model for alpaca shows all over the country. Some have called the 2008 show the "Green Show," meaning eco-friendly. After all, no trees were injured for the sake of our show and if you could ignore all of the big diesel trucks that brought us there or the gazillion kilowatts of electric we used to run our stall fans that might very well be true. But our show this year was truly special for so many because of how our exhibitors handled what could have been a debilitating issue. Our exhibitors were amazing, staying positive, alert and motivated to make it work and for that we thank you so much. Our concerns and the post show comments proved it to be true, that the lack of a show book would be tough on everyone but especially on the first time show exhibitors who were already nervous about knowing when and where they had to be. We say this for everyone, but especially for the newbies, we are sorry we lacked that piece of the puzzle to make your time in Syracuse less stressful. That being said, you all did amazingly well. So, Thank You!

Now, there was an alpaca show that did happen that weekend, and boy did some special things happen. First and foremost, there were some incredible alpacas that showed up. The Northeast is making some of the best alpacas in the country and that showed at the Extravaganza. Almost every class placed 6 alpacas and all the alpacas in the class were so close the judges had some really tough decisions to make. What spectacular alpacas everyone brought. The performance ring was exciting and entertaining again. For those of you that stopped by and watched what happens in that ring you understand why it is a highlight of the Extravaganza. We had 44 kids this year participate with huge smiles and a determined state of mind, it was awesome. We also had the first Halter Show Judge's Choice in AOBA Show System history and there was much excitement in the building as a black male and a brown female were selected for those honors by the judges. The Saturday night cocktail party was new this year and I think folks really liked the opportunity to unwind with their new and old friends whether it was for 5 minutes or a couple of hours, I believe it will become an Extravaganza ritual.



Our Volunteers are what makes the Extravaganza so special for me each year. From the leaders of the various sections of our show, to each of you who donate unselfishly to make sure it goes off without a hitch. About 100 people volunteer each year and so many more ask to help and I just don't have any room in the schedule but we really appreciate your generosity and thank you so much. The show can't run without you and you make it pleasant for all of our exhibitors so again, thank you.

Now on to our Sponsors who always show up in droves and are so important to EAA, an organization that does so much, but without you would not be able to do so. That sponsorship money allows us to do so many of the little things that make the Extravaganza, such as the Friday night pizza, the Saturday cocktail party, the coffee guy, the decorations, and the gifts. You are truly appreciated and a tremendous thank you goes out to you all. Please refer to the lists in our September newsletter and on our website and be sure to let our sponsors know how much we all appreciate their support!

2008 is a wrap and 2009 planning is well under way which we will keep you updated on as we go. Have a safe and joyous holiday season everyone!

Fleece & Fiber at Extravaganza 2008

~ Jeannine Anderson, Gaze Acres Alpacas

Hopefully you found your way over to the Fleece & Fiber area at the Extravaganza. For a small price – that of a banner, a folding table and a couple of chairs, a lot of good will was created.

Many of our members took advantage of the experienced, friendly and generous spinners that demonstrated their craft for us. Five women from the local guilds near Syracuse were kind enough to donate their time and talents to support our show, entertain the public and teach our members. On Saturday morning we had two spinners from the Fun Fiber Addicts



Guild and on Saturday afternoon two more spinners from the same group joined us. Sunday morning we had a member of the Golden Fleece Spinners Guild demonstrating spinning and plying. All the spinners were given a bag of alpaca roving to work with and all raved to the public about the fineness and handle of alpaca. Both guilds had a great experience and would like to join us again next year.

Other demonstrations over the weekend included, wet felting, needle felting and knitting. We had inquiries about crochet demonstrations, so anyone having expertise in crochet that would like to demonstrate next year would be welcome.



Having a location between the show rings and the product store gave us a steady flow of people. I tried to ask everyone that stopped if they had alpacas and was very pleased that the most common answer was “not yet”.

Thank you to the farms that listed fleeces for sale and displayed them at their farm displays. People did ask about raw fleece for sale and they were given the list and directed to the map of the barn. Some reported back that they did not find anyone home at their farm displays, but that they had picked up cards and planned to make contact at a later time. Thank you also for selecting such great fleeces to offer for sale. Many of them were award-winning fleeces and the AFD's were very impressive. Showing our best makes us all look good!

