

MINUTES

WATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

January 28, 2016

The Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group met at the Kentucky Farm Bureau State Office in Louisville, Kentucky on Thursday, January 28, 2016.

Working Group members present were: Steve Coleman, Chair; Todd Clark; Pete Goodmann; Pat Henderson; Kenny Imel; Kevin Jeffries; David Rowlett; and Larry Thomas. Working Group members absent were: Warren Beeler; Nancy Cox; Sharon Furches; Terry Gilbert; Gary Larimore; and Roger Thomas. Ex-officio members present were: Michael Griffin, State Director, U.S. Geological Survey. Ex-officio members absent were: Tom Fern, State Director, USDA Rural Development; John W. McCauley, State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency; Kim Richardson, Director, Kentucky Division of Conservation; and Karen Woodrich, State Conservationist, NRCS. Others in attendance were: Biff Baker, representing Roger Thomas; Drew Graham representing Nancy Cox; Gidget Cropper representing John W. McCauley; Reed Crepps representing Karen Woodrich; Brent Burchett; Jack Stickney, representing Gary Larimore; Joe Heim; Brian Astifan; Chad Lee; Rick Bennett; Bill Caldwell; Pete Cinotto; Chuck Taylor; David Chinn; Katie Weatherholt, KFB. This meeting was staffed by Joe Cain.

This meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m., EDT by Chairman Steve Coleman, who welcomed and reviewed the purpose of the meeting. Introductions were made. We have new members to the Working Group due to the 2015 election. Changes made were: Warren Beeler left the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and is now the Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy replacing Roger Thomas on the Water Management Working Group. The Kentucky Department of Agriculture will have permanent replacement for Warren Beeler soon.

Chairman Coleman asked the Working Group to consider the minutes of the November 18, 2015 meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Kenny Imel, and seconded by Mr. Kevin Jeffries second that:

"We approve the minutes of the November 18, 2015 meeting."

Motion passed.

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Chairman Coleman reminded the Working Group that a depository of meeting information (presentations, useful links, supporting literature and minutes) is located on the Kentucky Farm Bureau's Newsroom website at www.kyfb.com/water.

Chairman Coleman provided a quick update on the 2015 Kentucky Farm Bureau Annual Meeting and resolutions the Water Management Working Group submitted to policy. He noted all of the resolutions were passed into policy. Chairman Coleman announced that Kentucky Farm Bureau's staff began working on these policies as soon as it was passed. He commented on how it was exciting that the Water Management Working Group is already making a difference.

Mr. Pete Cinotto, USGS, provided an update on Kentucky's water monitoring progress and needs. Mr. Cinotto talked about the surface water monitoring that measures what is coming into Kentucky and then Kentucky's contributions to outflow. He provided an overview of current flow data from various monitoring sites. He reviewed monitoring needs and estimated cost to allow for a more accurate "capture" of nutrient loads from various sources. Mr. Cinotto discussed the need to monitor nutrient loads, harmful algal blooms (Toledo, Ohio's situation a couple of years ago), surface water availability (water budget equation: $\text{Precipitation} = \text{ET} + \text{Streamflow} + \Delta\text{GW} + \Delta\text{SM} + \Delta\text{RSV} \pm \text{Diversions}$), Kentucky has 200+ real-time monitoring sites, groundwater monitoring (an area where Kentucky is most lacking), Mesonet and soil-moisture plus climate data, and estimated costs associated with additional monitoring. Full presentation can be found on the Water Management website.

Mr. Brian Astifan, NWS, discussed the Ohio River Forecast Center efforts that transitioned from flood centers to water resource centers and basically perform national precipitation analysis. He noted the center collects precipitation data from multiple resources and develops forecasts into a flood risk analysis based on current conditions (snow melt, past rainfall data, etc.). Concurrently, the water resource outlook (WRO) is issued monthly. He reviewed the historical drought information data they have and how they use all of the information to develop a drought forecast. Mr. Astifan noted we are in the "tail end" of a strong El Nino cycle that would suggest Kentucky is facing a warmer, drier spring and summer. He noted there are tools available now to make nutrient application advisories based on the potential for runoff. It is currently being used in Wisconsin as an advisory tool, but some states such as Ohio are looking at this to be used as a regulatory tool. However, as a regulatory tool, it would be very difficult to actually enforce because everything is on a 4 kilometer grid. Discussion noted this would be an excellent app that producers could use to help determine application timing, for both potential runoff and loss of nutrients into water resources, but also as a tool producers use to avoid runoff and loss of nutrients available for crops and loss of

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valuable inputs. There is a NRCS study effort in 10-11 states (Kentucky is not one of the states) to look at this further as a runoff and management tool. To validate the model, there needs to be edge of field monitoring (EFM), and currently there is no EFM in Kentucky. Full presentation can be found on the Water Management website.

Dr. Chad Lee, UK CAFE, provided an overview on water-related research UK is engaged in, as well as, an overview of the Grain Center for Excellence proposal and research the Grain Center would be involved in. He reviewed variable rate irrigation research UK currently has in place. Dr. Lee noted if the Grain Center becomes a reality it will allow UK to closely link intensive agricultural production and ground water quality. During conversation, it was noted NRCS, while they currently cannot fund the development of initial irrigation systems, through EQIP funds could be provided to retrofit irrigation systems with variable rate technologies. It was also noted NRCS could provide support to upgrade efficiencies of older irrigation technologies. UK is working on the economic analysis of irrigation towards soil health, uniform crop development, utilization of crop inputs and ultimately overall plant health and productivity. Crop uniformity is something that has not routinely been included in crop budgets in the past. Dr. Rick Bennett, UK CAFE, commented we would not be at this stage of discussion without the support of KYFB and the farming community across the state.

Chairman Coleman asked subcommittee chairmen if they had any reports. The Information Subcommittee, chaired by Pat Henderson, reported just under 200 surveys were completed and could provide data concerning farmer demographics, sources of water utilized, types of production, weather data needed and weather data being utilized. It was noted a summary of survey results could be developed by the next regular Water Management Working Group meeting. Chairman Coleman asked Pete Cinotto if there could be a "Dashboard" site similar to what KASMC has together where someone in Kentucky could go to get a quick snapshot of water data for Kentucky. Mr. Cinotto stated that he and the USGS staff would try to develop a quick demo of Kentucky water resource data to show how links and applications could work as an example for what a future Kentucky Water Resources Data site might look like. Pete Cinotto updated the group on efforts to develop an Agriculture Drought Mitigation Plan as part of the overall Kentucky Drought Mitigation Plan and develop some Internet tools to help make an earlier determination of agricultural drought.

Chairman Coleman asked Water Management Working Group members for ideas to focus on the coming year. Chairman Coleman opened the floor for additional comments or suggestions the Work Group or public might have, there were none.

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Chairman Coleman announced the next Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group meeting will be held Wednesday, February 17, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. EDT at the Kentucky Farm Bureau State Office in Louisville. It was discussed to tentatively set the March meeting location in Western Kentucky, possibly starting at Murraray and ending at Princeton.

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned.

**Recorded by: Katie Weatherholt
Administrative Assistant**

**Approved by: L. Joe Cain, Director
Commodity Division**