

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

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### **Minutes of the November 9, 2007 Meeting**

The Kentucky Agricultural Council: Task Force on the Future of Agriculture meeting was held on **November 9, 2007** at **9:30 AM EST** at the Kentucky Exposition Center in South Wing C, Room 101 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; Todd Barlow, Kentucky Corn Growers Association; Bob Bauer, Kentucky Forest Industries Association; David Beck, Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation; John Bell, Kentucky Horticulture Council; Dr. Tony Brannon, Murray State University; Leland Brown, USDA NASS Field Office; Steve Coleman, Division of Conservation; Nancy Cox, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture; Marshall Coyle, Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation; Richie Farmer, Kentucky Department of Agriculture; Mark Farrow, Kentucky Department of Agriculture; 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; David Henderman, Kentucky Woodland Owners Association; Tony Herrington, Community Farm Alliance; Mike Hubbs, Natural Resource & Conservation Service ; Tim Hughes, Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation; Mike Judge, Kentucky Department of Agriculture; Larry Jagers, Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation; Kevin Jeffries, Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts; Libby Jones, PACE Board; Curt Lucas, Kentucky Association FFA/Kentucky Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association; Dave Maples, Kentucky Cattlemen's Association; Kathy Meyer, Kentucky Sheep & Wool Producers Association; Melissa Miller, Kentucky Poultry Federation; 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; Mike Ovesen, Kentucky Pork Producers Association; Aaron Reding, Kentucky Soybean Association; Keith Rogers, Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy; Todd Ryan, Kentucky Nursery & Landscape Association; Larry Sanders, Kentucky Nursery & Landscape Association; Jim Sidebottom, Kentucky Dairy Development Council; Dr. Scott Smith, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture; Roger Thomas, Kentucky Dairy Development Association; Ray Tucker, Commodity Growers Association; Jamie Vincent, Kentucky Soybean Association; Dean Wallace, Council for Burley Tobacco; Eddie Warren, Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative; James Weber, Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association; Brent Williams, Kentucky Feed & Grain Association; John Wright, Kentucky Agricultural Resource Development Authority

#### ***Others Present***

Christi Marksburly, Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy; Angela Blank, Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy; Joel Neaveill, Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy; Biff

Baker, Legislative Research Commission; Will Snell, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Kara Keeton, Keeton Communications; Bruce Harper, Kentucky Department of Agriculture; John C. Roberts Jr., Kentucky Department of Agriculture; Scott Norman, Allied Food Marketers West

## **Welcome**

Dr. Tony Brannon welcomed the group to the fifth meeting of the Task Force on the Future of Agriculture at the North American International Livestock Exposition. There was a special introduction of the consultants, Dawn Riley and Steven Spalding.

## **Review of the Regional Public Forums**

Dr. Brannon reported that he was satisfied to hear the consensus of the public at the regional forums and that each forum had its own tone to the meeting. He stated that Mark Drabenstott talked about the regional aspect at the Governor's Summit on Agriculture and this came out when traveling across the state. The synopsis document of the regional forums is available on the website. Dr. Brannon acknowledged the importance of having the public buy-in, from the agriculture public and the general public. He accounted that the six forums were equally attended. Dr. Brannon also complimented Steven Spalding for recording every idea on the flip charts and putting those ideas into the regional forums document. The question was asked: did the Task Force ideas come into play at the forums and the public's ideas played in what the Task Force had in mind as well? Dr. Brannon used an example he felt summarized the forums. If you followed the news in the last few weeks, you would have seen that Kentucky had the FFA American Star Farmer, Nicholas Hardesty from Meade County. Kentucky has not had an American Star Farmer in 80 years. Nicholas was quoted as saying it is not easy to get into farming these days, but he had a lot of people to help him get into it.

The Staff Working Group had one conference call and an official meeting to review the document and their question was – how do we use this document?

Dr. Brannon stated that the purpose of the forums was to generate knowledge and interest in this strategic plan. He asked everyone at the forums to become an ambassador for the plan.

## **Near Term Priority Actions**

Dr. Brannon talked about some legislative agenda items at the first Task Force meeting. It was discussed that it would be too late at the December Task Force meeting to bring these items to the legislature since they would already be working on their agenda for the January session.

