

## **Kentucky Agricultural Council: Task Force on the Future of Agriculture**

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### **Minutes of the August 16, 2007 Meeting**

The Kentucky Agricultural Council: Task Force on the Future of Agriculture meeting was held on **August 16, 2007** at **1:00 PM EDT** at the Kentucky Exposition Center in South Wing C, Room 105 in Louisville, KY. Dr. Tony Brannon, chair, called the meeting to order.

#### ***Members Present***

Scott Ahlschwede, Kentucky Association of Equine Practitioners : Rick Alexander, Commodity Growers Association; David Beck, Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation; John Bell, Kentucky Horticulture Council; Ray Bowman, Kentucky Goat Producers Association; Dr. Tony Brannon, Murray State University; Kaycie Len Carter, Community Farm Alliance; Steve Coleman, Division of Conservation; Nancy Cox, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture; Marshall Coyle, Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation; Dan Flanagan, Kentucky Poultry Federation; Brent Frazier, PACE Board; Sharon Furches, Kentucky Women in Agriculture; Terry Gilbert, Kentucky Women in Agriculture; Tod Griffin, AgriBusiness Association of Kentucky; Ginny Grulke, Kentucky Horse Council; Jeffrey Hall, Farm Service Agency; Mark Haney, Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation; Maurice Heard, Kentucky Pork Producers Association; David Henderman, Kentucky Woodland Owners Association; Tony Herrington, Community Farm Alliance; Jimmy Dan Hicks, Kentucky Bankers Association; Mike Hubbs, Natural Resource & Conservation Service; Tim Hughes, Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation; Dwayne Ingram, Kentucky Horticultural Council; Jenny Inman, Kentucky Women in Agriculture; Larry Jagers, Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation; Kevin Jeffries, Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts; Mike Judge, Kentucky Department of Agriculture; Sam Lawson, Kentucky Agricultural Development Board; Curt Lucas, Kentucky Association FFA; Dave Maples, Kentucky Cattlemen's Association; Kathy Meyer, Kentucky Sheep & Wool Producers Association; Harvey Mitchell, The Center for Rural Development; Robert Monk, Farm Credit Services of Mid-America, ACA; Sam Moore, Kentucky Agricultural Development Board; Dr. Wade Northington, Murray State University Breathitt Diagnostic Lab; Don Pemberton, Kentucky Cattlemen's Association; J. Mike Phillips, Morehead State University; Dr. Bruce Pratt, Eastern Kentucky University Department of Agriculture; Roger Quarles, Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative, Inc.; Aaron Reding, Kentucky Soybean Association; Deborah Reed, Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association; Keith Rogers, Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy; Dr. Jack Rudolph, Western Kentucky University Department of Agriculture; Todd Ryan, Kentucky Nursery & Landscape Association; Dr. Scott Smith, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture; David Switzer, Kentucky Thoroughbred Association; Roger Thomas, Kentucky Dairy Development Association; Ray Tucker, Commodity Growers Association; Dean Wallace, Council for Burley Tobacco; Growers Cooperative; James Weber, Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association; Brent Williams, Kentucky Feed & Grain Association; Todd Willian, Western Kentucky University; John Wright, Kentucky Agricultural Resource Development Authority

### ***Others Present***

Christina Gordley, Governor's Office of Policy Management; Laura Powers, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture; David Neville, Capstone Farms; Ginny Flanagan, Kentucky Agricultural Heritage Center; Terri Bradshaw, Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation; Troy Wistuba, Morehead State University; Laura Knoth, Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation; Gary Huddleston, Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation; Will Snell, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture; H. H. Barlow, Kentucky Agricultural Development Board; Kara Keeton, Keeton Communications; Mario Kearo; Christi Marksbury, Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy; Angela Blank, Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy; Joel Neaveill, Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy; Ted Sloan, Kentucky Department of Agriculture

### **Welcome**

Dr. Tony Brannon welcomed the group to the fourth meeting of the Task Force on the Future of Agriculture at the Kentucky State Fair.

### **Approve Minutes of the July 25, 2007 Meeting**

Dr. Tony Brannon presented the minutes of the July 25, 2007 meeting to the Task Force.

