

MINUTES

WATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

August 29, 2018

The Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group (WMWG) met at the Kentucky Farm Bureau State Office in Louisville, Kentucky on Wednesday, August 29, 2018.

Working Group members present were: Steve Coleman, Chair; Todd Clark; Sharon Furches; Pat Henderson; and Kenny Imel. Working Group members absent were: Warren Beeler; Nancy Cox; Rusty Cress; Terry Gilbert; Pete Goodmann; Kevin Jeffries; Gary Larimore; Keith Rodgers; and Larry Thomas. Ex-officio members absent were: Paulette Akers, Director, Kentucky Division of Conservation; Michael Griffin, State Director, U.S. Geological Survey; Brian Lacefield, State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency; Hilda Legg, State Director, USDA Rural Development; and Karen Woodrich, State Conservationist, NRCS. Others in attendance were: Biff Baker, GOAP; Brent Burchett, KDA; Bill Caldwell, KDOW; Pete Cinotto, USGS; Chad Lee, UK; Tim Harner, KY NRCS; Brunilda Velez, KY NRCS; Crystal Renfro, KACD; Erica Rogers, Farm Credit Mid-America; Stu Foster, WKU/KY Climate Center; David Chinn, Monty's Plant Food Co.; Mark Haney, President, KFB; Eddie Melton, 1st Vice President, KFB; and Fritz Giesecke, 2nd Vice President, 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.

KFB President Mark Haney welcomed the group and made comments about the success of the Kentucky State Fair and the successes of the Water Management Working Group and how proud he is of the work the group has done. He encouraged the group to continue to advance the positive efforts the group does because there is still plenty of work to be done.

Chairman Coleman asked the Working Group to consider the minutes of the May 30, 2018 meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Sharon Furches, seconded by Mr. Todd Clark, that:

"We approve the minutes of the May 30, 2018 meeting."

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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.

Mr. Pete Cinotto, USGS, noted Ms. Angie Crain was unable to join the meeting to provide her update. Mr. Cinotto stated the super gage report has been completed and is currently under review and should be released soon. He reviewed each site and their status and noted there really were not any major surprises. He reported the Wabash gage showed it was a significant contributor to loads on the Ohio and Cannelton, just below Louisville, was a hotspot. Others were not too bad. He noted the report will give a good overview of each gage and since they ran isotopes on the loads that will allow the report to provide a decent review of where the actual nutrient loads are being generated. Mr. Cinotto provided the group an annual Midwest report that has some areas of Kentucky included. The super gages are funded with Kentucky Ag Development funds through 2020, and they are working hard to find a sustainable source of funding to continue the gages. He noted on the Wabash that Purina is a corporate sponsor of the gage and felt this may be a way to secure at least some future funding from similar groups for other gages. They are expanding gages to the Licking River and will soon begin installation of a gage on the Kentucky River. The value of this data is to quantify where the nutrient and sediment loads are actually being generated rather than just modeling the data that initially showed Kentucky as a significant contributor to Mississippi River loads. Mr. Cinotto also reviewed the dashboard project he is working with KDOW and Mesonet on to help get data distributed more efficiently. He said the dashboard will be available in 2019, noting he is working with several groups to make the available data is in more of an informational format that could be easily understood and used.

Dr. Stuart Foster, WKU/Kentucky Climate Center, provided a report on updates made to the Mesonet. He reviewed the Temperature Inversion Monitoring System that has been installed at 6 locations in Kentucky, noting they plan to install similar systems at 15 additional sites in the coming months. He reported a lot of this is being driven by the dicamba situation and Monsanto plans to host meetings in October to discuss how this effort could be incorporated into efforts to address dicamba spray issues. Dr. Foster also reviewed the Drought Early Warning System (DEWS) kickoff meeting scheduled for September 6. The meeting will focus on two of the four defined project objectives. He stated there is a strong desire to engage the agricultural community in this effort. They want the result to be the development of functional requirements that will make the DEWS system effective. DEWS should develop into an informational database dashboard that

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would be useful by producers. Once the product is developed, the Climate Center will be hosting webinar updates and training for users to explain how the dashboard can be utilized. Dr. Foster also mentioned there is a great opportunity to bring a large variety of people and organizations together in a public/private partnership to make such efforts more successful. He reported the Mesonet continues to expand, but they had some setbacks due to staffing issues. They are working to fill those positions. He reported Dr. Mahmood recently accepted a position in Nebraska and WKU has yet to fill the position. He noted the Pulaski County Mesonet installation is moving forward and the Webster County station will officially open September 20. He discussed the partnership with NRCS on soil moisture monitoring efforts noting that over 30 sites currently have soil moisture monitoring with hopes to have over 50 soon. Mr. Eddie Melton, KFB First Vice President, noted the partnership in local communities is important in getting these stations in place, but also in providing ongoing maintenance and operational funding. Dr. Foster reported eventually they will develop specific pages for stations where local partnerships exist that will make it easier to view and utilize local data in those areas. Once the Mesonet infrastructure is in place, it isn't as expensive to add additional features and maintain the system by local partners. Ms. Sharon Furches added that the state FSA committee utilizes Mesonet data on a regular basis when reviewing indemnity claims. Maintenance per station is \$3-5,000 per year. The inversion package that can be added to Mesonet sites is somewhere around \$2,000 per unit to install. The full PowerPoint is available on the Water Management's website.