Dr. Brannon introduced Tod Griffin to present the Near Term Priority Actions. Mr. Griffin explained this was a legislative list because the Kentucky Agriculture Council is not in the business of lobbying since the organization is a non-profit. (See Secretary for handout)

Dr. Brannon will present the Near Term Priority Actions to the legislative subcommittee on November 14<sup>th</sup>.

Comments from the Task Force on the Near Term Priority Actions:

*Kentucky Sheep and Wool Producers Association* – On action #4, the people coming into the state know what the producers have to offer. We need to have funding for the people who live here to let them know what the producers have to offer, especially in the larger cities. This funding could come through the Kentucky Proud program.

*Rebuttal*– The intentions are to ask for additional funding for the Kentucky Proud program because that reason is the primary intention of the program.

*Kentucky Agricultural Development Board* – There is no mention of the Agricultural Heritage Center. Will there be a concentrated effort in this legislative session to secure funding for this effort? There is a real opportunity to move this project forward and we will need the support of the whole agricultural community. There was hope to have that mentioned in this document. There was a consensus from the Council on Burley Tobacco.

*Rebuttal* – This was not included because it scored a 5.9 on the ballot and the Staff Working Group looked at the scores of a 6.9 or above to be included in this document. This item was added to the ballot and believe it only got about 50% of the votes. The group may need to have another vote on that item today because it may not have gotten a clear vote at the August 16 meeting.

*The Center on Rural Development* – This item may not have gotten talked about enough. It may need to be discussed again.

Dr. Brannon noted the comments and said the item would be brought back up in later discussions.

*The Center for Rural Development* – Six major topics were identified in the plan and the Staff Working Group has identified ten immediate needs. Thought the focus was to increase net farm income? Often times we talk to ourselves about ourselves and we may have identified more problems. We are asking for continued funding, identified more problems and would like to know how this all fits together for a long term plan?

*Rebuttal* – We are not proposing legislation and all of these items have come from the plan.

*Kentucky Woodlands Owners Association* – They are in agreement with The Center for Rural Development. Eight items regard revenue sources and the other items are about permitting. They think these actions are unrealistic and not going to get very far.

*Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation*– Suggested to keep the near term priority actions in mind, but not approve at this time and go through the other documents. It seems the near term priority actions and long term items all tie together.

*Kentucky Horticulture Council* – They agree with The Center for Rural Development and feel like the near term priority actions help us get to a long term goal. They feel like the group is not getting to the true intentions of the plan and the goal of the plan from the beginning.

*Kentucky Department of Agriculture* – We should coordinate our efforts with all groups, with their budgets and try not to conflict with other groups. We need to make sure agriculture is truly speaking with one voice.

Dr. Brannon took a moment to make sure everyone understood that these near term priority actions were not the plan. The Staff Working Group wanted to get something in front of the legislators, but there was an agreement to hold off the vote on this agenda item.

Mr. Griffin made the comment that these were not the only near term items. They were just the ones pulled out of the plan to take before the legislators at the November 14 meeting. If agriculture is not at the table, they will give the money to someone else and the agriculture industry is not good at asking for money. We need to be at the table this time.

There was an agreement to hold the Agricultural Heritage Center and additions to the Kentucky Proud language for items of discussions when the Near Term Priorities were brought back to the table later in the meeting.

*Legislative Research Commission* – Mr. Griffin is right and if the industry wants to ask for money, now is the time to do it and we need to be unified in doing it. If we are not asking for money, these issues can be discussed separately.

*University of Kentucky College of Agriculture* – Not only will we vote on these issues, but we will have specific groups carry out these actions.

*Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation* – There is an importance of the language with the Agricultural Development Funds. The standard response is that items can come from this money and some items can come from the general fund. Need stronger language on how those dollars should be used.

*Kentucky Dairy Development Council* – At the first Staff Working Group meeting, it was understood that the water/sewer money would be transferred over a period of time back into the Agricultural Development Fund. This is one issue that would open up the eyes of the legislators more than any other issue.

*Kentucky Poultry Federation* – On action #3, what is currently being done to encourage incentives for veterinary students to stay with large animal practices?

*Rebuttal* – Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation is working on a policy with their task force to work on these issues. Expanding slots at Auburn will not address the problem because more students are interested in small animal practices.

## **Outline of Document Structure**

Dr. Brannon introduced Steven Spalding to present this document. (See Secretary for handout)

### **Section I: Overview of Kentucky's Agricultural Strategic Plan and Process**

Mr. Spalding reminded the Task Force that as we go through the document, think about who is your audience? Clarity and intent are very important. Think about the things you want to let go of and what absolutely must stay.

