

## MINUTES

### WATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

### KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

March 28, 2018

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The Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group (WMWG) met at the Kentucky Farm Bureau State Office in Louisville, Kentucky on Wednesday, March 28, 2018.

Working Group members present were: Steve Coleman, Chair; Todd Clark; Sharon Furches; Terry Gilbert; Pat Henderson; Kenny Imel; Kevin Jeffries; and Larry Thomas. Working Group members absent were: Warren Beeler; Nancy Cox; Rusty Cress; Pete Goodmann; Gary Larimore; Keith Rodgers; and David Rowlett. Ex-officio members present were: Paulette Akers, Director, Kentucky Division of Conservation; and Michael Griffin, State Director, U.S. Geological Survey. Ex-officio members absent were: Hilda Legg, State Director, USDA Rural Development; Brian Lacefield, State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency; and Karen Woodrich, State Conservationist, NRCS. Others in attendance were: Biff Baker, GOAP; Brent Burchett, KDA; Bill Caldwell, KDOW; Pete Cinotto, USGS; Steve Higgins, UK; Randy Smallwood, USDA NRCS; David Chinn, Monty's Plant Food Company; Eli Mann, Farm Credit Mid-America; Stuart Foster, WKU and KY Climate Center; Tim Thornberry, KFB; and Katie Weatherholt, 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 February 15, 2018 meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Kenny Imel, and seconded by Mr. Kevin Jefferies second that:

**"We approve the minutes of the February 15, 2018 meeting."**

Motion passed.

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).

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Mr. Michael Griffin, USGS, provided an USGS super gage update to the Working Group. He noted funding was approved for 3 additional super gages, located at the Ohio, Licking, and Green rivers. Funding is until September 2020. It was also mentioned a 4<sup>th</sup> site is under way for the fall at the Kentucky River basin around lock 2. The super gages will allow continued data collection and real-time information on the website. USGS wants to start determining loads in real-time and make it available on the web as well. He also noted that they want to have a gage on the Salt River due to it being a different type of watershed, with more urban influence.

Mr. Joe Cain, KFB, noted the WMWG was nominated for the U.S. Water Prize awarded annually by the U.S. Water Alliance. This award celebrates outstanding achievement in advancing sustainable, integrated, and inclusive solutions to our nation's water challenges. He thanked USGS and KY Division of Water for their letters of recommendation. Mr. Biff Baker, GOAP, mentioned Farm World Magazine wrote an article on the joint GOAP and USGS water project, it should be released soon to the public. It was suggested the Working Group should develop talking points so everyone is saying the message when talking about the WMWG and the key benefits each organization brings to the table to tackle Kentucky's water challenges.

Mr. Pete Cinotto, USGS, reported on the USGS data portal project. He reported the USGS data portal will be completed by the end of the year. The data portal will be similar Pennsylvania's. Currently, USGS is trying to figure out how to scale Kentucky. WMWG members mentioned possible components to keep in mind while designing the portal including: a gray scale option for color blind people, adding an executive summary for the month, and keeping it user friendly with the option to explore more deeply into the topic.

Mr. Bill Caldwell, KDOW, provided an update on the Kentucky Water Resources Board, specifically the On-Farm Water Management Program, which was approved on March 16, 2018. The On-Farm Water Management Program Committee will be formed of 3 Ag Development Board representatives and 3 Water Resources Board representatives. The project memorandum of understanding will include projects including on-farm resiliency including Research, Development and Demonstration (RDD) farms and Practical Implementation Project (PIP) farms. RDDs are multiple projects in one location and PIPs are individuals or non-profits who want to implement on their own farms projects they have viewed on RDD farms. The first project application review is scheduled for April 20 to discuss the Morehead State University Farm Project. The budget for On-Farm Water Management Programs over the next two years is \$1 million dollars, max of \$400,000 to RDD farms and max of \$600,000 to PIP farms. There will be a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to prescreen applications, arrange site visits and

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provide recommendations to the On-Farm Water Management Committee. The Committee would then evaluate the recommended applications and communicate with the Water Resources Board and recommend projects for Ag Development Board funding. Mr. Caldwell noted the Water Resources Board has been developed and the board is now looking at setting the goals and objectives. It was requested that a brochure or fact sheet be created to help get the On-Farm Water Management Program information easily distributed to the community with steps of the application process and who to contact. It was noted that these On-Farm projects could help showcase what agriculture can do around the state. The full presentation can be found on the Water Management's website.

Dr. Stuart Foster, WKU and KY Climate Center, provided a Kentucky Mesonet update and weather outlook. Dr. Foster reported Kentucky is currently in a La Nina weather pattern, which correlates to wetter conditions this year. As of March 20, 2018, the U.S. Drought Monitor reports Kentucky has no drought conditions, but there are concerns of drought in other parts of the country. Dr. Foster provided a Kentucky Mesonet update, specifically on the Temperature Inversions Monitoring (TIM) and Drought Early Warning System (DEWS). Temperature Inversions Monitoring systems are being experimented with from funding from USDA Midwest Climate Hub. Six locations across Kentucky installed temperature sensors at 3 different levels to help determine when the potential for a temperature inversion is high. This system could help farmers determine when conditions are right for applying chemical treatments to crops. Results from this experiment will be evaluated to determine whether to invest in monitoring at additional sites and possibly at higher heights. Data from this pilot project will eventually be available on the KY Climate Center website. Dr. Foster reported a two-year project, beginning in Summer 2018, to start building the Kentucky Drought Early Warning System is under way. The proposed scope of work integrates 4 key themes (data collection, information extraction, messaging, and communication). He noted over 20 Mesonet sites have soil probes, with funding for another 25-30 sites to receive the soil probes in the next couple years. He also mentioned 8 Mesonet sites have cameras and would like to expand that to a minimum of 25 sites. The cameras use infrared red imagery to help document vegetation health. Dr. Foster reported the app is complete and available for Android, but they are waiting on for Apple to approve the IOS app. Once both versions are available KY Climate Center will push for downloads and will begin promoting the app. The full presentation can be found on the Water Management's website.

Mr. Joe Cain, KFB, reported on the Farm Bill. He discussed the effort to change the language for technical assistance for new water projects for NRCS. Currently, a person must already have developed a water resource on the farm to receive technical assistance. A more cost-efficient way would be to be able to

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receive help from NRCS during the planning phases to get the water system correct the first time. Language has been submitted to both the Senate and House Ag Committees as well as a request for more funding. If the language is changed NRCS personnel would need to be in place to provide technical assistance.

After lunch, Chairman Coleman lead an open discussion on the water resource development implementation strategies. Mr. Joe Cain, KFB, noted the Working Group needed a strategy moving forward to transition into a supporting role for the Kentucky Resources Board. He mentioned funding needs to be on the available to implement projects and there needs to be established projects people can easily replicate on their own land. He also noted additional technical assistance personal would be needed to help get the projects underway and make sure the program runs smoothly. Mr. Pat Henderson noted the projects at public lands should be strategically spread out across the state and possibly have videos of the projects available online for people to see all the projects and choose which ones they would like to see more of in person. Mr. Kenny Imel mentioned the need to sell the individual farmer on the benefits of implementing the water resource projects on their farms. Mr. Biff Baker, GOAP, reiterated the needed PR to help get the word out in the counties about the programs available. The application is on the Ag Development Board's website and PIPs are encouraged to go through the county.

Chairman Coleman opened the floor for general discussion. None were made.

Chairman Coleman announced the next Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 30, 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**