**MEETING MINUTES**

**Agriculture Water Quality Authority**

**Thursday, April 23, 2020 9:30 am**

**Zoom Video Conference**

**Meeting ID: 247 377 815**

**Inattendance**: Mr. Larry Thomas, Chair, Kentucky Farm Bureau; Mr. Joseph Sisk, Vice Chair, Member-at-Large; Ms. Paulette Akers, Director, Division of Conservation; Mr. Allan Bryant, Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts; Mr. James Wright, Director, Division of Forestry; Mr. Mark Burnett, Farmer, Member-at-Large; Mr. Chuck Taylor, Kentucky Geological Survey; Mr. Keith Rogers, Kentucky Department of Agriculture; Mr. John Webb, Branch Manager, Division of Water; Mr. Brian Lacefield, Kentucky Farm Service Agency, USDA-FSA; Mr. Greg Stone, State Conservationist, National Resource Conservation Service; Ms. Angela Billings, Environmental Health, Department of Public Health; and Dr. Amanda Gumbert, UK College of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service.

**Also in attendance**: Ms. Johnna McHugh, Assistant Director, Division of Conservation; Mr. Josiah Frey, Division of Water; Mr. Allen Kyle; Mr. Brandon Howard, Division of Forestry; Mr. Adam Andrews, Program Director, Kentucky Corn Growers Association; Mr. John Pitcock, Kentucky Department of Agriculture; Mr. Timothy Mayer, Staff Attorney, Energy and Environment Cabinet; Dr. Chad Lee, Professor for Grain Crops, University of Kentucky; Mr. Pete Cinotto, United States Geological Survey; Mr. Abe Nielson, Division of Forestry; Mr. Steve Coleman, Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts; Ms. Mahtaab Bagherzadeh, Division of Water; Mr. Gordon R. Slone, Commissioner, Department for Natural Resources; and Mr. Jeff Gravitt, Division of Conservation.

**Meeting Called to Order** – 9:37 AM by Mr. Larry Thomas.

**Roll call of Authority members** – Quorum was met.

**Introduction of guests** – Introductions were made.

**Approval of previous meeting minutes from February 13, 2020** – A motion to approve was made by Mr. Joseph Sisk and was seconded by Mr. Keith Rogers. **Motion carried**.

**Old Business** – No old business was discussed.

**New Business** – Crops BMPs – Moved to later in the meeting.

**Subcommittee Reports**

**KASMC –** Mr. Pete Cinotto discussed upcoming meeting to be held virtually (Zoom).

**Farmstead** – Dr. Steve Higgins – Not attended

**Pesticides Fertilizers and other Agriculture Chemicals** – Mr. John Pitcock – Nothing to report.

**Livestock and Poultry** – Mr. Keith Rogers – Nothing to report.

**Silviculture** – Mr. James Wright nothing to report.

**Education and Outreach** – Ms. Paulette Akers discussed the following with the Authority:

* Education and Outreach has not met recently.
* EPA funding.

**Quarterly update of AWQA related violations –** Ms. Paulette Akers informed the Authority of 6 violations in total; 2 beef, 2 dairy, 1 hog, and 1 crop.

**Updates from members** –

Farm Service Agency update - Mr. Brian Lacefield discussed the following with the Authority:

* How FSA is working with the CARES Act and CFAP.
* Dealing with rumors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kentucky Department of Agriculture update - Mr. Keith Rogers discussed the following with the Authority:

* KDA response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
* State Fair is still up in the air.
* 98 percent of staff is telecommuting.
* Farmers market is still operating under guidelines provided by the Governor and local health department requirements.
* The local health department’s hand in enforcement of COVID-19 guidelines.

National Resource Conservation Service update - Mr. Greg Stone discussed the following with the Authority:

* COVID-19 NRCS guidelines.
* Federal services hit hard by COVID-19.
* NRCS has not been impacted as hard as other areas have been.
* Staffing offices at one person per location.
* All meetings are being held virtually through Microsoft Teams.
* NRCS is ahead of schedule and deadlines are being met.
* Conservation Desktop, CART software being used.
* FSA had large sign-up in CRP’s.
* NRCS and USDA are open for business.

Division of Conservation update - Ms. Paulette Akers discussed the following with the Authority:

* DOC is currently in process of updating the process of State Cost Share regulations.
	+ Currently scheduled for May ARRS meeting.
* Current length of time for completion of State Cost Share is (2) two years (One year with two (6) month extensions). This is not stated in either the regulation or the State Cost Share manual. DOC is planning to do an agency amendment when it goes before committee. The current length of time has always been in the cost share manual but adding it to the regulation makes it more transparent.
	+ A motion to support adding the (2) two years (One year with two (6) month extensions) to the regulation was made by Mr. Allan Bryant and was seconded by Mr. Joseph Sisk. **Motion carried**.

Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts update - Mr. Allan Bryant stated that the upcoming KACD Convention has been canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Division of Forestry update - Mr. James Wright discussed the following with the Authority:

* + Division running as usual with little modifications while following social distancing.
	+ Zoom software being used as a communication tool.

United States Geological Survey update - Mr. Pete Cinotto gave a brief view of the new Drought Condition Monitor software.

**New Business** – Approval of Crops BMPs

Copies of the latest proposed updates to the Crops BMPs were emailed to all Authority members and interested parties prior to the meeting.

Dr. Amanda Gumbert brought up Crops BMP # 5 (Nutrient Management) and how the language in parts seems to be ambiguous, open to interpretation. After a brief discussion with other Authority members it was decided to keep wording as written.

Dr. Amanda Gumbert then asked about Crops BMP # 6 (Filter Strip) and the need for more of a reference in determining the filter strip. A decision to add NRCS conservation practice standard Filter Strip Code 393 as a reference was presented. A motion to approve the addition of NRCS Code 393 as the new BMP # 6 Filter Strip reference was made by Mr. Keith Rogers and was seconded by Dr. Amanda Gumbert. **Motion carried**.

Dr. Amanda Gumbert asked about Crops BMP # 8 (Mulching) language. The current language has, “Mulching is the application of plant residue (which is not produced on the site), wood fiber or by-products, asphalt or synthetic sprays, or other suitable material to the soil surface”. After a discussion it was decided the language stating, asphalt or synthetic sprays was outdated and should be removed from the language of BMP #8. A motion to remove the stated language from the BMP was made by Dr. Amanda Gumbert and was seconded by Mr. Chuck Taylor. **Motion carried**.

Dr. Amanda Gumbert brought the language in Crops BMP #11 (Critical Area Planting and Treatment) up for discussion. In section 9 under recommendations it states “Native warm season grasses require about two to three years of herbicide use to control weeds and allow the native warm season grasses to become fully established”. Dr. Amanda Gumbert asked for the phrase “require” two to three years of herbicide use be removed and insert the phrase typically require in its place. A motion to replace current wording with typically require, was made by Dr. Amanda Gumbert and was seconded by Mr. Allan Bryant. **Motion carried**.

A motion to approve the updated Crops BMPs was made by Mr. Joseph Sisk and was seconded by Mr. Allan Bryant. **Motion carried**.

**Next Meeting** – Scheduled for 1:00 pm on August 27th at the State Fair. The location may change if the Fair is canceled.

Adjourn – 10:47 am