Don Pemberton (Kentucky Cattlemen's Association) moved to accept the minutes of the July 25, 2007 meeting of the Task Force on the Future of Agriculture; Dan Flanagan (Kentucky Poultry Federation) seconded the motion. The motion passed without dissent.

Dr. Brannon noted that all of the meeting minutes are posted on the Kentucky Agricultural Council website at [www.kyagcouncil.org](http://www.kyagcouncil.org).

### **Overview of Task Force**

Dr. Brannon briefly reviewed the meeting starting with the Governor's Summit on Agriculture and the challenge issued to Kentucky's agricultural leaders by Governor Ernie Fletcher. He then touched on the first meeting of the Task Force in Elizabethtown and the presentations on strategic planning from Dr. Steve Isaacs, Dr. Lori Garkovich and Dr. Rick Maurer from the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture. The Task Force also discussed the critical challenges and emerging opportunities in the agriculture industry. Each organization was given a questionnaire to fill out for "homework". The Staff Working Group took these questionnaires and grouped the information into six groups.

The second meeting of the Task Force was in Somerset. The Task Force was broken up into six roundtable groups to take the information from the questionnaires and identify strategies, key actions and benchmarks for each topic.

The purpose of the third meeting of the Task Force in Murray was to fill in gaps from the meeting in Somerset and refine what had been put on paper to date. The Staff Working made further recommendations on the six topics at this meeting.

The Staff Working Group met on August 3, 2007 and developed the strategies that were received by mail earlier in the week. This brought the Task Force to the current meeting.

The Staff Working Group struggled with the format of the information and Dr. Brannon emphasized the importance of arriving at a consensus at this meeting. Every organization would have a chance to provide input and arrive at a consensus by a ballot vote. The flow of the day's meeting was that the presenter would discuss the topic areas one at a time and guide the discussion for the group.

The goal of the meeting was to rate the strategies and key actions based on the consensus scale provided with the ballot. Dr. Brannon pointed out that this is a draft document or a work in process. The Staff Working Group plans to work with the consultant and obtain information for the upcoming regional public forums.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) for a consultant was approved in the Kentucky Agricultural Council meeting earlier in the day. Funding from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board was allotted to hire a consultant to help with the strategic plan. This process is not to be driven, but refined by the consultant. Dr. Brannon stated that everyone has gone above and beyond the call of duty to get their ideas on paper and we are now at the point that we need someone to devote the time to writing the plan.

### **Education** (Handout on file with Secretary)

Dr. Brannon called on Dr. Will Snell to present the Education topic. Dr. Snell stated that education was a very broad topic all the way from FFA/4-H to the universities. The continuous them from the organization reports from the Kentucky Agricultural Council meeting mentioned an education component. Everyone is affected by education. (Dr. Snell summarized the key actions of the Education strategies.)

Some comments Dr. Snell made on individual strategies were the following:

Strategy A – School systems are devoting less time to agricultural education and there are hardly any middle school programs. There needs to be more agricultural education in grades K-12 and in urban areas

Strategy B – Strategies A and B were combined and this strategy came forth. There needs to be more degree programs and adult education. There is a cross reference with discussions about funding with the Agriculture Production and Marketing topic.

*Kentucky Farm Bureau* – There was no mention of the Agricultural Heritage Center. There needs to be help for that endeavor in the strategic plan. This Center can help to educate the public and the agriculture community.

*Eastern Kentucky University Department of Agriculture* – There could be a tag into Strategy C and this could be a key action.

**Dr. Brannon asked that the group write in the Kentucky Agricultural Heritage Center at the bottom of Page 1.**

*Kentucky Horticulture Council* – Two areas were not identified in the plan thus far and they were through the Kentucky Proud program. One area was to try to get the point across to consumers why they should buy Kentucky grown products. The key action would be to spend more money on advertising for this concept. The other area is to buy

local because it is healthier. There needs to be continual education in order keep producing this healthy food.

*Kentucky Agricultural Development Board* – The plan seems to be more public relations and lobbying than hard education.

*Kentucky Women in Agriculture* – The tour idea is excellent, but what about general public in the tour? Dr. Snell's response was that leadership on local level can help with this issue.