Empire Fleece Event One of the First of 2009

~ Scott Young, Hilltop Alpacas, Fleece Event Show Coordinator

It won't be long now for The Empire Fleece Event, one of the first fleece shows of 2009. The Empire Fleece Event will be held in conjunction with the Empire Alpaca Symposium in Syracuse, NY this year. We will again feature mail-in entries for fleece, skein and fiber arts but please note the spin-off show deadline is already past. However, you have until January 10th to get the rest of your entries registered. You can just go online at www.NYAlpacas.com to find out information about this event and register. The Empire Fleece Event is an awesome way to highlight your breeding program and your individual skills. Please consider joining us for the event, which is one of the finest educational events in the country, as well as entering your fleeces and projects.

This year Wini Labrecque will be judging the fiber arts and skeins, while Cheryl Ghely and Polly Michaelis will be evaluating the fleeces. Don't forget January 10th is the deadline. Don't miss out and I hope to see you there.

Election and By-Law Vote

~ Steve McCarthy, Spruce Ridge Farm

Barb Rossi of Bel Canto Farm and Dick McCoy of Foxrun Farms Alpacas were elected to the Empire board for three year terms, replacing Chris Gilman and John Askew. The board elected the following officers at its November meeting:

President: Steve McCarthy
Vice President: Cindy Cuykendall
Treasurer: Sue Zelazny
Secretary: Jeannine Anderson

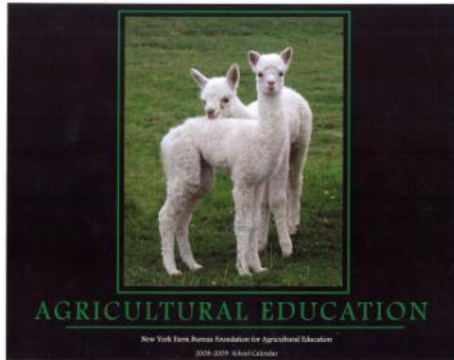
The vote to amend the bylaws to remove the requirement for a certified financial audit was approved by the membership 106 to 2.

Thank-you to all the candidates who ran and the members who voted. Welcome to Barb and Dick. Many thanks to Chris and John for their years of service on the board.

Alpacas on the Cover!

~ Steve McCarthy, Spruce Ridge Farm

The New York Farm Bureau Foundation for Agricultural Education issues a calendar each year to every third grade classroom in New York in an effort to educate children about agriculture. Alpacas are on the cover of the 2008/2009 school calendar and are the featured animal for the month of April! For each day during the month of April, there is an alpaca fact and even a few alpaca jokes. Great publicity and a good way to educate children about agriculture!



Left: 2 adorable crias on the COVER!

Below left: Mother and cria photo for April 2009

Below right: Calendar entries with alpaca facts on each day.



April 2009						ALPACAS
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>The Foundation Foundation for Agricultural Education Inc. 1000 West 10th Street Syracuse, NY 13204 Phone: 315-435-1234 Fax: 315-435-1235 Website: www.farmbureau.org</p>						
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		
<p>VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.farmbureau.org CONTACT US AT 1-800-542-9145</p>						

Symposium and Fleece Event Update

~ Steve McCarthy, Spruce Ridge Farm

By the time you receive this newsletter, registration for the Symposium will be in full swing. This should be an exciting and educational experience as we add new elements to the three day affair. Registration for the fleece show, fiber art and skein competitions have been open since late November. Here is an overview of the event:

Location: Renaissance Hotel in Syracuse

Dates: Friday February 6 through Sunday February 8, 2009

Schedule:

- Friday: Free session for veterinarians and vet students with the primary focus on female reproduction. There will be ultrasounds with live animals. Be sure your vet attends this seminar with Dr. Toni Cotton.
- Friday: Optional fiber workshops: expanded to 6 morning workshops and 6 afternoon workshops. An excellent way to learn a new fiber art skill and have fun in a relaxed, friendly environment. See separate article by Cindy Cuykendall for more details.
- Friday night: Meet and greet. A casual way to gather, meet the other participants and instructors, enjoy appetizers and have a cocktail (cash bar). A special treat this year will be a mini fashion show put on by

the clothing vendors. Should be fun way to relax and interact with other alpaca people before the "work" begins on Saturday!

