

Kentucky Agricultural Council

Minutes of the November 13, 2009 Meeting

The Kentucky Agricultural Council meeting was held on November 13, 2009 at 9:30 AM EST at the Kentucky Exposition Center, South Wing Room C 101 in conjunction with the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, KY. Keith Rogers, chair, called the meeting to order.

Members Present

Tod Griffin and Laura Cole, Agribusiness Association of Kentucky; Dean Wallace, Council for Burley Tobacco; Bruce Pratt, Eastern Kentucky University Department of Agriculture; Robert Monk, Farm Credit Services; Roger Thomas and Michael Judge, Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy; Keith Rogers, KY 4-H Foundation, Inc.; Sam Moore, Kentucky Ag Development Board; Tim Hughes, Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation; Dave Maples, Kentucky Cattlemen's Association; Maury Cox and Jim Sidebottom, Kentucky Dairy Development Council; Steve Coleman, Kentucky Division of Conservation; Cara Stewart, Kentucky Equine Education Project; David S. Beck, Kentucky Farm Bureau; John McCauley, Kentucky Farm Services Agency; Jeff Pendleton, Kentucky Feed and Grain Association; Curt Lucas, Kentucky FFA Association and Kentucky FFA Foundation; Ray Bowman, Kentucky Goat Producers Association and Kentucky Sheep and Goat Development Office; John Morris, Kentucky Grocers Association; Jeff Hall, Kentucky Horticulture Council; Dan Flanagan, Kentucky Poultry Association and KY Council on Post-Secondary Education; Kathy Meyer, Kentucky Sheep and Wool Producers Association; Jaime Vincent, Kentucky Soybean Association; James M. Weber, Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association; Margo Bruce, Kentucky Vocational Ag Teachers Association; Sandy Gardner, Kentucky Women In Agriculture; Biff Baker, Legislative Research Commission; Wade Northington, Murray State University Breathitt Diagnostic Laboratory; Tony Brannon, Murray State University School of Agriculture; Frances Ann Brown, PACE; Scott Smith and Drew Graham, University Of Kentucky College of Agriculture; Leland Brown and Shawn Clark, USDA NASS Kentucky Field Office; Bobby Bradley and David Stipes, USDA NRCS; Scott Maas, USDA Rural Development;

Others Present

Todd Beckwith, Jeff Harper, Jennifer Hudnall, Christi Marksbury, Dawn Riley, Will Snell and Steven Spalding

Welcome

Keith Rogers welcomed the group to the quarterly meeting. The meeting proceeded with a Roll Call of members.

Approve Minutes of the June 9, 2009 Meeting

Keith Rogers presented the minutes of the August 20, 2009 meeting. Tod Griffin (Kentucky Agribusiness Association) moved to accept them; Dan Flanagan (Kentucky Poultry Association) seconded the motion. The motion passed without dissent.

Treasurer's Report

Steve Coleman presented the Treasurer's Report for the Kentucky Agricultural Council. The balance as of October 31, 2009 was \$15,471.59. The balance of the #2 GOAP grant was \$ 12,005.71.

The motion was made by Tony Brannon (Murray State University School of Agriculture) to accept the treasurer's report; Curt Lucas (Kentucky FFA Association) seconded the motion. The motion passed without dissent.

Guest Speaker

John McCauley was introduced by Keith Rogers. John is the new director of the Kentucky Farm Services Agency. John is very newly appointed and thanked Jeff Hall for his service in that position over the past 8 years. He also spoke of his background in Kentucky agriculture which included work for Dee Huddleston, Ed Logsdon and Billy Ray Smith. John looks forward to being an active part of the KAC and will be providing us with updated information from FSA on a regular basis.

Nominating Committee Report

Dr. Tony Brannon presented the report. As Past Chairman, Dr. Brannon became the Chair of the nominating committee. Dr. Brannon recognized Dave Maples and Todd Barlow for their service to the KAC as Board members. Kathy Meyer and Robert Monk are nominated to fill those seats. Ray Bowman made a motion to accept these nominations and Tod Griffin seconded the motion. The motion passed without dissent.

Dr. Brannon then asked all the board members to stand. He announced that the officers for the coming year would be as follows; David Beck as Chairman, Keith Rogers as Past Chairman, Tod Griffin as Chair Elect, and Steve Coleman as Treasurer.

Plans for the 2010 Kentucky General Assembly

Keith Rogers introduced David Beck to give the membership an overview of the upcoming General Assembly session. This is going to be a difficult year and the membership needs to be informed of the circumstances in which decisions will be made.

Prior to starting the discussion, David gave a brief update on the health status of Mike Ovesen of the Kentucky Pork Producers Association. It is a very emotional and difficult time for Mike and we all are asked to keep him and his family in our thoughts and prayers.

David started with a budget overview. The Commonwealth's budget year begins on July 1st. The last 15 – 20 years have been relatively stable with 4-5% increases in revenue. Since January of 2008, there have been 5 budget cuts. The upcoming budget will most likely take us back to 2004/2005 revenues. The last 2 year budget was \$19.5 billion and this year there is the prospect of an \$8-900 million revenue reduction. Ag is approximately 1-2% of the budget. \$800 million in federal stimulus bridged the gap last year.

