

## MINUTES

### WATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

### KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

March 29-30, 2016

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The Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group met at 1:30 p.m., CDT, Tuesday, March 29, 2016 at the Furches Farm in Murray, Kentucky. The meeting was a two day meeting to western Kentucky with the second day starting at 9:30 a.m., CDT, at the University of Kentucky Research and Education Center in Princeton, Kentucky.

Working Group members present were: Steve Coleman, Chair; Warren Beeler; Sharon Furches; Pat Henderson; Kevin Jeffries; David Rowlett; and Larry Thomas. Working Group members absent were: Todd Clark; Nancy Cox; Terry Gilbert; Pete Goodmann; Kenny Imel; and Gary Larimore. Ex-officio members absent were: Tom Fern, State Director, USDA Rural Development; Michael Griffin, State Director, U.S. Geological Survey; 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, Project Manager, GOAP; Steve Blandford, State Soil Scientist, NRCS; Pete Cinotto, USGS; Dr. Stuart Foster, Kentucky Climate Center, WKU; Tripp Furches, Owner, Furches Farm; David Gilland, District Director, FSA; Dr. John Groves, Director of University of Kentucky Research and Education Center; UK; Dr. Chad Lee, Plant and Soil Sciences UK; Dr. Rick Bennett, Associate Dean for Research and Director of the Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station, UK; Dr. Roy Burris, Beef Specialist, UK; Dr. Lloyd Murdock, Plant and Soil Sciences, UK; Glenn Howell, Randall Heath, Frieda Heath, Mike Burchett, Eddie Workman, Jamie Potts, Bob Cornelison, Jennifer Cornelison, Doug Hall, Robert Geurin, and Penny Fleming. This meeting was staffed by Joe Cain.

This meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM, CDT, by Chairman Steve Coleman, who welcomed and reviewed the purpose of the meeting. Introductions were made.

Chairman Coleman asked the Working Group to consider the minutes of the February 17, 2016 meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Larry Thomas, and seconded by Mr. Kevin Jefferies that:

**“We approve the minutes of the February 17, 2016 meeting.”**

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Motion passed.

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](http://www.kyfb.com/water).

Mr. Tripp Furches, Owner, Furches Farm, provided an overview of their farming operation and their irrigation system. He noted the challenges they faced in establishing their irrigation well and how they possibly could have been more successful on their first well attempt if they were aware of geological resources that were available. He urged the Working Group to consider compiling a listing of resources available by county that landowners could reference in the future to obtain assistance in developing water resources. Mr. Furches led members of the WMWG on a tour of his irrigation well and grain handling facilities.

Dr. Stuart Foster, Kentucky Climate Center, WKU, provided a review of KY Mesonet options and opportunities for consideration by the WMWG. He noted the funding was approved in 2006 with the first station established in 2007. Dr. Foster reviewed the costs of establishing as well as the annual maintenance for a station and noted he was exploring a variety of options to expand and maintain the system in lieu of dwindling state and federal funding.

Chairman Coleman asked subcommittee chairmen if they had any reports. The Information Subcommittee, chaired by Mr. Pat Henderson, reported on the progress of HB 529 in the General Assembly. Discussion concerning the recent KY Drought Mitigation Team meeting was held with a focus on how a drought emergency is actually declared. It was noted that UK collects weekly crop condition reports and the UK Climate Center collects weather data, but it was unclear what process was actually followed to have a drought emergency declared. The WMWG requested the issue be researched and invite relevant speakers to the April meeting to discuss.

The meeting was recessed until dinner.

Chairman Coleman reconvened the meeting of the WMWG at 5:30 PM at the Calloway County Farm Bureau office for dinner and discussion of water issues with local farm leaders. A number of producers from western Kentucky joined the group for dinner and a discussion of their current water resources, challenges surrounding water resources in the region and ideas for development of future water resources. Some of the concerns expressed were: mineralized water and the impact it has on pumping equipment, the costs of establishing wells versus tapping onto municipal water sources for livestock production, US Army Corps of Engineers regulations

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and permitting for water withdrawals from rivers and lakes and the general lack of a consolidated resource for helping make water resource development decisions.

The meeting was recessed until March 30, to reconvene at 9:30 AM at the UK Research and Education Center in Princeton, KY.

Chairman Coleman reconvened the meeting of the WMWG at 9:30 AM at the UK Research and Education Center in Princeton. Mr. Coleman recognized welcomed Dr. John Groves, Manager of the Research and Education Center, to provide an overview. Also participating in the overview of the Center was Dr. Chad Lee, Plant and Soil Sciences, UK. Following a brief presentation, Dr. Groves invited the WMWG to tour the farm and facilities. The tour included a visit to the beef research area on the farm where Dr. Groves noted the water for the herd is from municipal water sources. The tour continued to the crop research area where Dr. Groves and Dr. Lee provided an overview of the proposed land purchase to the facility as part of the Grain Center for Excellence development. The current irrigation system was reviewed and plans for adding an additional well and irrigation research was discussed. The WMWG then toured the soil testing, plant disease lab and insect lab facilities at the current Research and Education Center and review plans for expansion and modernization of the facility to meet the future needs of the farming community as part of developing the Grain Center for Excellence.

Dr. Lloyd Murdock, Plant and Soil Sciences, UK, was introduced and provided an overview of how soils formed in Kentucky. Dr. Rick Bennett, Associate Dean for Research at the UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment hosted the group for lunch.

Chairman Coleman opened the floor for additional comments or suggestions the Work Group or public might have, there were none.

Chairman Coleman announced the next Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group meeting will be held Wednesday, April 27, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. EDT at the Kentucky Farm Bureau State Office in Louisville.

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**