

**Minutes**  
**Kentucky Agricultural Council, Inc.**  
**Spring Members Meeting**  
**June 7, 2023**  
**Hyatt Regency Lexington**

The Spring Kentucky Ag Council Members Meeting was called to order by Chairman Drew Graham at 2 p.m. EDT. Members, representatives, and guests present: 28.

Graham asked KAC Executive Secretary Jennifer Elwell to present the minutes from February 16, 2023, that were provided to members via email before the meeting and via paper copy. A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as presented. Motion passed.

Elwell presented the financial report through the end of May 2023. A motion was made and seconded to accept the report as presented. Motion passed.

Greetings were provided by Kentucky FFA Foundation Executive Director Sheldon McKinney, welcoming everyone to the Kentucky FFA Convention and giving thanks for member contributions. She also announced that Sealy Mattress was donating 400 mattresses to the Kentucky FFA Leadership Camp to replace mattresses that were last purchased in 1994.

Graham introduced guest speaker Laurie Mays, Agriculture and Equine Talent Pipeline Project Manager with the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. She shared how they worked with the Kentucky equine industry to address labor needs in a strategic and targeted manner. She mentioned that she will do the same for other agricultural sectors.

Graham asked Elwell to discuss further planning for agricultural career promotion and workforce development efforts. Elwell shared what is being planned under Kentucky Agriculture and Environment in the Classroom with teachers and students, including a shared booth with KAC at the Kentucky State Fair. Elwell also invited members to join an advisory council that will be meeting following the meeting to talk about additional efforts as it is an issue that affects all members and sectors of agriculture.

Graham also announced that the KAC Board would like to address a new strategic plan for agriculture with the new administration with additional information coming later this year.

Members were then invited to provide organizational and agency updates.

Tim Hughes spoke on behalf of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. Commissioner Quarles is attending a trade mission in Japan, and Keith Rogers is attending the Southern Association of State Departments of Agriculture meeting. Hughes was happy to report that a new state veterinarian, Dr. Steve Velasco, was named, but stakeholder meetings continue to address the large animal veterinarian shortage. Hughes also thanked KFB and others for supporting the Commissioner's hunger initiative.

Kentucky Farm Bureau Second Vice President Sharon Furches provided an update, noting Clays for a Cause, the upcoming Beef Tour, Young Farmers, and Generation Bridge meetings. Furches also reported staff changes: Renee Carrico was promoted to lead the Commodity Division and Donovan Pigg was hired to replace Carrico as commodity livestock programs coordinator.

Melissa Miller, Kentucky 4-H Foundation Executive Director, thanked KAC members for supporting the 4-H programs and their 138,000 youth members. She noted the upcoming Teen Conference, where all will participate in a service project in Lexington, and the \$225,000 raised at the Emerald Gala in April. Also of

note was the availability of county mini-grants to support agriculture promotion and work to replace or upgrade the pools at the regional 4-H camps.

Nick Carter provided an update for the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment, noting the recent \$100 million gift from Bill Gatton and several facility construction projects across campus.

Graham spoke on legislative issues, including the farm bill and the recent WOTUS ruling. Laura Knoth with the Kentucky Corn and Small Grain Growers Associations reiterated that the ruling was a win for agriculture, but members should pay attention to a new Nutrient Reduction Strategy from the Kentucky Division of Water.

Additional updates were provided by member organizations:

Natalie Gupton provided an overview of AgSafe and their work in HR matters. She invited members to attend the national professional development event in California. Gupton, as president of the Ky Women in Agriculture, invited members to consider sponsoring the conference that will be held in Somerset in October.

David Chinn with the Agribusiness Industry Network said they are taking nominations for the Agribusiness of the Year that will be honored at the Farm City Luncheon on November 10 during the North American International Livestock Expo.

Johnna McHugh with the Kentucky Division of Conservation reported that Paulette Akers had moved to the Division of Water, and she was now the acting director of the division.

Elwell provided an update on behalf of the Louisville Agriculture Club. They have launched the Kentuckiana Agribusiness Leadership Academy, which will begin in February 2024. They are seeking class members and sponsorships.

With no further business to be conducted, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 3:35 p.m. EDT. Motion passed.