

## MINUTES

### WATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

### KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

April 27, 2016

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The Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group met at the Kentucky Farm Bureau State Office in Louisville, Kentucky on Wednesday, April 27, 2016.

Working Group members present were: Steve Coleman, Chair; Warren Beeler; Todd Clark; Sharon Furches; Pete Goodmann; Pat Henderson; Kenny Imel; Kevin Jeffries; Gary Larimore; David Rowlett; and Larry Thomas. Working Group members absent were: Nancy Cox; and Terry Gilbert. Ex-officio members present were: Kim Richardson, Director, Kentucky Division of Conservation; and Karen Woodrich, State Conservationist, NRCS. Ex-officio members absent were: Tom Fern, State Director, USDA Rural Development; Michael Griffin, State Director, U.S. Geological Survey; and John W. McCauley, State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency. Others in attendance were: Drew Graham representing Nancy Cox; Bill Caldwell, KDOW; Pete Cinotto, USGS; Bob Finch, USDA FSA; Harry James, KY Division of Emergency Management; Jennifer Thomason, US Army Corps of Engineers; Shawn Clark – USDA NASS; Jennifer Hickerson, KDDC; David Knopf, USDA NASS; Stacy Rockaway, Congressman Massie's Western District Field Representative; David Chinn, Monty's Plant Food Company; Dawn Riley, Monty's Plant Food Company; Eddie Melton, First Vice President, Kentucky Farm Bureau; Fritz Giesecke, Second Vice President, Kentucky Farm Bureau; Jeff Harper, Public Affairs Director, Kentucky Farm Bureau; Katie Weatherholt, Kentucky Farm Bureau. 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. Mr. Eddie Melton, First Vice President, Kentucky Farm Bureau and Mr. Fritz Giesecke, Second Vice President, Kentucky Farm Bureau, each thanked the Working Group for their efforts and emphasized the importance of the Working Group. Mr. Coleman gave a brief overview of the March meeting in Western Kentucky and thanked the Furches' for hosting the Working Group.

Chairman Coleman asked the Working Group to consider the minutes of the March 29 - 30, 2016 meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Larry Thomas, and seconded by Mr. Kevin Jeffries second that:

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**“We approve the minutes of the March 29 - 30, 2016 meeting.”**

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).

Bob Finch, Executive Officer, USDA FSA, discussed the emergency disaster designation and declaration process. FSA administers four types of disaster designations: USDA Secretarial disaster designation; Presidential major disaster and Presidential emergency declarations; FSA Administrator’s Physical Loss Notification; and Quarantine designation by the Secretary under the Plant Protection Act or animal quarantine laws. Secretarial disaster designation is the most widely used and its process is the most complicated of the four. In 2012, the Secretarial disaster declaration process was streamlined to reduce paperwork and documentation requirements at the local FSA level, making the process more efficient and timely for agricultural producers. Drought is now determined when during the growing season, any portion of a county meets the D2 drought intensity value for eight consecutive weeks or a higher drought intensity for any length of time as reported in the US Drought Monitor. For all other natural disaster occurrences, including drought conditions that do not trigger a Fast Track designation, the county must have a 30 percent production loss of at least one crop or a determination must be made by surveying producers that other lending institutions will not be able to provide emergency financing.

Mr. Shawn Clark, Deputy Director, USDA NASS, gave an overview of the reports NASS produces. NASS field offices regularly survey thousands of farm operators, ranchers, and agri-businesses who voluntarily provide information on a confidential basis. Consolidating these reports with field observations, objective yield measurements, and other data, statisticians then produce state statistics. These statistics are forwarded to NASS headquarters in Washington, D.C., where they are combined and released to the public. One of the most used reports in Kentucky is the two page Weekly Crop Progress and Condition Report that is released each Monday in April through November. This report gives data on: temperatures and precipitation of selected locations; state weather summary; planting, harvesting and crop development progress; range and livestock pasture conditions. The goal is to have coverage in every county every week.

