

MINUTES

WATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

September 30, 2015

The Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group met at the Kentucky Farm Bureau State Office in Louisville, Kentucky on Wednesday, September 30, 2015.

Working Group members present were: Steve Coleman, Chair; Sharon Furches; Pat Henderson; Kenneth Imel; Kevin Jeffries; Larry Thomas; and Roger Thomas. Working Group members absent were: Warren Beeler; Tyler Campbell; Todd Clark; Nancy Cox; Terry Gilbert; Pete Goodman; Gary Larimore; and David Rowlett. Ex-officio members present were: 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: Bill Caldwell; Chip Zimmer; Pete Cinotto; Chuck Taylor; Jacob Kuhn; Gary Crenshaw; Lowell Atchley; David Chinn; Jeff Harper, Kentucky Farm Bureau; and Katie Weatherholt, 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. The Emerging Ag Advisory Committee joined the Water Management Working Group meeting and Chairman Joe Paul Mattingly introduced the advisory committee and overviewed what the Emerging Ag committee works on.

Chairman Coleman asked the Working Group to consider the minutes of the August 19, 2015 meeting. It was requested that a grammatical error be changed on page three. A motion was made by Mr. Pat Henderson, and seconded by Mr. Kenny Imel second that:

“We approve the minutes of the August 19, 2015 meeting as amended.”

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.

Chairman Coleman reviewed the Action Item Development template that will be used as new issues and concepts are being developed. This will allow the WMWG to develop more detailed, and consistent, action plans in the future. A motion was made by Mr. Kevin Jeffries, seconded by Mr. Larry Thomas, to approve the Action Item Development template as the form to be used. Motion passed.

Chairman Coleman asked Mr. Jeff Harper, Director of Public Affairs, to provide the Water Management Working Group an overview of the Kentucky Farm Bureau Resolutions Committee process for dealing with resolutions that will be developed into a voting delegate report from which 2016 policy for Kentucky Farm Bureau will be approved.

Mr. Kevin Jeffries, Chairman of the Policy Subcommittee, provided a report on recommendations developed by the Policy Development Sub Committee concerning potential policy recommendations. A motion was made by Mr. Pat Henderson, seconded by Ms. Sharon Furches to approve the subcommittee report as edited and to be sent to the Kentucky Farm Bureau Resolutions Committee for consideration. Motion passed. The following are the approved recommendations for Kentucky Farm Bureau policy:

Water Resources

Page 38, **EDIT:**

Rename the present "Water Resources" section to "**WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**" and review policy currently contained within that section to possibly move policy that relates to water quality to the "Water Research" section of the Kentucky policy book. Policy within the "Water Resource Management" section would then deal with the development and management of water resources, including irrigation and weather management issues.

"Water Resource Management"

Page 40, Line 7, **ADD:**

"WE SUPPORT THE CREATION OF A KENTUCKY WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMISSION TO SUPPORT A COORDINATED EFFORT TO MANAGE WATER RESOURCE PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS."

"Water Resource Management"

Page 40, Line 8, **ADD:**

“WE SUPPORT THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY GRAIN CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE CONCEPT AND COORDINATED RESEARCH EFFORTS ON WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND IRRIGATION EFFICIENCIES.”

“Water Resource Management”

Page 40, Line 9, **ADD:**

“WE SUPPORT INCREASED MONITORING OF KENTUCKY’S WATER RESOURCES TO OBSERVE BOTH QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF THESE RESOURCES.”

“Water Resource Management”

Page 40, Line 10, **ADD:**

“WE RECOMMEND THE KENTUCKY DROUGHT MITIGATION AND RESPONSE PLAN BE UPDATED TO INCLUDE A SPECIFIC “AGRICULTURE DROUGHT MITIGATION” SECTION. WE RECOMMEND THAT IN ADDITION TO THE KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE THAT THE USDA FARM SERVICE AGENCY AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FARMING COMMUNITY BE REPRESENTED ON THE KENTUCKY DROUGHT MITIGATION TEAM.”

“Water Resource Management”

Page 40, Line 11, **ADD:**

“WE SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF TAX INCENTIVE FOR IRRIGATION AND LIVESTOCK SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT.”

“Water Resource Management”

Page 39, Line 47, **ADD:**

“WE SUPPORT USDA MODIFYING EXISTING COST SHARE PROGRAMS TO ALLOW FOR NRCS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN ASSESSING THE LONG-TERM AVAILABILITY OF WATER RESOURCES AND THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ON-FARM WATER SUPPLIES AND IRRIGATION SYSTEMS.”

“Technologies”

New section, **ADD:**

Develop a **“TECHNOLOGIES”** section of policy to focus more efforts on new technologies. This section could include drones, new NASA technologies such as GRACE, better real-time water resource data, irrigation systems, GPS, ect. To benefit and improve farm management programs.