- Saturday and Sunday: The Educational Symposium kicks off bright & early. There will be 3 or 4 lectures going on at all times. Participants will be able to select what classes they wish to attend. With one exception (Open Fleece Judging), you do not need to sign up for the classes in advance. Each class will be offered twice so you can attend most topics. Topics include female reproduction (with ultrasounds on live animals), EPD, parasites, nutrition, many fiber topics (remember this is our fleece event!).
- Spin-off, Fiber Arts and Skein Competitions: Judging should be completed by Saturday morning and the entries should be displayed by Saturday afternoon for viewing. You will get to see some very talented and creative works.
- Fleece Show: Judging will take place all day Saturday and possibly Sunday morning, depending on the number of fleeces received. Oral discussion is tentatively scheduled for noon on Sunday, but may possibly move to the morning if judging is completed on Saturday. This year, we have added a featured where a limited number of people at a time will be able to go into the fleece room and observe Cheryl Gehly judge fleeces. You will be able to hear first hand why she is giving the scores she is. This "Open Fleece Judging" will be a great learning experience. Observers will not be able to make comments about the fleeces and questions will be limited, so as not to interfere with the judging.

No activities are scheduled for Saturday night. We will post on the web site a listing of area restaurants.

We will need animal volunteers for the Friday vet session and Sunday ultrasounds. We need maidens, bred females, females with reproductive problems and a couple of males. Please send me an email at spruceridgefarm@aol.com if you want to volunteer your animal.

Hope to see you in Syracuse in February!

2008 Empire Alpaca Extravaganza Photo Contest Results

~ Barb Rossi, Bel Canto Farm, Photo Contest Coordinator

The 2008 EAA Photo Contest was a huge success. The addition of a Sponsorship and Cash Prize Awards for the first through third place winners in each category added more excitement to the contest. We were also happy to add a new Youth Category to the contest so that young shutter bugs could enter photos as well. With so many cute, funny, beautiful, and artistic alpaca photos entered, the Judges, Doug and Donna Herrmann of Herrmann Photography had their hands full.

Photo Contest Winners

JUDGE'S CHOICE



Abenaki Acres Farm, LLC, William L. Johnson, "Taste of Fall"

Color:

- 1st: Abenaki Acres Farm, LLC, William L. Johnson - "Taste of Fall"
- 2nd: Inghams Mills Farm, Jill Snell - "Beauty Before the Storm"
- 3rd: Split Rock Farms Alpacas, Elaine Raby - "Lazy Daze"
- Honorable Mention: Alpacas of Maple Lane, Sarah Sartorini - "Come with me Mom"

B&W

- 1st: Springside Farm, Emily Drexler Olsenwik - "Momma's Girl"
- 2nd: Alpacas of Rain Dance Pond, LLC, Richard Jonassen - "Is that the beginning of a smile?"
- 3rd: Split Rock Farms Alpacas, Elaine Raby - "Field of Dreams"
- Honorable Mention: Hunter Hill Alpacas, Ruth Fegela - "Waiting"

Humor

- 1st: We Paca Punch Alpacas, Jennifer ManWarren - "Attitude, What Attitude"
- 2nd: Split Rock Farms Alpacas, Elaine Raby - "More Please"
- 3rd: Inghams Mill Farm, Jill Snell - "Summer Vacation"
- Honorable Mention: Cushing Ranch Alpacas, Inc., Fred Chandanis - "I'm Suing my Barber"

Alpacas Interacting

- 1st: Thunder Bay Alpacas, Martina Horwath - "Kisses from a Cria are Priceless"
- 2nd: Andes Dandies, LLC, Katie Zelazny - "Where's your mom?"
- 3rd: Faraway Farm Alpacas, Leda Blumberg - "The Meeting"
- Honorable Mention: Bentwood Alpacas, Suzanne Drumm - "Sunset and Aurora"

Youth

- 1st: Aussie Hill Alpacas, Nikole (age 15) - "What will this new day bring!"
- 2nd: We Paca Punch Alpacas, Dustin ManWarren - "The Talk"
- 3rd: Elf-Paca Meadows, LLC, Emily Foss - no caption given
- Honorable Mention: CnL Paca Farm, Inc., Katie McNinch - no caption given

Computer Enhanced

- 1st: Blue Opal Alpacas, Ruth Fegela - "Kashette"
- 2nd: Alpacas In Harmony, Susan Weber - "Hannah-Warhol Inspired"
- 3rd: Full Moon Alpacas, Darlene Reardon - "Born in the USA"
- Honorable Mention: Heavenly Sunset Farm Alpacas, Susan Jacobson - "Love at First Sight"

Thank you to all the entrants for submitting photos. EAA would also like to thank Doug and Donna Herrmann for their sponsorship and judging talents. Hope you will all join us again next year!

