

NWHCA Spring 2010 Membership Meeting May 22, 2010, Maple K Farms, Colfax, WA

Call to order

President Tom Newton called the meeting to order at 12:45 PM.

The minutes from the last membership meeting, Spring 2009, were approved as written.

Treasurer's Report

Sharon Howard reported that we currently have 86 member farms, five more than last year this time. 18 farms did not renew for 2010, of those 4 were new last year. And we have received 10 new member farms so far in 2010.

The balance of the checking account is \$2752.62, approximately \$600 better than last year. There is no need to consider raising membership fees for the next year or so if membership stays healthy.

Sharon also reviewed the 2010 budget, which is strongly based on the 2009 one. She stressed that all dollars come from our membership, either as dues or donations. The monies are spent on membership education and communications (The Fold and the website), promoting the breed (website and shows), and internal administration (postage, corporation filing fees, etc.).

Old Business

2011 Spring Meeting location – we would like to hold the next spring meeting either in Oregon or close to it to enable our members living in that area to attend. There had been discussion at the winter teleconference to approach John Pearson about hosting the event, but there has been no response from him. Robin Wolfe and Lisa Jennings expressed interest in hosting the event. There was more discussion about this at the board meeting that followed.

Show venues in 2010 – AHCA points shows are Grays Harbor, Evergreen Fair at Monroe, Spokane Interstate, Puyallup, and Central Washington at Yakima. Tom encouraged members to explore new venues in their area by talking to the fair boards – take your cattle either as an exhibit or enter them in the beef classes. Tom said that “showing up” is the best way to get things started.

Fold update – Deanna Newton explained to the membership that we have purchased our own printer to help keep printing costs down. It does, however, increase the amount of work the newsletter editor has to do. The last edition of The Fold has completed the purchase of the printer, so the costs for further editions should be lower. Deanna and Tom also asked for more articles and pictures from members

Gina Ames suggested starting a series of articles featuring members' farms, with pictures and descriptions. Everyone agreed that these would be great reading. Gina volunteered to start the ball rolling with an article on Boise Creek Farm.

New Business

Nothing to report on the winter teleconference.

AHCA - Mike Mower, our representative to the AHCA board, gave a report. He explained that there were two groups involved in AHCA, the regional reps and the elected board members. There are two face-to-face meetings a year, one at the national show in Denver (in January), and the other at the AHCA National Member Meeting, generally held in June.

AHCA places all representatives on a subcommittee, and Mike has been serving on the Breed Protection Committee which meets once a month. He reported from the last meeting, held April 13. He said that 90% of the discussion had to do with showing cattle, and that the recent rule prohibiting excessive blocking/trimming had been rescinded. At the Denver show, 2 or 3 exhibitors blatantly ignored the ruling, and when other exhibitors complained, the AHCA board reacted by rescinding the rule. Mike asked if a regional affiliate (e.g. NWHCA) could continue to abide by the original rule, and the answer was no, all affiliates must follow AHCA rules to qualify a ROE show.

More from Mike – NWHCA is a healthy organization. The Fold and our website are far better than other regional groups. For the most part, NWHCA members are small breeders, most don't make a living with their cattle. He also explained that the bottom line issue for AHCA is to define its real purpose – does it exist to promote the commercial success of the Highland breed, or is it just to maintain the Highland registry and make show rules? The board consists of members pulling each way, or at least did, but most of the ones interested in the commercial (read here “beef”) success of Highlands have dropped out.

Mike also discussed the issue of DNA testing. With the advent of DNA testing, it has become apparent that the purity of the breed may be in question in some lines. Hence the requirement to DNA test all bulls these days. Wayland Read explained that in Canada all bulls must be tested, and every 75th cow that is registered must be tested as well. Mike said that AHCA is considering a similar approach.

The question of “unwritten rules” came up, and Mike said yes, AHCA has admitted that they have unwritten rules and they're trying to figure out what they are and actually write them down. They are contacting some of the oldest members to figure out what the rules are and why they exist, then codify them.

Tom and Mike reported that Mike will be resigning as the NWHCA rep following the AHCA Conference in Michigan in June. Do we need another representative? This was discussed in the board meeting later in the day.

Membership Email Policy – Tom led the discussion about sending out email messages to large numbers of NWHCA members advertising animals for sale. There are two issues here, both the use of email to sell cattle, and also including member email addresses in distribution lists that could be used for other purposes.

There was lots of discussion from the membership, especially on the snowballing issue of using email. If one or two members do this, pretty soon everyone else feels they need to participate. Since we have such a great facility on the NWHCA website for advertising animals for sale, why do we need to send emails as well?

Bottom line – it's OK to send an email to just a few of your closest NWHCA friends about animals for sale, but just those you know would be interested. Always use the BCC facility to hide the email addresses. And keep this to a minimum – make use of the NWHCA website as the first and best location for advertising your animals.

Members agreed there was no need to put anything in our bylaws or other policies on use (or abuse) of email.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:40 PM.