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A motion was made by Mr. Pat Henderson, seconded by Ms. Sharon Furches to approve the subcommittee report as edited and to be sent to the Kentucky Farm Bureau Resolutions Committee for consideration. Motion passed. The following are the approved recommendations for American Farm Bureau policy:

"Water Use"

Page 212, New Section 3, **ADD:**

"WE SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF TAX INCENTIVE FOR IRRIGATION AND LIVESTOCK SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT."

"Role of USDA"

Page 168, New Section 11.3.5, **ADD:**

"NRSC should: MODIFY EXISTING COST SHARE PROGRAMS TO ALLOW FOR NRCS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN ASSESSING THE LONG-TERM AVAILABILITY OF WATER RESOURCES AND THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ON-FARM WATER SUPPLIES AND IRRIGATION SYSTEMS."

Chairman Coleman recognized Mr. Joe Cain, Director of Commodity, to review some of the issues relative to the recommendations being sent to the Resolutions Committee. He then discussed how an Agriculture Drought Mitigation Plan might be developed and asked Mr. Bill Caldwell to review what should be included and how an agriculture drought mitigation plan should be developed. He noted it may be more significant if a Kentucky Agriculture Drought Mitigation and Response Plan is developed separate to the Kentucky Drought Mitigation and Response Plan. Mr. Bill Caldwell noted an Ag Mitigation Plan would set standards that would allow for a much quicker, and timely, drought response. There were considerable discussions concerning what needed to be included in a mitigation plan for agriculture, and who should be involved in the development of such a plan. While it will need to be a plan dependent upon data, it was noted that FSA, NRCS, USGS, KGS and KDOW must be part of the development process. Mr. Bill Caldwell volunteered to check on plans that may be out there already that could be used as a starting place for development of a Kentucky plan.

Mr. Pat Henderson, Chairman of the Information Subcommittee, reviewed data results the Information Subcommittee collected from the weather survey thus far. Mr. Pat Henderson noted the survey is online and will be active at least through the end of the year. Mr. Pat Henderson suggested for Annual Meeting that the Working Group include an unbiased report on water quality progress in Kentucky.

Chairman Coleman asked if any Working Group members had reviewed the proposed revisions to water quality regulations by the Energy and Environment

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Cabinet. After reviewing the proposed regulation changes, the committee had no suggestions for comments.

Mr. Bill Caldwell, KDOW, reported he was still working on an evaluation of threatened rural water systems and how much agriculture is dependent upon them.

Mr. Peter Cinotto, USGS, updated the group about the most effective way to display water monitoring or weather data for the general public from the Working Group. He said the use of D3 might be an option that would allow a more uniform platform for data display. The idea is to develop a platform that will allow the user a usable interface to pull weather data or other information a user needs on a timely basis. Chairman Coleman noted Missouri had a program that a user can click on a well site to check the ground water level in real time that would allow a producer a quick and easy look at current conditions. Eventually this platform could be used to observe and predict trends.

One component of this data is the monitoring of current water resources, possible expansion of the Kentucky Mesonet and development of a long term strategy to fund and utilize that data. It will be critical to determine what data sources are applicable and what is needed to build a workable system. Funding will be a key to not only the initial establishment of a sound monitoring system, but to the long term viability of any program. Each Mesonet site, or potential site, needs to be thoroughly evaluated to make sure the data is reliable and useful. Sources of funding, other than just state funding, must to be considered. County Extension offices and local fire departments should also be considered as possible locations for locating new or expanded Mesonet sites. It was noted that Kentucky Farm Bureau could potentially be the one organization that could bring all sides together to develop a state program for the development and collection of this type of data. Mr. Cinotto will work with other groups to try and pull together an estimate of funding needed for developing and maintaining an effective network along with a set of deliverables for the November meeting.

Mr. Pat Henderson suggested the Working Group help develop a short form version of the GOAP application to allow for applications for funding to be made quicker and easier. This could be used to apply for funds for Kentucky Mesonet sites or upgrades.

Chairman Coleman led a discussion about the upcoming Kentucky Farm Bureau Annual Meeting and the request for the Water Management Working Group to participate in the commodity sessions on Thursday, December 3. There will be a panel discussion at 3:30 specifically for the Water Management Working Group that will report on workings of the Working Group and planned action items. There was also discussion how the Water Management Working Group could participate in the Natural Resources session that will be held at 10:00 AM on December 3. It

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was discussed to try and secure Mr. Steve Blandford, NRCS, to present on soil health and water during that session, and possibly have a session concerning development of irrigation systems by Mr. and Mrs. Tripp and Sharon Furches.

Chairman Coleman announced the next Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group meeting will be held Wednesday, November 18, 2015 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**