

## MINUTES

### WATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

### KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

February 15, 2018

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The Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group (WMWG) met at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center in Louisville, Kentucky on Thursday, February 15, 2018.

Working Group members present were: Steve Coleman, Chair; Warren Beeler; Sharon Furches; Pat Henderson; Kenny Imel; Kevin Jeffries; David Rowlett; and Larry Thomas. Working Group members absent were: Todd Clark; Nancy Cox; Rusty Cress; Terry Gilbert; Pete Goodmann; and Gary Larimore. Ex-officio members present were: Paulette Akers, Director, Kentucky Division of Conservation; Michael Griffin, State Director, U.S. Geological Survey; and Brian Lacefield, State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency. Ex-officio members absent were: Hilda Legg, State Director, USDA Rural Development; and Karen Woodrich, State Conservationist, NRCS. Others in attendance were: Bill Caldwell, KDOW; Pete Cinotto, USGS; Steve Higgins, UK; Glynn Beck, KGS; Tim Hughes, KDA; Randy Smallwood, NRCS; David Chinn, Monty's Food Co.; Curt Hall, Starboard Irrigation; Ben Koostra, Consultant; Staton Nesbitt, Farm Credit Mid-America; Jack Stickney, KY Rural Water Association; Michael Ricketts, Louisville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Patti Grace-Jarrett, Louisville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Amy Babey, Louisville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Robert Augustine, Field Representative for Senator Rand Paul; Stacie Rockaway, Field Representative for Congressman Thomas Massie; Tim Thornberry, KFB; and Ed McQueen, KFB. 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.

Chairman Coleman asked the Working Group to consider the minutes of the November 15, 2017 meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Kenny Imel, and seconded by Mr. Pat Henderson second that:

**"We approve the minutes of the November 12, 2017 meeting."**

Motion passed.

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Chairman Coleman reminded the Working Group that a depository of meeting information (presentations, useful links, supporting literature and minutes) is located on Kentucky Farm Bureau's website at [www.kyfb.com/water](http://www.kyfb.com/water).

Mr. Pete Cinotto, USGS, informed the Working Group that not much progress has been made with the data portal, but it was submitted to the Kentucky Water Resources Board. Mr. Cinotto reported on the super gages that are able to calculate in real time what is going in and leaving Kentucky's water ways, especially to measure Kentucky's agriculture contributions. He reviewed who funds the different gages on network and noted they submitted a proposal for Federal funds to continue to operate the super gages till 2020. He stressed that it is important to know what Kentucky is contributing, especially since we have the tools to be able to collect the data and because water quality is becoming a blame game between the states. Mr. Cinotto noted there would be value in doing a public service announcement on water in the future touching on the topics of where your water comes from and what agriculture is doing to protect water.

Mr. Glenn Beck, KGS, reported that there are 12 monitoring wells in place in Kentucky since November 2015. He noted that there are plans to expand the monitoring well system to make a total of 15 monitoring wells.

Mr. Bill Caldwell, KDOW, discussed the Water Resources Board (WRB) program model and what it considers as main interest, including on-farm water resiliency program, planning and water management, groundwater monitoring, mesonet and gaging, and water quality monitoring and assessments. The WRB and the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board are developing the On-Farm Water Resiliency Program which provides funding to promote water resilience on farms, helping Kentucky's agriculture become more sustainable and profitable for generations to come. Project will be presented to MOU Committee for approval and oversight. Mr. Caldwell discusses the Drought Hazard Risk Assessment, a soil moisture concept regarding drought indexing, which he is working with FEMA on. Looking at three classes of factors related to soils moisture suitability under moderate drought conditions, including infiltration factors, water movement factors, and water supply factors. Part of the Drought Hazard Risk Assessment is to lay out water use for FEMA's consideration because FEMA has done a good job with flood issues, but may not as versed in drought models. With FEMA's help KDOW may be also to use this assessment to help show worthiness of various water development projects and inefficiencies of older municipal water systems and loss due to leakage. The full presentation can be found on the Water Management's website.

Ms. Amy Babey, Mr. Michael Ricketts, and Ms. Patti Grace-Jarrett, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, provided an overview of the U.S. Army Corps of

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Engineers Louisville District, noting that the Civil Works boundaries are based on watershed boundaries including 20 flood reduction and recreation reservoirs, 8 locks and dams on the Ohio River, and 2 locks and dams on the Green River. The four primary missionaries for the Civil Works are navigation, flood and storm risk management, aquatic ecosystem restoration, and watershed planning. Ms. Patti Grace-Jarrett discussed the Corp's Regulatory Authority program section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and section 404 of the Clean Water Act. If there is no discharge from your farming activity then no authorization from the Corp's is required, exemptions to this rule that allow for discharges but still not requiring a permit includes normal farming (plowing, seeding, cultivating, minor drainage, or harvesting) and part of an established "on-going" farming operation (conventional rotation). Other program the Corps offers are Planning Assistance to States, Flood Plain Management Services Program, Emergency Management, and Environmental Infrastructure. It was discussed to work with Corp to develop materials for landowners on issues that need Corp review or approval, similar to the brochure on irrigation USGS did.

Mr. Steve Higgins, UK, reported that the draft BMP's publication was submitted to University of Kentucky to review and should know more in two months. It was suggested that the publication could be publicized through KFB's monthly video. Mr. Higgins noted he has other water harvesting ideas to try if funding is available.

Mr. Curt Hall, Starboard Irrigation and Lighting, provided an overview of Starboard Irrigation and Lighting which helps owners decrease water and power usage, and enhance their property. By using smart technology for irrigation farmers can focus on conservation and efficiency by using participation first and domestic second. Smart irrigation has the capabilities to report accurate data both historical and current, predictive watering by looking ahead to weather conditions, and send alerts when there is an issue.

Mr. Tanner Oliphant, Ag Sense, provided an overview of the remote-managed irrigation company Ag Sense. With Ag Sense you can access real-time information about your operation, control center pivot irrigation remotely, and monitor your farm through your smartphone, tablet or PC allowing you to stay on top of things, wherever you are. The Ag Sense system is capable with all pivots and now valley pivots have Ag Sense technology built in. Mr. Oliphant noted that Kentucky irrigators using soil moisture probes is minimal compared to the data that Ag Sense can provide.

Chairman Coleman opened the floor for general discussion. Mr. Kenny Imel provided an update about the water conservation project at his farm. Mr. Jack Stickney noted the Drinking Water Advisory Council Source Water Subcommittee

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meeting will be held on Thursday, March 1, in Frankfort. Mr. Glynn Beck reported the edge of field project is still ongoing with 6 sites with samples being pulled by end of March. Mr. Randy Smallwood reported the loss of key state staff at NRCS (geologist, archeologist and engineer) without those roles EQIP cannot operate efficiently. Mr. Steve Higgins noted he is looking at historical Mesonet data for a project.

Chairman Coleman announced the next Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 28, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. 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**