

KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

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Priority topics identified during first meeting of Water Management Working Group

Louisville, KY (December 10, 2014) – A Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) task force to develop ideas for enhancing water resources for the state’s farmers held its initial meeting today, identifying priority topics.

Identifying financial and regulatory challenges, improving ties between water suppliers and communities, assessing available resources and educating farmers on water management were among the chief topics mentioned as KFB’s “Water Management Working Group” established its agenda. KFB President Mark Haney, who appointed the 20-member committee, urged the group to focus on three objectives: (1) research the status of water supplies in the state; (2) examine potential action to raise the availability of water to farms; and (3) make recommendations to the appropriate federal, state and private entities.

After a morning session in which officials from the U.S. Geological Survey gave a presentation on Kentucky’s water resources, Committee Chairman Steve Coleman said the group “is just beginning to scratch the surface.” Coleman, the former Director of the Kentucky Division of Conservation, commended KFB “for having an eye to the future.”

Haney, a Pulaski County farmer in his seventh year as KFB president, said the organization regards water as a looming critical issue for Kentucky farmers as they seek to feed a growing world population.

(more)

“This has the possibility of being a big ticket item,” Haney told the committee. “On-farm water is a must for the future of agriculture. I’m excited about the potential” of developing sources.

Kentucky agriculture has been hit hard by drought in three of the past 15 years plus has had three other years with significant loss. A very small percentage of Kentucky’s cropland is irrigated, according to federal reports.

Gary Larimore, Executive Director of the Kentucky Rural Water Association, said both water quality and quantity are “big issues” in rural areas.

“My only reluctance is that we didn’t start this (project) earlier,” he said.

There are 457 public water systems in Kentucky serving about 96 percent of the population. Kentucky also has 90,000 miles of streams that drain the state plus 2,700 lakes and reservoirs.

The working group includes representatives from KFB, the Kentucky Division of Water, Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Governor’s Office of Agricultural Policy, UK College of Agriculture, Food & Environment, Kentucky League of Cities, Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts and Kentucky Rural Water Association.

The next meeting will be held January 28.

To learn more about KFB’s Water Management Working Group, visit kyfb.com/water.

Photo available for download:

To download the photograph accompanying this story, [click here](#).

Photo Cutline: Joe Cain, left, KFB's Commodity Division Director, and Steve Coleman, retired Director of the Kentucky Division of Conservation and Chairman of the newly formed Water Management Working Group listen as presentations are made during the initial meeting of the task force.

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