*Kentucky Woodland Owners Association* – There are a lot of specifics on agricultural education but not on rural education. If this plan prospers, agriculture as a whole will prosper.

Strategy D – This strategy brings it all together. Without leaders in the future, we will not prosper. Everyone in the room is a leader.

*Council on Burley Tobacco* – The standards need to be raised in public school system and develop a stronger school system. There was an agreement with the comments made previously from the Kentucky Woodland Owners Association.

*Kentucky FFA Association* – There needs to be an appeal to colleagues that if we do not stand up for agricultural education, we will have a hard time getting the upgrades needed in the school systems. If left emphasized by the industry, we will not know where it will stand for the future.

*Kentucky Woodland Owners Association* – There was not a disagreement with what was said, but how can we not start with basic education?

## **Labor**

Dr. Brannon called on Michael Judge to present the Labor topic.

Strategy A – Several topics were put under this broader category.

Strategy B – This was a strategy that was mentioned several times in discussions.

*Kentucky Horticulture Council* – Since there is nothing happening in Washington, is this a good opportunity for Kentucky to make a statement for this to happen in the industry? This is a good opportunity for us to make a policy statement instead of a recommendation. It is aggressive, but it is a challenge to the group to move forward because nothing is progressing as we stand now in Washington.

*Kentucky Thoroughbred Association* – The H2A program is not the only important thing. Immigration reform needs to be included as well as the H2A program.

*Kentucky Women in Agriculture* – Their groups is comfortable with things in this area. They do feel it is heavily weighted towards migrant issues and does not include grain farmers. This area may need to include general labor reform.

*Commodity Growers Association* – There needs to be something farmer and worker friendly in these programs. Be more specific and do not make the language generic.

*Council on Burley Tobacco*– It is much bigger than the H2A program.

Strategy C – Mr. Judge summarized this strategy.

*Kentucky Woodlands Association* – There was a question about the Agricultural Development Board's cost-share program and discussion on consideration of financial assistance to help with migrant housing.

*Farm Service Agency* – It was explained that there is some assistance for this effort with federal dollars.

*Council on Burley Tobacco* – Do we need to limit this to housing? Maybe we could use this for other infrastructure programs, such as busing, wagons for hauling to the field, etc.

## **Agricultural Production and Marketing**

Dr. Brannon called on Roger Thomas & Dave Maples to present the Agricultural Production and Marketing topic.

Strategy A –

### Production Area

*University of Kentucky* – The issue of large animal vets is complicated. Kentucky Farm Bureau has a task force and has encouraged more options to be left open at this time. An additional thought would be to have more options on a high school level and in college and more veterinary education involvement.

*Murray State University Breathitt Diagnostic Lab* – It was encouraged that the example be deleted from benchmark or to find a different example so as not to have legal ramifications.

*Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association* – Veterinary technical programs are accredited on a federal level. There is nothing set in place at this level and that would require the powers that be research into federal education.

### Marketing

No comments for the marketing portion of strategy A.

Strategy B -

*Murray State University Breathitt Diagnostic Lab* – There was a question for clarification. Is the money from Agricultural Development Fund for sewer and water for everyone in the state? The answer was yes.

Strategy C –

*Kentucky Horticulture Council*– Infrastructure development is applicable here as well, in both marketing and production.

### **Rural Health Initiative**

Dr. Brannon announced that this was a change of the topic title from the previous Task Force discussions. He then introduced Jeff Hall to Present the Rural Health Initiative topic.

#### Strategy A –

No comments

#### Strategy B –

*Council on Burley Tobacco* – The statement was made that we are treading on thin ice if we are saying than Kentucky food is healthier than other food. We do not need to try to knock down one section of the industry to build up another section. We do not need to loose the confidence of the consumer.

*Kentucky Horticulture Council* – Some research shows that fresher is healthier.

*Kentucky Women in Agriculture* – Perhaps the plan should say that we promote a healthier Kentucky.

*Community Farm Alliance* – Food security is also an issue. Closer to the producer reduces contamination, etc.

**The consensus of the group was to change the wording to state to promote benefits of locally grown food.**

### **AgriEnergy**

Dr, Brannon called on Tod Griffin to present the AgriEnergy topic.