Mr. Harry James, Planning Branch Manager, Kentucky Emergency Management, Kentucky Emergency Management coordinates a system of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery and protects the lives, environment and property of the people of Kentucky. Mr. James stated that there are 42 threats to the state of Kentucky, one of those is drought. He then proceeded to give an

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overview of the emergence management drought designation process. The intent of emergency management is to know as early as possible; when ag drought monitor turns yellow the Kentucky Emergency Management starts looking at the specific counties, how bad is the drought going to get, and what is the impact on the county, especially on their water systems? They then gather recommendations for members in the community to make up a core planning team. When the ag drought monitor becomes D1 the Kentucky Emergency Management team comes together with the core planning team made up of local government agencies, companies, and individuals to solve the problem and work on how to better prepare for next time. Mr. James noted that certain counties that are more prone to drought should have a drought emergency management plan to better expedite the process.

Mr. Jeff Harper, Director of Public Affairs, Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation, updated the Working Group on legislative efforts made in Frankfort during the 2016 Kentucky General Assembly, mainly HB 529. This bill established the 11-member Kentucky Water Resources Board and identified the role and function of the board in developing water resource policy. It will require the cabinet to provide leadership for on-farm and rural community drought and water assessment monitoring, and improvements for agricultural purposes and authorize the cabinet to receive and disperse federal, state, and other funds for on-farm and community drought and water assessment, monitoring, and improvements. This bill passed the House of Representatives 95-0 and passed the Senate 38-0. This bill became law without Governor Bevin's signature. In addition to the passage of HB 529, the Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group finalized both a plan and a proposed specific budget in the fall of 2015. This plan and budget was developed as a potential guide for the newly created Kentucky Water Resources Board.

Jennifer Thomason, Louisville District, US Army Corps of Engineers, provided a report of the federal permitting process for water removal. The only Corp operated lakes that have a congressional approval for agricultural use is the 17 western states. It is built into their authorization to build the lakes; in Kentucky we do not have that authority. The only authority Kentucky has is for public water supply and industrial use, agricultural is not listed as industrial use. She noted people could be arrested for trespassing if you take water from these lakes without the appropriate permits. If you want to change or alter a creek on your property you should call the regional Corp's office and they can tell you if you'll need to complete paperwork or not. The Working Group discussed the possibility of making recommendations to pursue federal changes to the authorization to various lakes in Kentucky to allow agricultural use and pursue the Corp to complete the studies needed to make the changes to the authorization.

Chairman Coleman asked subcommittee chairmen if they had any reports. The Information Subcommittee, chaired by Mr. Pat Henderson, reported that the new Water Resources Board should help design the app and Pete Cinotto is creating

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a prototype. The Policy Subcommittee, chaired by Mr. Kevin Jeffries, reported that they were waiting on the state budget to be approved to know how they can complete the needs to address the water management concerns in Kentucky. The Ag Drought Subcommittee, Mr. Bill Caldwell, reported the Kentucky Drought Mitigation Committee is meeting to discuss agriculture with representatives from the agriculture community and then develop a plan for Kentucky Ag Drought Mitigation.

Mr. Warren Beeler, Executive Director, GOAP, updated the Working Group on the progresses being made for the Kentucky Water Resources Board created by HB 529. The Kentucky Water Resources Board would promote water conservation in agricultural uses and provide the cabinet with recommendations on water use efficiency. He noted that they are trying to figure out who will be on the newly formed board so people will be ready to serve and meet by July 15 when it goes into effect.

Chairman Coleman opened the floor for additional comments or suggestions the Work Group or public might have. Gary Larimore, Rural Water Association, and Bill Caldwell, KDOW, noted they have been working with EPA on a Drought Response Water Loss Control Workshop which will be in Prestonsburg on May 10. The workshop will be focusing on a group of utilities that are susceptible to drought and have issues with water accountability and water management. Mr. Pete Goodmann, Director, Kentucky Division of Water, reported they are working on plan that would make the whole state of Kentucky be 100% lidar by end of 2017. It was also noted to the Working Group that Shelbyville is about to add 2 new mesonet sites to bring the total mesonet sites in Shelbyville to 3.

Chairman Coleman noted that Working Group members were invited to the FFA State Convention at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Lexington on Wednesday, June 8 at 1:00 pm for a student listening committee to talk about the work the Water Management Working Group does and why it is important; this listening committee takes places before the Kentucky Ag Council meeting at 1:30 pm at the same location in Patterson Room A. Chairman Coleman announced the next Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group meeting will be held Thursday, July 28 at 10:00 am at the Kentucky Farm Bureau State Office in Louisville. Dates for upcoming Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group meeting were set tentatively for Wednesday, August 31, 2016 location to be determined.

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**