

MINUTES

WATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

March 13, 2019

The Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group (WMWG) met at the Kentucky Farm Bureau State Office in Louisville, Kentucky on Wednesday, March 13, 2019.

Working Group Members present were: Steve Coleman, Chair; Warren Beeler; Sharon Furches; Terry Gilbert; Pat Henderson; Kenneth Imel; Kevin Jeffries; and Shane Wells. Working Group members absent were: Todd Clark; Nancy Cox; Rusty Cress; Pete Goodmann; Gary Larimore; Keith Rogers; and Larry Thomas. Ex-officio members present were: Hilda Legg, State Director, USDA Rural Development Office. Ex-officio members absent were: Michael Griffin, KY Director, U.S. Geological Survey; Brian Lacefield, State Executive Director, FSA; and Karen Woodrich, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service. Others in attendance were: Gary Brown; Bill Caldwell, KY Division of Water; Pete Cinotto, U.S Geological Services; Stuart Foster, WKU KY Climate Center; Stephen Higgins, UK Grain and Forage Center of Excellence; Renee Laurent, Governor's Office of Ag Policy; and Chad Lee, UK Grain and Forage Center of Excellence.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. EDT, by Chairman Steve Coleman, who welcomed the committee and reviewed the purpose of the meeting. Mr. Coleman also made mention of the group website, www.kyfb.com/water, and the resources that are provided there. This was followed by introductions.

Chairman Coleman asked the Working Group to consider the minutes of the December 5, 2018 meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Kenny Imel, seconded by Ms. Hilda Legg that:

“We approve the minutes of the December 5, 2019 meeting. ”

Motion passed.

Mr. Warren Beeler, KY Governor's Office of Ag Policy, provided an update on water projects being considered by the KY Water Resources Board and noted they were having some issues. He felt overall positive about the quality of the projects and was confident the issues will be overcome. Ms. Renee Laurent noted there will be consideration of two PIP and two RDD projects at the next meeting of the water committee on March 25th at 10:00 AM the Franklin County Extension office.

Mr. Peter Cinotto, U.S. Geological Service (USGS), provided a PowerPoint update on USGS super gages and the Kentucky drought dashboard. Mr. Cinotto provided an overview on the uses and functions of the 8 fixed site super gages and noted that they were partially funded by the Governor's Office of Ag Policy. He also provided an overview of the mobile super gage prototype they developed to collect data along waterways. The data showed Kentucky contributions of Nitrate and Phosphorous loads in the Mississippi River Basin are considerably lower than what was originally modeled for loads out of Kentucky. The data also showed the variance in Nitrate and Phosphorous along the tested waterways from various agricultural production areas. In response to Mr. Cinotto's presentation several members of the group remarked on the importance of maintaining the super gage system by securing long-term funding for gages to allow for continued data collection. Data collection on the drought dashboard is behind, due to the government shutdown but development is continuing. He is working with multiple agencies (Mesonet, UK, KDOW and others) on this project.

Mr. Bill Caldwell, KY Division of Water, provided a PowerPoint update on the drought mitigation plan for agriculture. He encouraged an active Water Management Working Group, use of programs through the KY Water Resource Board, and more adequate utilization of Mesonet systems. He emphasized that there are multiple considerations in developing an effective drought mitigation plan that can identify droughts in early stages and help make management decision on effective water use. The group discussed how tying the Mesonet-generated data with soil moisture probe data under various cropping systems could make the drought management tool more realistic. Mr. Caldwell and Mr. Foster noted this is a worth further research. Mr. Caldwell suggested working on edaphological (soil) drought rather than just referencing agricultural droughts.

Mrs. Hilda Legg, State Director, USDA Rural Development, noted upcoming broadband activities. A save-the-date brochure was distributed.

Dr. Chad Lee, UK Grain & Forage Center of Excellence, presented an update on a recent trip he led to Argentina. He highlighted the water issues they are facing but noted that Argentina has tremendous potential in their natural resources despite considerable challenges with their infrastructure. Dr. Lee also provided an update on the Grain and Forage Center of Excellence. The ribbon cutting for the new facility is scheduled for Thursday, September 19, 2019. The progress of the construction can be viewed at www.kygrains.info.

Dr. Stephen Higgins provided an update on BMPs for water resource development. He also announced that the designated practices, AEU 104, have been published. Most of the BMPs on the list are already NRCS-approved practices. He also updated the group on projects he is working with around Kentucky. He talked about an evaporative cooling system that is being planned for one hog farm would significantly reduce water use.

Mr. Joe Cain, KFB, noted there wasn't much of an update to provide on the new farm bill as the writing of the program guidelines have been delayed due to the government shutdown. He also stated that EQIP was expanded.

There was general discussion on the water risk analysis and risk assessment, as well as how the water resource development projects are going. Mr. Imel discussed ongoing issues with NRCS on his water resource development project and asked the group for suggestions on moving forward. Future meeting dates and locations were discussed. The next meeting is set for May 29th, and the group would like to use the Mercer County Extension Office as a potential meeting site. The group also suggested the August 28th meeting be held at the new UK Center for Grain and Forage of Excellence or the new KY Soybean Association building. The December 11th meeting will likely be held at Kentucky Farm Bureau State Office.

There being no further business to come before the committee the meeting was adjourned.

**Recorded by: Tiara Robinson
Administrative Assistant**

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