

MINUTES

WATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

August 19, 2015

The Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group met at Monty's Research Plots in Shelbyville, Kentucky on Wednesday, August 19, 2015.

Working Group members present were: Steve Coleman, Chair; Warren Beeler; Todd Clark; Sharon Furches; Pete Goodmann; Pat Henderson; Kenneth Imel; Kevin Jeffries; David Rowlett; and Larry Thomas. Working Group members absent were: Tyler Campbell; Nancy Cox; Gary Larimore; and Roger Thomas. Ex-officio members present were: 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; John W. McCauley, State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency; and Kim Richardson, Director, Kentucky Division of Conservation. Others in attendance were: Gidget Cropper representing John W. McCauley; Anthony Hollingsworth representing Tom Fern; Johnna McHugh representing Kim Richardson; Biff Baker representing Roger Thomas; Senator Paul Hornback; James Tillman; Steve Higgins; Bill Caldwell; Chip Zimmer; Allen Bryant; Steve Blanford; Scott Aldridge; Dawn Riley; David Chinn; Sam Finney; Gary Coughlin; Dennis Stephens; Eddie Melton, First Vice President, Kentucky Farm Bureau; Fritz Giesecke, Second Vice President, Kentucky Farm Bureau. The 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.

Chairman Coleman asked the Working Group to consider the minutes of the July 29, 2015 meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Todd Clark, and seconded by Mr. Kevin Jeffries second that:

"We approve the minutes of the July 29, 2015 meeting."

Motion passed.

Chairman Coleman reminded the Working Group that a depository of meeting information (presentations, useful links, supporting literature and minutes) is

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located on the Kentucky Farm Bureau's Newsroom website at www.kyfb.com/water.

Senator Paul Hornback spoke to the Working Group members stating his appreciation for the Water Management Working Group. He noted that the Working Group should have a strong recommendation to present to the general assembly to be taken seriously and to be considered to fund future projects.

Dennis Stephens, Monty's Plant Food Company, gave an overview of Monty's Plant Food Company stating Monty's has been pioneering advancements in the soil enhancement product manufacturing industry since 1997. Founded by Montrose "Monty" Justice, Monty's products are developed to be a leader in the field of humics and soil health by providing a top quality plant food to the market.

Ms. Karen Woodrich, State Conservationist, NRCS, noted that people forget about the connection between healthy soil and water holding capacity when it comes to drought tolerance. She stated that Working Group members will see several research demonstrations that will impact the water. Ms. Woodrich noted the importance of developing strong working relationships with other organizations noting how NRCS works with Monty's through the Soil Renaissance Project to improve the soil health and water holding capacity.

Mr. Steve Blanford, State Soil Scientist with NRCS, reported on soils and soil health to the Working Group. He gave examples of soil management systems that included no tillage, cover crops, diversity cover crops, and application of animal waste. Mr. Blanford provided a demonstration showing how healthy soil, soil structure, soil health management systems, bulk density, and soil types impact water retention and movement. Part of the demonstration included the use of a mobile rain simulation that demonstrated the effects of runoff on various land covers.

Mr. Gary Coughlin, Agronomist with Monty's Plant Food Company, provided a brief overview of how their company has grown in the amount of value added products they offer. He noted that Monty's goal is to create quality products that will help farmers be more efficient, more profitable, and at the same time be cost effective. Mr. Coughlin's let the Working Group of a tour of soil demonstration pits at the Monty's research plots.

Tim Brennan, Farm Foundation, provided an overview of the Soil Renaissance Project noting it is a national campaign to inform the public to the value of soil and soil health. The project is committed to building a strategic plan to address four key issues: how to measure soil health, how to understand the economic impact of soil health, address research needs, and providing education and outreach. Details are available on the project website: www.soilrenaissance.org. The Farm Foundation

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has partnered with The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation in a new initiative designed to bring attention to the critical role of soil health in the challenge of feeding 9 billion people by 2050. The Soil Health Initiative will bring recognition to the central role of soil in productive agricultural systems, and establish a strategic plan to address soil health issues.

The Working Group looked over the recommendations and action items feedback that members submitted before the meeting. Chairman Coleman mentioned the Working Group will soon be reviewing the Kentucky Farm Bureau policy on water resources as we move forward with making recommendations. He invited Mr. Eddie Melton, First Vice President, Kentucky Farm Bureau to speak on the process of policy making. Mr. Melton noted policy resolutions are due by October 15 for consideration and that all recommendation sent to the Resolutions Committee are discussed and given consideration.

Kevin Jeffries will chair the Policy Subcommittee that is charged with reviewing current Kentucky Farm Bureau policy and see where the working group could make recommendations to strengthen policy. A report will be made at the September meeting. Other members of the subcommittee are Pat Henderson, Sharon Furches, Larry Thomas, Kenneth Imel and Bill Caldwell.

Mr. Pat Henderson, Chairman of the Information Subcommittee, provided a brief report of the subcommittee's meetings and progress made. Mr. Henderson noted that there has been close to 200 Weather Data Use Survey that have been turned in. All of the surveys have been entered into the online database that will create a summary of the results. The survey is available on the Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management website. The results will be available at the next Water Management Working Group meeting for review.

Mr. Warren Beeler, Chairman of the Ag Drought Mitigation Subcommittee, recommended that any Working Group recommendation must be an achievable action item and that consideration must be given as to who will be in charge and how the project will be funded. He noted the group should push forward with reasonable, and feasible, goals to gain momentum and traction that allows citizens to see who the group is and what we can accomplish to help everyone in Kentucky.

Chairman Coleman noted that he recently attended the Kentucky Life Sciences Council meeting that featured a group from Israel. The US-Israel Science and Technology Foundation objectives are to facilitate joint research and development cooperation, scientific exchange that could lead to cooperative commercial activities, enable the development of emerging technology sectors, and assist in the adaptation of military technology for commercial use.

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Chairman Coleman announced the next Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group meeting will be held Wednesday, September 30, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. EDT at the Kentucky Farm Bureau State Office in Louisville. The date for upcoming November Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group meeting was tentatively set for Thursday, November 12, 2015 with date and site to be confirmed at the September meeting.

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

**Recorded by: Katie Spradlin
Administrative Assistant**

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