Mr. Bill Caldwell, Kentucky Division of Water, provided the group with three handouts as part of his report on the status of water resource development projects; the handouts can be found on the Water Management's website. The first handout was a map of Kentucky showing the location and visit status of water resource development projects. He noted the Imel Greenhouse project will be a RDD project (RDD projects are larger projects that can be utilized for field days and demonstration visits). He reported the program now has 42 projects submitted. The second handout was a summary of submitted projects, by county, providing a brief description of the projects applied for. He noted that spring development projects are an area that is underutilized as is pump-and-store projects for on farm water storage. One project he reviewed was water moisture monitoring on a watermelon farm. He noted a strawberry farm will be installing a similar system for the coming season. He also reported that several hoop houses for year-round stone fruit, flowers and herb production are being developed and are considering a variety of water management systems. The final handout was a summary of a water harvesting project that was conducted at a farm in Jackson/Owsley County showing the recommendations to be considered as the farm contemplates what projects they should apply for. He invited the group to accompany them on site

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visits if interested. Mr. Caldwell noted the Kentucky Water Resources Board may have some additional projects to review at the next meeting being planned for late September. He and Mr. Pete Cinotto, USGS, briefly discussed a joint hydrological model they are working on for water availability studies. Mr. Caldwell reported the Drought Risk Assessment should be available soon, and noted it is already getting some use by different agency groups.

Dr. Chad Lee, UK, updated the group on progress being made at the UK Center for Grain and Forage Excellence noting the project is moving quickly. Faculty will move into the new convention area in temporary office space as building renovations continue. He anticipates the ribbon cutting ceremony officially opening the new facility will be September 2019, but they may be in the full facility as early as June if all goes well. Dr. Lee reported they usually have around 2 students working at the Center, but this year they had 29 undergraduate students working on a variety of projects. He noted the Center for Grain and Forage Excellence project started locally as a collaborative effort between farmers and UK and he is humbled by the amount of effort various groups and individuals have and are making. www.kygrains.info is a website interested individuals can visit to follow progress. Mr. Biff Baker, GOAP, asked about the October 26 joint meeting with UK and the KY Division of Water for the KY Water Resources Research Institute Forum, and it was noted the forum would be considering building a watershed directory for Kentucky.

Ms. Brunilda Velez, KY NRCS Interim State Conservationist, updated the Working Group on NRCS activities in Kentucky and recognized the strong working relationship between agricultural groups in Kentucky. She noted NRCS may have funds that could be used in conjunction with water project activities saying there was a funding pool created for water resource management. She reported ten projects received funding for irrigation water management practices and are eligible to come back for additional funding. Ms. Velez reviewed the irrigation training that was recently conducted and reported there is some funding available that could be used for irrigation sensor funding. There are opportunities available through NRCS that could fit well with the objectives of the Water Management Working Group. She noted that ranking specific objective priorities can be addressed during state technical committee meetings.

Ms. Paulette Akers, Kentucky Division of Conservation (KDOC), provided an update on state cost share programs. The application process was online this year and worked well with just over 1,200 applications with requests totaling just over \$8 million (adjusted to around an actual \$7 million) in funding. KDOC is going through the data to make sure it is correct, and they expect to have the final list finalized soon and anticipates approval of around \$6 million. She stated they are

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considering another potential signup sometime in late winter. KDOC is working with NRCS on conservation planning with KDOC staff currently undergoing training. They anticipate initially working on Ag Water Quality Plans and program applications to find the best projects for producers. This would free up NRCS staff who hold specific certifications to work on projects rather than trying to research and recommend projects or programs for producers to consider. Ms. Akers noted Mr. Jim Roe was hired to be the liaison for DOC with NRCS. She reported the Governor's Conference will be October 11 & 12 with early bird registration at \$295.

Mr. Coleman recognized Mr. Shane Wells, the newly elected president of the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts.

Chairman Coleman asked the group to consider current **KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU POLICY**.

A motion was made by Ms. Sharon Furches, seconded Pat Henderson, to add the following language pertaining to water resource management.

Water Resource Management
Page 41, Line 25, **ADD**

"WE SUPPORT FURTHER EXPANSION OF THE KENTUCKY MESONET INFRASTRUCTURE TO INCLUDE ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE TOOLS TO HELP PRODUCERS MANAGE RISK. WE ENCOURAGE COOPERATION BETWEEN AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS WITH CONTINUED STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDING FOR MESONET PROGRAMS, AND STRONGLY ENCOURAGE LOCAL PUBLIC/PRIVATE SUPPORT OF MESONET SITES."

Motion passed.

A motion was made by Mr. Pat Henderson, seconded by Mr. Kenny Imel, to add the following language pertaining to water research.

Water Research
Page 39, Line 38, **ADD**

"WE ENCOURAGE ADEQUATE FUNDING BE ALLOCATED TO CONTINUED MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OF USGS SUPER GAGES."

Motion passed.

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Chairman Coleman asked if the Working Group had any recommendations of program material for the commodity breakout sessions during the KFB Annual Meeting. The suggestion was to possibly have Dr. Stuart Foster present on the new Kentucky Mesonet monitoring tools and how they can benefit agricultural producers.

The Working Group discussed future WMWG meeting items and recommended asking the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to come and report on their long-term vision for Kentucky's management water systems. The Working Group plans to invite Ms. Angie Crain to provide an update on Super Gages and Real Time Loading Reports and Mr. Bill Caldwell to present on the results of the water risk analysis study that is being conducted. Mr. Pat Henderson recommended having a presentation on how blue line streams are designated.

Chairman Coleman announced the next Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 5, 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**