Fiber Arts Workshops at the 2009 Symposium

~ Cindy Cuykendall, Song Meadows Alpacas, Workshop Coordinator

We have a plethora of awesome Fiber Arts Workshops lined up for the February 2009 Symposium. If you have been wanting to learn how to create something from that wonderful fleece, now is your chance. At this year's Symposium, you can learn how to skirt your fleeces to make the most of Fleece Show opportunities. You can learn how to spin that fleece into beautiful yarn, and then learn to create items from that yarn in Knitting for the Non-Knitter. Have you ever wanted to learn to weave? We have workshops on Weaving Without a Loom, Easy Tapestry Weaving, or Weaving for Stress Relief. Does felting catch your interest? You can learn to felt a birdhouse, or needle felt a pair of slippers and then wet-felt them right on your feet for a perfect fit! The Granny Square Revolution offers ways to create and use granny squares that would knock your Granny's socks off! Looking for something a little bit unusual? Learn the old Australian craft of Locker Hooking, the new art of Nuno felting, or perhaps try your hand at hand-painted skeins. Check out the Empire Alpaca web site for details on these awesome opportunities. Class sizes are limited, so register today!

Affiliate Congress Eliminated

~ Steve McCarthy, Spruce Ridge Farm

In the November monthly teleconference between AOBA and the Affiliate Congress (AC), Kim Devos, the AOBA board liaison to the AC, asked if she could start the conference call by reading a letter from the AOBA board. The letter announced the elimination of the AC and, therefore, ended our teleconference! Below is the letter read to the AC which was emailed to the AOBA membership minutes after it was read to the AC.

Dear AOBA Member:

AOBA has begun a strategic planning process and the initial phase is now being implemented. Attached is a brief overview of AOBA's basic plan for reference. As you can see this plan takes AOBA forward, addresses many of the issues raised by our members and assigns priority to the objectives. One of the objectives that is and will continue to be addressed is communication with our members.

Essential communications such as this will be sent to the membership through AOBA Eblasts as is our normal practice. To better facilitate this communication we ask that all affiliates resend these communications out to your membership as well. We realize that this may duplicate some communication. Our belief is that duplication is better than missed communication.

The Affiliate Advisory committee, now the Affiliate Congress was formed to facilitate better communication to the membership through the affiliate organization structure. The number of affiliates has grown and the current structure has lost its effectiveness. As such the AOBA Board has decided to remove the charter that formed the Affiliate Congress. The Board believes we now have better and more effective systems in place to communicate with our membership and will continue to develop different ways to facilitate communication in the future.

This evening through personal contact with the Affiliate Congress in the monthly teleconference they were informed of this change. All affiliates were likewise informed through this communication.

It is the AOBA Board's unanimous opinion this is in the best interest of the organization and the industry. We ask that all members continue to provide input to AOBA through its standing committees, the AOBA Office and the Board of Directors. AOBA has and will continue to be the leader of the alpaca industry in the United States. We are confident that the strategic planning we set in motion is the best option to move the industry forward into the future. The AOBA Board asks now more than ever for your continuing support and commitment to AOBA and the alpaca industry.

David Barboza, President
on behalf of the AOBA Board

To say that the AC was surprised would be an understatement. We had no warning or indication that this was being considered. As I reported in the last newsletter, I attended the July semi-annual face-to-face between the AC and the AOBA board. I believe both sides left that meeting pretty happy. The board asked the AC to submit a revised organizational structure which was done. No indication of problems was given in the subsequent teleconferences that usually included the AOBA board liaison, the AOBA president and occasionally the AOBA Executive Director.

Personally, I was appalled at the way 40+ volunteers for this organization were treated and I have told the AOBA board as much in a letter I wrote to them. I do not think this is the way people should be treated and I think the rationale given in the letter is weak. The "better and more effective systems in place to communicate with our membership" which apparently consists of the affiliate presidents resending all AOBA emails to their affiliate members, doesn't strike me as either better or more effective.

