



January, 2010

Dear KAC Member:

I am writing to tell you about an important initiative getting under way this month, designed to shape the future direction of the Kentucky Agricultural Council.

In particular, I want to invite you to participate in either a focus group session or a one-on-one meeting in the very near future. Details about those arrangements are provided near the end of this letter; however first let me share a little background on the initiative and its purpose.

As you know, throughout all of its history the KAC has been run on an all-volunteer basis until 2007, when at the request of the Governor we took on the challenge of developing a strategic plan to help guide the future of Kentucky Agriculture in the post-Tobacco Settlement era. In early 2008, we released our report, ***A Pathway for Kentucky's Agriculture and its Rural Communities: 2007 to 2012 Strategic Plan***, which outlines opportunities and challenges in six critical areas:

- Agricultural Production and Consumer Marketing
- Agri-Energy Development
- Education
- Public Awareness and Advocacy
- Rural Communities: Quality of Life, Conservation and Community Leadership
- Agricultural Development Fund and Supporting State Government Actions

As a result of the strategic plan – which has been nationally recognized -- and through the generous support of the Ky Ag Development Fund (ADF), we were able to secure professional support on a contract basis for the past year. In the words of former KAC Chairman, Dr. Tony Brannon, we have been “working our plan” since that time. However, at the conclusion of the current ADF grant in December of 2010, we will need to have a management structure in place that allows the KAC to continue to fulfill its mission of communications and facilitator of efforts among the state’s diverse agricultural groups, and to provide sustained support for the KAC’s strategic agenda.

Included in the KAC’s grant agreement with the ADF was a commitment to undertake a **Feasibility Study** that would examine options for future management and operation of the KAC. Through this process, we will learn more about the needs and aspirations of our members; we also want to hear from you what challenges you face *as an organization* and as leaders of Kentucky Agriculture. That information will help us determine the proper role and focus for the KAC, with the goal of complementing and supporting *your efforts* to serve your members and constituencies.

As part of this study, we will look at “best practices” among similar organizations in other states; we also want to talk to corporate leaders outside of production Agriculture, to get their insights and perceptions of the role that Kentucky agriculture plays in advancing the Commonwealth’s economy and its rural communities. Taken together, these steps will help us to identify a range of options for structuring the KAC so that it can continue to pursue its activities on behalf of Kentucky agriculture in an economically viable, sustainable fashion in the coming years.

Our plan is to bring these perspectives and options back to the membership at the mid-year point for a thorough review and discussion, so that with the help of the full membership we can determine the organizational direction that the KAC should pursue. The final result by year’s end will be a new **Business Plan** for the KAC to guide the organization’s activities beginning in 2011 and beyond.

In order to accomplish this, we need your help and thoughtful input. Our goal is to directly involve 100% of KAC’s members in this process, either through attendance at one of a series of small group meetings we will hold across the state, or by scheduling a private meeting with you and other leaders in your organization at a time of your convenience. Obviously, the logistics of this presents a great challenge, and so we will make every effort to provide a time and place to meet that is as convenient as possible, and appreciate your help in letting us know the preferred date and location from among these options:

- February 4 – Lexington
- February 12 – Louisville (after the KAC Quarterly Membership Meeting)
- February 17 – Frankfort
- February 22 – Lexington [in conjunction with meeting of KAC Ag Production & Marketing and Agri-Energy Committees]
- March 1 – Bowling Green
- March 10 – Murray
- March 17 – Louisville
- March 26 – Frankfort

Small group sessions of one and a half hours each will be held at staggered times on these days. Additionally, if you and your organization wish to schedule a private meeting, our professional staff may make independent arrangements to meet at alternative times or at your place of business when they are in the respective parts of the state.

Please help us in determining the shape and direction of the future KAC organization by responding to this letter and to the follow-up contacts you will be receiving from our consultants, Dawn Riley and Steven Spalding. They will be working in the coming days to fill this schedule and seeking to reach all KAC members for a mutually convenient time when we can meet with you. You may respond now be emailing to:

Dawn Riley: dawn.riley@insightbb.com Phone: (502) 552-5849.

Additionally, if you have any questions about this initiative, feel free to contact me directly, and I will be pleased to address them. I can be reached at 502 226-1122. This is a very important initiative for the KAC and we look forward to your input and working with you in the coming months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tod A. Griffin', written in a cursive style.

Tod Griffin
KAC 2011 Chair Elect