

MINUTES
WATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP
KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU FEDERATION
JUNE 24, 2020

The Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group (WMWG) met on June 24, 2020 via Zoom.

Working Group members present were: Steve Coleman, Chair; Warren Beeler; Pat Henderson; Kenny Imel; Gary Larimore; Larry Thomas; and Shane Wells. Working Group members absent were: Todd Clark; Dr. Nancy Cox; Rusty Cress; Terry Gilbert; Pete Goodmann; and Kevin Jeffries. Ex-officio members present were: Paulette Akers, Director, KY Division of Conservation; Michael Griffin, KY Director, USDA Rural Development Office; and Hilda Legg, State Director, USDA Rural Development Office. Ex-officio members absent were: Brian Lacefield, State Executive Director, FSA; Greg Stone, State Conservationist, NRCS. Also present were: Emily Buckman, KFB Director, National Affairs; Renee Carrico, Governor's Office of Ag Policy; David Chinn; Pete Cinotto, Deputy Director, U.S. Geological Survey; Stuart Foster, KY Climate Center; Sharon Furches, KFB 2nd Vice President; Drew Graham, KFB Executive Vice President; Steve Higgins, University of Kentucky; Chad Lee; Erica Rogers; and Chip Zimmer, KY Division of Water. The meeting was staffed by Joe Cain and Tiara Carter.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m., by Chairman Steve Coleman. This was followed by brief remarks thanking the committee for their participation and wished everyone well during the health pandemic. This was followed by remarks from KFB Executive Vice President, Drew Graham and KFB 2nd Vice President, Sharon Furches.

Chairman Coleman asked the group to consider the minutes of the December 11, 2019 meeting. Mr. Larry Thomas made a motion to remove Mr. Phillip Rogers and Adam Rogers as committee members on the minutes and add them as guests. After these revisions a motion was made by Mr. Larry Thomas, seconded by Mr. Shane Wells that:

"We approve the minutes of the December 11, 2019 meeting as mailed."

Motion passed.

Mr. Chip Zimmer, KY Division of Water, gave the group a demonstration of the KY Drought and Hydrologic Impact Reporter. The impact reporter provides a database to illustrate the location, type, and timing of drought impacts throughout the state. The impact reporter utilizes data collected through Survey 123 software from farmers, extension agents, and state organizations, etc. and provides real time data. The survey was designed to be used along with mobile devices and is intended to take 60 seconds to complete. Mr. Zimmer is hopeful that users will input data consistently so they can collect data over time on specific locations and better distribute resources to counties in need. There are plans to use a new survey every year, and Mr. Zimmer noted that they are open to suggestions for additions to next year's survey.

Ms. Emily Buckman, KFB, Director, National Affairs, reported that KFB has shifted its focus to federal COVID-19 programs that will benefit their members. She reported that most recently KFB has focused on getting its eligible members to sign up for payments through the CFAP program with approximately 12,000 livestock applications already submitted in the state; and also pushing its members to sign up for the Paycheck Protection Program, which provides potentially forgivable loans to make payroll. KY Farm Bureau will continue to monitor the new WOTUS rule that took effect June 22, 2020 and is being contested. She noted that another stimulus package is expected. The House of Representatives and the Senate are both in session and remarked that attention has shifted from COVID-19 to police reform amidst nationwide protests. She also announced that Sharon Furches was appointed to the Farm Ranch and Rural Communities Committee at the EPA. She expressed her excitement as Ms. Furches will give Kentucky a national voice for agriculture.

Mr. Warren Beeler, Governor's Office of Ag Policy (GOAP), expressed that COVID-19 has revealed the weaknesses in meat processing and noted that processing is backed up 6 months to a year from the usual 2 months. He gave the group an overview of the incentive program that the USDA has rolled out to expand processing.

Mr. Pete Cinotto, U.S. Geological Survey, gave the group a demonstration of the USGS Kentucky Drought Condition Monitor. Precipitation data collected from stream gauges throughout the state are accessible through mobile devices and via the USGS website. The site also offers weather monitoring for producers to get weather forecasts. Mr. Cinotto is hopeful to have the link to this site linked to the KFB webpage.

Mr. Stuart Foster, KY Mesonet, noted that they have been limited on travel and site maintenance for the past couple of months due to COVID-19. He announced that the work at Robinson Forest has been completed, and two new stations have been installed. The Mesonet has been granted permission to continue working and has plans to install a few more stations in the coming months. There are currently 73 stations and they anticipate having 75 before the end of year. Mr. Foster announced the new Kentucky Mesonet website that will offer an enhanced user experience and addressed some of the issues from the old webpage. He expressed his excitement for the collaborations that have developed recently with the KY Mesonet.

Ms. Renee Carrico, Governor's Office of Ag Policy (GOAP), announced that because of the success of the water projects GOAP has expanded their efforts to meat processing. She announced there are 3 completed water projects and 2 projects near completion. Ms. Carrico gave the group an overview of the changes to the program guidelines that will allow them to utilize more of the federal funding for agriculture. Mr. Kenny Imel gave the group an update on the progress of his On-Farm Water Management project and remarked on the success and profitability of the project thus far. The next On-Farm Water Management Committee meeting will be held on September 12, 2020.

Mr. Joe Cain, KFB, remarked on his visit to Imel's Greenhouse and the progress of his project. He announced that the next meeting of the Water Management Working Group will be August 19, 2020. Location details are to be determined. He also noted that KFB policy will be discussed in the upcoming meeting and asked the group to consider suggestions for policy change.

With no further business to come before the Group the meeting was adjourned.

**Recorded by: Tiara Carter
Administrative Assistant**

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