No comments for Section I.

### **Section II: Core Strategies and Recommended Actions to Drive Kentucky Agricultural Progress**

- Agricultural Development Fund and Supporting State Governmental Actions

Comments from the Task Force

*University of Kentucky* – The way this is presented, it is divorced from what we are trying to address. It seems we are trying to separate the near term priority actions from the plan. Maybe we need another title other than governmental issues.

*Rebuttal* - Try not to see them as competition with each other, rather see them as married to each other. The near term priority actions were a time issue.

- Agricultural Production and Marketing

No comments for this area.

- Education and Public Advocacy

Comments from the Task Force:

*Kentucky Horticulture Council* – The third component to education is consumer education and this needs to be under marketing. This area has a huge impact on increasing farm income and has an impact on the Kentucky Proud program. It is continuing education.

*At this time, the group took a break. Dr. Brannon introduced Commissioner Richie Farmer for brief remarks. Commissioner Farmer stated that it was a privilege and an honor to be at the meeting and he could look around the room to see the who's who in agriculture. He said it was a great idea to put together a plan to talk about the future of agriculture and he thanked everyone from the bottom of his heart. He stated that anything is possible when you get everyone together for the good of agriculture. He is looking forward to seeing the report and the results of the group. Commissioner Farmer also acknowledged that he is looking forward to working with everyone for the next four years.*

After the break.....

*Murray State University* – We are not likely to get agriculture in the core curriculum. If we were to get it in there and every school system has to teach agriculture, it may be a negative impact. Each school would be required to hire a 12 month teacher or they may hire a science teacher instead of an agriculture teacher. It could eliminate the 12 month employment and could compromise the agriculture program.

*Kentucky FFA Association & Kentucky Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association* – They are afraid that this concept will mandate that agriculture be taught in grades K-12 in all schools and not all the universities are producing enough certified teacher to teach all of these programs across the state.

*Kentucky Department of Agriculture* – There is agreement that this concept will get resistance, but it is something we need to work for. We need to focus on food and fiber production in the schools. We do not have to call it agriculture right off the bat. We have to be a little sneaky about how to get it into the schools.

*Kentucky Women in Agriculture* – Consider the Ag in the Classroom program and every classroom has a different way of teaching their curriculum. We hope that this plan will make it easier to have an avenue to get agriculture into the classrooms.

*Farm Service Agency* - We ask for a lot, but we don't see what we get in exchange. Put some hard data behind it or our arguments run thin.

- Labor/Research & Development

Comments from the Task Force:

*Commodity Growers Cooperative* – Discuss working with other organizations on a handbook about migrant worker programs and other aids.

*Council on Burley Tobacco* – There is no doubt we can take on infrastructure to help farmers to employ various workers including migrant workers. We need to let our delegation know where we stand.

*The Center for Rural Development* – Other avenues exist besides the H2A program including new programs that we do not know about that can help with these issues.

*Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation* – Individual groups will probably need to take a lead role in the labor issue. Developing policy would be a good idea for the Task Force. In the third bullet point, service areas such as extension agents and soil scientists should be included here.

- AgriEnergy Development

Comments from the Task Force:

*The Center for Rural Development* – This topic does not talk about using Agricultural Development Funds to develop biofuels, but does discuss bio-mass. It also does not mention renewable fuels, wind, solar and geothermal. There are companies who want to lease farmland for these purposes and that is an opportunity for agriculture.

*Rebuttal* – What came out of workshops was the biomass and not the other items.

- Rural Communities: Quality of Life, Conservation, Health and Nutrition -

Comments from the Task Force

*Kentucky Horse Council* – The majority of the Rural Community Actions are tied to income and accessibility to health care.

*Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation* –Health Savings Accounts are available for individuals

*Council on Burley Tobacco* – Is everyone eligible?

*Kentucky Women in Agriculture* – Maybe it should be discussed to look at this issue like Health Savings Accounts as an alternative to insurance.

*Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation* – Tax incentives have been an issue for sometime as far as availability.

*Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts* – concern on last bullet point under Health & Nutrition: be careful not to say that food that is traditional grown is necessarily bad (corn, soybeans, etc.). Watch that language.

*Kentucky Horse Council* – Food makes us unhealthy and healthy. This group should worry more about marketing than what makes us healthy. This is more consumer education in terms of marketing.

*Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation* – This is a classic example from earlier when talking about securing money for the Kentucky Proud program. They feel this falls under that category and anyone growing vegetables falls under that category as well.

*Kentucky Women in Agriculture* – The first statement under Health and Nutrition should be left out because it falls under so many other places. We need to make that link between local foods and eating too much of something can be bad for you. There is a problem with the statement that you are not going to be healthy unless you eat local.

It was agreed by the group to place the Health & Nutrition section under the Agricultural Production and Marketing topic.

*University of Kentucky College of Agriculture* – We are focusing on quality issues, but this also belongs in economic development. This is more than simple economics and it still has a role in this area. This is a connection between urban and rural.

- Other Issues of Importance

#### Comments from Task Force

*Kentucky Agricultural Development Board* - Will the Agricultural Heritage Center be included?

*The Center for Rural Development* – Forestry is a significant part of rural Kentucky. Not sure how it interacts and where we need to put it in the plan. There are opportunities in forestry and biomass. How does this fit because there has always been a separation between this issue and farmland. It needs to be mentioned in the plan.

*Rebuttal* – There was an agreement from the beginning of the process that individual industries would not be mentioned in the plan. Maybe this should possibly be under Agricultural Production and Marketing.

- Conclusions, Summary and Next Steps beyond 2008

No comments for this area.

#### **Vote to Proceed with Document Structure**

Dr. Brannon asked the remaining group to vote to proceed with the document structure.

Continue to proceed - 21 votes

Formal disagreement – 0 votes

Block – 0 votes

#### **Near Term Priority Actions Document**

Dr. Brannon clarified that the following items were to be included in the Near Term Priority Actions document and asked for a consensus vote:

- Include incentive program for rural vets – agreement by group
- Wordsmith the Kentucky Proud program language – agreement by group
- Include the Agricultural Heritage Center with the Agricultural Development Board as the overarching value – agreement by the group

There was a discussion of having ten or eleven items in the document with the Agricultural Heritage Center being its own item.

Comments from the Task Force:

*Kentucky Women in Agriculture* – They liked it the way it was described previously.

*Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts* – Could we start the document with the Agricultural Heritage Center and then the ten items?

*Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative* – Would the Agricultural Heritage Center or the diagnostic labs be the first item? Are the items listed in priority order?

*Rebuttal* – The items are not really in priority order because several items were lumped together because there was originally a list of 16 items that were narrowed to ten.

*Kentucky Women in Agriculture* - Leave this to the Staff Working Group's discretion for priority order. Maybe the items should not be numbered.

There was an agreement of the group not to number the items in the Near Term Priority Actions document.

*The Center for Rural Development* – Item #9 needs a verbage change to say the right things.

*Council on Burley Tobacco* - Not everyone will read the entire document. Develop an extremely strong summary statement for a legislator to read in the front of the document.

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

Dr. Tony Brannon presented the minutes of the August 16, 2007 meeting to the Task Force.

Marshall Coyle (Kentucky Farm Bureau) moved to accept the minutes of the August 16, 2007 meeting of the Task Force on the Future of Agriculture; Sharon Furches (Kentucky Women in Agriculture) seconded the motion. The motion passed without dissent.

### **Conclusion**

Dr. Brannon informed the Task Force that once the changes have been made from the day's discussions, the document will be emailed for a two day turnaround for comments. It will also be posted on the website. The final revised document will be mailed on December 10<sup>th</sup>. The last meeting of the Task Force will be on December 17<sup>th</sup> to approve the plan. He asked the group to send their individual feedback to the consultants.

Dr. Brannon stated that the meeting on December 17<sup>th</sup> starts the implementation of the strategic plan. He envisions the subcommittees continuing the work of the plan. Part of the meeting on December 17th is to discuss where your organization fits in to continue with the plan. In Owensboro at the regional public forum, the question was what will happen to this plan if Kentucky gets a new governor? This is not the Governor's plan, it is agriculture's plan. Let's find every avenue possible to brief the new governor on our efforts. Dr. Brannon said that he would like the first part of the meeting to be about the discussion of the implementation of the plan and the second part of the meeting to be a press conference to present the plan to the governor and legislators. He encouraged everyone to make contacts to see that this happens and we have a good end product. Dr. Brannon stated that these were his thoughts and encouraged the group to give him their thoughts.

The meeting adjourned at 3:13 PM EST.