

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC RELATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Chair: Martha A. Littlefield, Baton Rouge, LA  
Vice-Chair: Karen Conyngham, Austin, TX

J Lee Alley, AL, Kathleen Connell, WA; Thomas Holt, FL; Larry Mark, VA; Lee Myers, GA; James Watson, MS  
Richard Willer, AZ.

The Committee convened at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, October 24, 2007 at John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel, Reno, Nevada. The Vice-Chair presided and welcomed all in attendance. The Chair participated in the meeting via tele-conference.

The Committee Report from the 2006 meeting was reviewed and approved. One mission of last year's Committee was the creation of a new generic United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) business card that can be used at any meeting or event where USAHA may have an information table or display booth. The card lists the new contact information for USAHA and on the verso contains the following text:

"The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) – serving as the nation's animal health forum for more than a century – is a science-based, voluntary organization. Members come from state, federal and international animal and public health agencies, allied industry and professional organizations, livestock producers, academia and animal health professionals. Join Today!" The new card has been printed and is very attractive. It was available at the 2007 Annual Meeting.

Action item remaining from 2006: writing a concise, information letter that Annual Meeting attendees can customize and submit to their Association web sites or newsletter reviewing the major issues (bullet points) of the Annual Meeting general session and any noteworthy Committee Reports. It was determined that the Allied Industry groups are distributing information about the annual meeting to their members directly. There was no interest in such a document from the district-at-large(DAL), so this action item was dropped. The Committee again discussed renovation of the existing USAHA display booth. It was suggested by Ben that he do an investigation into the time and cost involved in refurbishing the booth with high-quality photos and support literature. He will then report to the Executive Committee (EC) to see if there is interest from the EC in pursuing this project.

Lee Myers recommended that Ben compile a generic Power Point presentation about USAHA that can be distributed to any interested organization and USAHA's Allied Industry representatives to encourage interest and membership in USAHA among producers and veterinary groups that may not already be aware of USAHA.

The Committee reviewed possible ways to build upon the success of the news alerts. Martha asked if a version of the alerts could be sent out in straight text. Ben said that this is already an option, the alerts can be sent out in either .html or .txt formats and USAHA members just need to subscribe to whichever version they prefer. Lee Myers suggested that an occasional topic for the top section of the news alerts could feature either a short personal biography on a USAHA member or if a Committee has undertaken a project that they would like to publicize, a short review could be included on that project.

The Executive Committee has asked the Committee to continue to evaluate the USAHA web site for further possible enhancements to maximize "e-communications". The USAHA web master will be working with Ben to re-work the background navigation structure for the site. After that is completed, the web master would like to incorporate more photos and add some "spice" to the overall look of the site.

The USAHA office occasionally receives requests for articles from past Annual Meeting proceedings. Ben will look into possibly digitizing the proceedings archive. This information could then be made available to USAHA members via a pass-word protected section on the web site. The Committee thanks and commends Dr. Dick McCapes and Dr. J. Lee Alley for their efforts in assisting the USAHA office in reviewing the Association's archives prior to the relocation of the office from Virginia to Missouri.

Lee Myers recommended that Ben contact the Communication Officers for State Departments of Agriculture (COSDA) and develop a working relationship with them to further awareness of USAHA. [See: <http://www.nasda.org/StaticContent/cosda/> ]

Ben will look into drafting a 3-year plan for outreach and awareness of USAHA which could focus on different groups each year, such as various producer associations, agricultural and veterinary groups, etc. This plan will be developed in conjunction with the Executive Committee.

Finally, it was agreed upon by the majority of the Committee that the Committee disband since Committee attendance at the Annual Meeting is always very low and it is difficult to recruit new members. Now that the USAHA office has an Executive Director and staff, it will be more efficient for Ben to work directly with the EC on public relations issues. However Ben will maintain contact with resource members within USAHA for input on both web content and public outreach and awareness activities. Katie Wetherall of the California Department of Food and Agriculture graciously offered to share her public relations experience and resources with Ben as needed.