

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the 2022 Interim

November 3, 2022

Call to Order and Roll Call

The 5th meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Agriculture was held on Thursday, November 3, 2022, at 9:00 AM, in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Paul Hornback, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Paul Hornback, Co-Chair; Representative Richard Heath, Co-Chair; Senators Dennis Parrett, Damon Thayer, Stephen West, and Max Wise; Representatives Josh Calloway, Myron Dossett, Daniel Fister, Kelly Flood, Derrick Graham, Mark Hart, Keturah Herron, Kim King, Matthew Koch, Nima Kulkarni, Michael Sarge Pollock, Phillip Pratt, Felicia Rabourn, Josie Raymond, Brandon Reed, Cherlynn Stevenson, Nancy Tate, Walker Thomas, and James Tipton.

Guests: Drew Graham, Executive Vice President, Kentucky Farm Bureau; Sharon Furches, Second Vice President, Kentucky Farm Bureau; Commissioner Ryan Quarles, Keith Rogers, Chief of Staff, and Dr. Katie Flynn, State Veterinarian, Kentucky Department of Agriculture; H.H. Barlow, Executive Director, Kentucky Dairy Development Council; and Martin Richards, Executive Director, Kimberly Ishmael, Policy Campaign Coordinator, and Jennifer Weeber, Northfork Local Food Coordinator, Community Farm Alliance.

LRC Staff: Stefan Kasacavage, Kelly Ludwig, Hillary Abbott, and Rachel Hartley, Committee Assistant.

The October 20, 2022, minutes were approved, without objection, by voice vote.

Potential Legislative Issues for the 2023 Regular Session

Kentucky Farm Bureau. Drew Graham, Executive Vice President, Kentucky Farm Bureau and Sharon Furches, Second Vice President, Kentucky Farm Bureau, discussed Farm Bureau's legislative issues. Ms. Furches said that oversight and the decommissioning of solar projects is a big issue for members of Kentucky Farm Bureau. She said members are concerned about workforce development relating to the lack of trained farm laborers. Students should be encouraged to attend trade and technology schools and scholarships should be available to students.

Kentucky Department of Agriculture. Ryan Quarles, Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA), Keith Rogers, Chief of Staff, Kentucky Department of Agriculture, and Dr. Katie Flynn, State Veterinarian, Kentucky Department of Agriculture, gave an update on agricultural issues. Commissioner Quarles said that there was an increase in attendance and exhibits at the 2022 Kentucky State Fair. He said that KDA created a taskforce to review the large animal veterinarian shortage across Kentucky. Commissioner Quarles stated that there is concern about potential forage shortages for the winter.

Dr. Flynn said that the Office of State Veterinarian's (OSV) mission is to protect Kentucky's animal agriculture and aid the food supply chain. She said that Kentucky is not exempt from foreign animal diseases. The consequences of foreign animal diseases include an increased animal and human morbidity, negative economic impacts, and social impacts. Kentucky ranks 7th in the United States broiler production. In February 2022, highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza was detected in Kentucky and approximately 240,000 birds had to be depopulated from one county and approximately 53,000 were depopulated in a different county. She said six additional commercial houses were put under quarantine, and surveillance testing was required every 5-7 days.

Dr. Flynn said that as a result of foreign animal disease the OSV assigned 22 staff members to areas affected in Western Kentucky. Staff worked 822 regular hours and 148 overtime hours. During the outbreak, no poultry inspections were conducted, 73 percent of chronic wasting disease inspections and 67 percent of rendering inspections were not completed, and 35 percent of stockyard sales were not monitored. She said the worst-case scenario would be trying combat two foreign animal diseases without adequate staffing to conduct inspections or carry out duties to protect the animals and/or humans. One other major issue is the lack of large animal veterinarians in Kentucky. Veterinarians are graduating and practicing in small animal clinics because hours are shorter and smaller animal practices are more profitable.

Keith Rogers, Chief of Staff, Kentucky Department of Agriculture discussed potential legislative issues for the 2023 Regular Session. He said that KDA and OSV would like to create a new division, "Division of Emergency Preparedness and Response," and rename two current divisions. Funding from the General Assembly would be needed to include nine additional positions to address program deficiencies.

Senator Hornback encouraged the General Assembly to consider KDA's and OSV's request for additional funding.

In response to Senator West, Dr. Flynn stated that biological warfare has been a topic of conversation for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The OSV is aware of the potential for biological warfare.

In response to Representative King, Dr. Flynn said that Kentucky and Tennessee do share information and staff resources when needed.

In response to Representative Kulkarni, Dr. Flynn said there are approximately 7,000 applicants for just 3,000 seats in veterinarian school. Only a small percentage of those students will practice large animal medicine.

Kentucky Dairy Development Council. Mr. H.H. Barlow, Executive Director, Kentucky Dairy Development Council (KDDC) said that the main goals of KDDC are to improve farmer profitability, improve quality of milk, and encourage farmers to adopt and implement the latest technology. He said that in 2011, there were 900 dairy farms in Kentucky. In 2021, that number dropped to 420 dairies. Southern Kentucky has opened its doors for more milk which has created a need to grow existing dairy farms and recruit new dairies to Kentucky. Mr. Barlow said that a large 6,000 cow dairy farm from California has decided to move their operations to Fulton County. In addition, two more large dairies from California have expressed an interest in moving to Kentucky.

In response to Representative Kulkarni, Mr. Barlow that there would be a new employee per 1,000 cows.

In response to Senator West, Mr. Barlow stated that Kentucky dairies have not been involved in federal subsidies.

Community Farm Alliance. Martin Richards, Executive Director, Kimberly Ishmael, Policy Campaign Coordinator, and Jennifer Weeber, Northfork Local Food Coordinator, Perry County, Kentucky, discussed how investments in eastern Kentucky have expanded the food system. Ms. Weeber said that over the last 10 years, federal, state, local, and private investments have helped eastern Kentucky to grow and strengthen the local food system and local economy. Community Farm Alliance (CFA) has invested approximately \$3 million dollars. She said that CFA's investments have helped to strengthen local farmers markets, making it possible for people to buy local fresh foods. The recent flooding event destroyed gardens, crops, livestock, infrastructure, machinery, and tools. CFA has been actively working with the Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky, Kentucky Horticulture Council, Grow Appalachia, East Kentucky Canning Coalition, and Ag Recovery Resources.

Mr. Martin stated that in Kentucky, 575,300 people are facing hunger (including 152,100 children). Feeding Kentucky estimates that it will take \$258,458,000 more per year to meet the hunger issues.

Ms. Ishmael discussed the creation of The Healthy Farm and Food Innovation Fund. It would create a structured state fund capable of receiving state, federal, and private

philanthropy funds to help Kentucky address food and nutritional security. The fund would specifically help to match grant programs.

Meeting adjourned.