The AC was established about two and a half years ago by the AOBA board as a means of enhancing communications within AOBA. Many people feel "closer" to their regional affiliate than to AOBA because it is generally more local and one is more likely to personally know an affiliate board member than an AOBA board member and therefore more likely to communicate with that person. The first meeting of the AC back in August 2006 was rather raucous and negative; a lot of time it was basically a "bitch session" where many people complained about everything AOBA has done wrong, in their opinion, for the last 10 years. Once people vented their frustrations, we were able to move forward and the AC got its first tasks from AOBA (surveying affiliate memberships about various topics, one result was AOBA implementing an insurance discount program with vendors).

Over the years, the structure of the AC and its relationship with AOBA was the number one sticking issue and, in my opinion, way too much time was spent on the topic. Many affiliates believed that the AC should be an independent body; the AOBA board insisted that it could only interact with the AC if it was a committee of AOBA. I frankly didn't care if we were called a "committee" or something else, the important thing to me was that we improve communications and accomplish tasks.

The AC did have a number of accomplishments over the years and a number of AC recommendations have been implemented by AOBA. Last spring, the AOBA President and Executive Director asked the AC's help to get out the vote in the second election since only 27% of the membership voted in the first election and did not make the quorum. The affiliates sent out repeated reminders to their members to vote. The AC also prepared a questionnaire for the candidates to help provide their members with additional candidate information to encourage voter participation. This questionnaire ended up being very controversial and ruffled many feathers. Three of the six candidates refused to answer the questionnaire and an email under AOBA's name was sent out saying the AC overstepped its bounds with the questionnaire. I guess I didn't think asking candidates their opinions would cause such turmoil! When I ran for the AOBA board several years ago, I had lots of emails and phone calls from people. One Empire member told me that it was the AC's questionnaire that got her to vote in the second election after intentionally not voting in the first election. Interestingly, the three candidates who responded to the AC's questionnaire were the top 3 vote getters in the second election and now sit on the AOBA board

I do not want this to be perceived as an anti-AOBA article. I am a strong supporter of AOBA and think that one national organizational structure is vital to the industry. I have always encouraged people to join AOBA and still will. However; I strongly disagree with this Board's action on this issue and also have concerns as to why 3 board members have resigned in two months. Communication with members has always been one of AOBA's weaknesses and this latest action does not help. Since the AOBA board does not believe the AC is needed to foster communication between the AOBA members and the AOBA board, I urge you that if you have concerns, you contact AOBA and its board members directly, as recommended in David Barboza's email.

I am disappointed that the AC was abolished. While being personally somewhat frustrated at some of the bickering and negativity that took place at the meetings, overall I think the AC was beneficial to the AOBA organization. Over the years, I have found that if you have 3 alpaca people in a room, you are going to have some disagreement, whether it is over alpaca health issues, what fleece characteristics are important, nutritional issues, parasite control or something else! We alpaca people tend to be very opinionated! The important thing is that we are talking, sharing and respecting the other people.

The AC was personally helpful to me. Recently when I was preparing the 2008 EAA By-Law amendment regarding the elimination of the requirement for certified financial statements, it was easy for me to solicit the members of the AC for their affiliate requirements and opinions. At the AC meetings and teleconferences, it was useful hearing what other affiliates are doing and how they do them. Some of the affiliates are considering creating a group to facilitate communications amongst the affiliate for issues such as these. The focus would be on affiliate issues and in no way would be intended to usurp AOBA's role as the national organization. My promise to the EAA board (and to the EAA membership) is that I would withdraw EAA's participation in this new group if I felt the direction was one that was anti-AOBA or one whose intent was to replace AOBA. I have the commitment of the people trying to organize the new group that their intent is not to be anti-AOBA or to take AOBA's place. We all agree that we need one, strong national organization and AOBA is it. I strongly support it, even if I may have disagreements with certain actions.

I am happy to hear any member's opinion on this topic and about EAA's participation in the new proposed affiliate group.

AFCNA Fiber Collection

~ Cindy Cuykendall, Song Meadows Alpacas, Fiber Collection Coordinator

The AFCNA Fiber Collection at the Extravaganza was a resounding success. Twenty-five farms pooled a total of almost 1500 pounds of fleece to send off to the co-op, far exceeding the minimum shipment of 500 lbs. required for free shipping. Volunteers weighed and recorded each box, then packed them on pallets and wrapped them securely for shipping.