#### Strategy A -

*The Center for Rural Development* – KREC is a good project and has good agricultural representation.

Strategy B – Almost two strategies in one.

No comments

#### Strategy C -

No comments

### **Regional Agriculture and Rural Community Development**

Dr. Brannon pointed out the change in topic title and he presented the topic to the Task Force.

Strategy A – Forums and leadership days correlate with the education topic. Several of the topics were moved to Education or other topics.

*University of Kentucky* – There are many local meetings to discuss agricultural issues of all kinds. Unless you are going to tell the group what to do with that input and why we are doing it, then another meeting is not the problem. The question was asked, can we piggyback onto something else? We could possibly coordinate with the Agricultural Development Board and the county comprehensive plans. Maybe do an analysis of plans? Once you get input at a local level, what are you going to do with it?

*Strategy B–*

*Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts* – There was no discussion of where the funding will come from for the PACE program.

*University of Kentucky* – The understanding is that it is not funded at all. There have been no projects in the past couple of years.

*PACE Board*– The program has purchased a few farms in the past couple of years. They are excepting donations. The federal tax laws have changed and donations would be a step in the right direction.

*Kentucky Department of Agriculture* – The funding was removed in the 2006 budget. It is an expensive program and the funding for the appraisals, etc., are very expensive and outside funding would be very much appreciated. It was a general fund appropriation and there have been discussions on dedicated funding again. There is a statutory board that meets every month.

**Include wording changes to include a recommendation from the PACE Board.**

*Kentucky Agricultural Development Board* – Redefine economic development. What does that define and who are they talking about? Who are we redefining this for?

**Definition of economic development shall be developed by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and the Governor’s Office of Agricultural Policy. This definition would allow economic development to compliment incentives based on job creation for agriculture.**

**Conclusion**

Dr. Brannon stated once again that there were six topic areas. In the bottom space of the ballot, he asked each Task Force member to rank the topics from most important to least important (1 being most important and six being least important).

Dr. Brannon thanked everyone for their participation in the process. He stated that each member should feel they have had a chance to participate in the process orally and in writing from the day’s process.

He discussed the RFP process for the consultant with the group. The RFP is posted on the website. It is a funded position and the Staff Working Group is taking competitive

bids and they are not bound by state guidelines. The Task Force gave the Staff Working Group the authority to hire someone. (Handout on file with Secretary)

Once again, Dr. Brannon thanked everyone for their attendance and involvement in process. He also thanked the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and the Staff Working Group. He asked the group not to be afraid to give feedback to himself or the Staff Working Group.

Keith Rogers asked that the group give a big hand to Tony Brannon for his hard work. Mr. Rogers stated that Dr. Brannon had gone above and beyond for the task at hand. He is happy that we are where we are today and we are there with the talent we have.

Before the conclusion of the meeting, Dr. Brannon introduced Governor Ernie Fletcher for remarks to the Task Force.

Governor Fletcher thanked Dr. Brannon for leading the group and Mr. Rogers for keeping him up to date on what had been going on with the Task Force. Most importantly, the initiative that was going on with the members. The successful future of Kentucky's heritage is changing rapidly and tremendously and it is hard to meet those demands. He encouraged the Task Force to stay ahead of the curve and be focused.

Governor Fletcher discussed the biodiesel plant in Owensboro, other value added endeavors and their impact on the economy. He stated some issues that were important to him were the expansion of broadband, promoting life sciences and the agricultural component of that endeavor, and therapeutic drugs for the future. Governor Fletcher stated that exciting things are happening in the forefront of the medical field. With more diversification efforts to make farmers profitable, part of these efforts does not mean the industry will leave tobacco behind completely. Tobacco will always be a big part of the agricultural economy

Diversification means strength and it means a profit for farmers. Governor Fletcher promised to keep 50% of the tobacco settlement funds in the Agricultural Development Fund and he stated that over \$250 million had been spent in diversification efforts. At the conclusion of the Governor's Summit on Agriculture, he issued a challenge for the agriculture industry to submit a strategic plan and you are doing a tremendous job.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM EDT.