What does this mean for Agriculture? We must be engaged. We must justify our case to keep the ADF funds. We are competing with everyone. Every dollar we request and spend must have a direct impact on a farmer – improving net farm income. Our issues are not partisan issues but Kentucky issues.

David asked Roger Thomas, Executive Director to address the ADF and the debt service issue. The ADF will provide \$3 million in Fiscal Year 2011 to debt service and \$12-13 million in Fiscal Year 2012. If the rumors are true, it is imperative that the Governor's budget protect the ADF. ADF dollars have funded and continue to fund VERY important organizations and activities which include KDDC, UK, the Sheep and Goat Development Office, the Beef Network and KALP just to mention a few. These and the many other programs supported by ADF have shaped Kentucky's Agriculture. We must keep these funds and the leadership to keep Kentucky Agriculture moving forward.

The discussion was then opened up for comments and questions from the members.

Chairman's Report

Keith Rogers reported that the KAC testified on Tuesday November 10th at the Joint Interim Ag Committee meeting. The testimony was a very simple thank you to the members for their support of our Top 10 items, a brief review of the Progress Report and that maintaining the funding for the ADF remains our # 1 priority. The Board of Directors met November 2, 2009. The 2nd year ADB grant was approved. Now plans are being developed for the feasibility study and business plan for the KAC. A further update will be given at the February meeting.

The February meeting will be held on Friday, February 12th. Angela Blank will provide an update on the WEG and what opportunities there may be for Kentucky Agriculture to participate.

Committee Reports

Dr. Tony Brannon reported that the Education Committee had met. Staff continues to work on a document/roadmap of education opportunities in the agriculture arena. (See website for notes)

Robert Monk announced and invited all to attend the December 7th meeting of the Rural Communities Committee. Al Cross is the featured guest at the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association offices in Lexington. Robert also reported that a very successful meeting had been held at ECU with members of the regional stewardship group (see website for notes)

Tod Griffin invited everyone to attend the next meeting of the Agri-Energy Committee on Monday, November 23rd at WKU. There will be a tour of the relevant WKU projects and Peter Nelson and Tony Brannon will update the group on the Regional Strategy for Biobased Products in the Mississippi Delta.

Member Updates

Roger Thomas from GOAP thanked everyone for their thoughts and prayers as he has been recovering from his bicycle accident. He greatly appreciated the support. The ADF will be holding their 2 day planning meeting at Barren River State Park next week. The next ADB meeting will be held on December 18th at the Kentucky Horse Park. The Governor's Biomass Task Force is drawing to a close. Recommendations will soon be going to the Governor and General Assembly. The last meeting will be November 30th. Special thanks to Tim Hughes for all of his work on energy issues. Also thanks to everyone at GOAP.

Scott Maas from USDA Rural Development spoke about many grant and loan opportunities. Kentucky is missing out on many of these programs. The unused dollars go back to the Federal government and used by other states. He encouraged all to stay engaged and take advantage of these programs.

Jeff Hall gave an overview of the activities of the Livestock Coalition. He mentioned the recent Ohio ballot initiative and how we need to be on the watch for increased activity by HSUS and PETA. We are lucky to have strong ag organizations here and that they are involved. The group is developing by-laws, membership and dues structures. There will be a meeting in December TBD and the website is www.KYLivestock.org

Wade Northington gave a report on the status of the Breathitt Lab. Funds have been received from the ADF to perform a feasibility study. A national firm out of Memphis has been hired. He gave special thanks to Pat Henderson from the ADB and Christi Marksbury of GOAP. They have also received a grant from NIST at the US Department of Commerce.

Will Snell reported on KALP. He began by thanking the ADB for all of their support. There have been 98 nominations for the program. They have actually received 55 applications for 20 spots. Diversity has come in gender, race and location. Classes begin in January and he hopes to introduce the call at the February meeting.

Open Comment Period

Jeff Harper followed up on the Animal Care Issues and recognized Mark Haney, President of Kentucky Farm Bureau for appointing a Task Force. HSUS held an organizational meeting in Garrard County yesterday. They have hired a Frankfort lobbyist and testified in Frankfort on Tuesday. The KFB will be proactive on this issue.

Biff Baker from LRC encouraged any group or organization that has not spoken with him about legislative needs to do soon. Everyone who has a need should be heard early on all budget related matters.

Dean Wallace told the group that the Council for Burley Tobacco is closing its office on December 31, 2009. An independent contractor has been hired. This is the last meeting he will be attending as representative for the Council. He hopes to continue to attend in a new role in the future.

Ray Bowman informed the group that 2 successful referendums had been passed in the Sheep and Goat arenas. There will be check off programs after the first of the year. This will go to not only promoting sheep and fiber but all of agriculture.

Keith reminded everyone to pick up copies of the Progress Report if they had not done so earlier. Also, the KAC is still working to raise the \$25,000 required by the ADF grant. All members will be receiving more information on this subject after the first of the year.

There were no further comments or discussion. Tod Griffin made a motion and the meeting was adjourned at 11:15 AM EDT.