The Alpaca Fiber Co-op of North America is one of many options available to breeders for processing their fiber. The co-op purchases fiber from its members and turns that fiber into yarn, clothing, and accessories. Members may then purchase the finished goods at wholesale prices for retail through farm stores, craft fairs and bazaars, etc. The co-operative business structure provides members with services and commercial leveraging on a scale not available to the individual farm, and produces a high quality, value-added end product.

We hope that the Clip Collection at the Extravaganza will become an annual event. In light of the great success of this year's collection effort, we hope to provide this service to Empire members for years to come. Plan to bring your fleece to next year's show and take advantage of the opportunity for free shipping to the co-op!

Ag & Markets Considering Testing Changes

~ Steve McCarthy, Spruce Ridge Farm

A veterinarian with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets recently contacted me to present their proposed changes relating to testing requirements of alpacas and llamas. The changes they are contemplating are the elimination of the TB requirements and the addition of a negative test requirement for Bovine Viral Diarrhea, similar to the BVD requirement at AOBA shows. The changes would only affect county fairs, youth shows and the NYS fair; it would not apply to private shows.

In 2007, Ag and Markets implemented a negative BVD requirement for bovine at county and state fairs. This should help protect our alpaca herds by reducing our potential exposure to BVD from bovines.

The Empire board discussed the issue and voted to support the Ag & Markets changes. Tuberculosis has not ever been seen in alpacas in the United States; this change should help save Empire members money on their testing costs for fairs. Since AOBA implemented the once in a lifetime BVD negative PCR test requirement, most farms routinely test their crias, so there should be no additional cost impact to Empire members for this change.

One issue on which I did voice my disagreement with the Ag & Markets vet was his statement that the BVD testing cost was "reasonable". I pointed out that Cornell testing lab effectively charges alpaca owners 5 times the cost they charge bovine owners for BVD PCR tests. Bovine owners are allowed to submit up to 10 samples per pool for one testing price whereas Cornell limits alpaca owners to 2 samples per pool. I asked that there be parity between the species on testing costs. I figured it wouldn't hurt to try!

Extravaganza Volunteers and Exhibitors: Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!

~ Steve McCarthy, Spruce Ridge Farm

In past newsletters, I have written that one of the main reasons the Empire Alpaca Extravaganza is such a successful, fun show is because of the volunteers who help get things done and keep the show moving along smoothly. This year, with the system problems we had, the volunteers and the exhibitors were extraordinary and were responsible for helping us avoid a disaster. Ultimately it was the exhibitors and the volunteers who made this show a success.

There were six people in particular who took control of the show and got us running when the show system data were lost. Melisa Young-Crozet, with her two week old daughter at her side, walked in Saturday morning and put on the show with really nothing but the show cards the exhibitors wear around their necks. She was cool, calm and collected and got the show running. Cindy Vars assisted her and the two functioned as the show superintendent and got us rolling.

Polly Michaelis, Kelly Zanella and Kevin O'Leary took control of the gates at the 3 halter rings and got people lined up and into their classes with minimal disruption. We had fewer complaints of people missing classes than we usually have! Ann Merriwether did a great job organizing the performance ring.

With all of the other aspects of the show, our Empire members again did a superb job of volunteering for the 2008 Extravaganza. Color checkers, gate keepers, ring stewards, check-in staff, seminar speakers – SO MANY volunteers! While there are too many (80+) volunteers to list individually, I would like to single out a few more volunteers who did a tremendous amount of work for the show:

- Chris Gilman and Cindy Cuykendall: barn managers
- Lou Eustance: silent auction
- Paulie Drexler: promotions
- Ellen Chamberlain and Kathy Young: product booth
- Barb Rossi: photo contest
- Sarah Lamana: sponsorship coordinator
- Suzanne Drumm: kids' activities
- Cindy Cuykendall: AFCNA fiber collection
- Jeannine Anderson: Fleece & Fiber Corner

A special thank you to Scott Young and his family who do so much for the Extravaganza and this organization.

A big thank you to all volunteers. We sincerely appreciate your help! And a HUGE thank you to all of the exhibitors who pitched in and got us through a rough situation. You are the best! Thank you!



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