

SUMMARY OF KAC Strategic Plan Kick-off Meeting Highlights

2/21/12

Opening remarks by KAC Chairman Dan Flanagan

- Acknowledged the great attendance
- Recognized the KAC leadership in the room and Strategic Plan project Chair (Keith Rogers) and Co-Chairs (Sharon Furchess and Todd Clark)
- Recapped KAC Quarterly and Annual meeting that had been held the previous Thursday, including remarks made there by Commissioner Comer.
- Encouraged TF participants to “have a lot of fun but also get some work done”.
- Introduced Tony Brannon, former KAC Chairman who led Strategic Plan Task Force in 2007.

Dr. Brannon gave a recap of 2007 Strategic Plan history, process and outcomes

- Spoke of concept of “memory makers”:
 - The role of Michael Judge when he was at KDA in helping reconstitute the KAC with help of Keith Rogers, Tod Griffin, Steve Coleman and few others -- from being a loose group of organizational directors who met twice a year to being an organization that could lead the strategic plan, give it independent foundations, serve as a neutral forum.
 - Call he received from Keith Rogers, at the time head of GOAP, on behalf of the Governor telling him of the decision to do a strategic plan, asking him to take on the role of leading it.
 - A quote from David Beck saying “we need the plan to be created by producers, not staff”
 - A quote from Will Snell about the need for the plan to focus on “increasing net on-farm income”
- The planning process started in this same room, five years ago.
- He reviewed the process used to generate the 2007 plan – after identifying broad issues and generating initial goals and objectives through the Task Force’s process, they took a road show across the state to 6 locations to get input from farmers and the public. To be authentic, the plan cannot just be created by a committee but must also from a wider base.
- Task Force representatives also have the opportunity to involve the membership of their own organizations in providing input to the plan.
- The plan brought out new and emerging issues like “agri-energy”. At the time we did not even know if it existed; but now it has become a major focus of agricultural diversification efforts and an area that we need to continue developing.
- Dr. Brannon closed by saying that the last plan could not have been accomplished without the efforts of Michael Judge at KDA and the leadership provided by Keith Rogers. He hopes that the new plan may be able to be dedicated to Michael.
- He introduced Keith Rogers, to give an overview of the process by which the current plan will be conducted.

Keith Rogers talked about the current strategic plan as a “living document”.

- He referred Task Force members to copies of the 2007 Plan and also to a Progress Report document that had been issued about 18 months after the initial plan was completed.
- Page 3 of the 2007 plan has a “Top 10” list of goals – item that were recommended by the Task Force for priority attention. Many of these priorities have been partially or substantially achieved.
- He called attention to page 9 the Plan that lists the six broad focus areas for the strategy under which the more specific goals and objectives are grouped. These topics are not locked in stone -- it will be up to this Task Force to decide if topics need to be dropped, modified or added. “It is your plan, and the Task Force will decide this.”
- He called attention to page 11, showing how each of the specific goals also had specific Action Steps and milestones defined to measure progress. The 2007 plan was recognized in a national publication by the University of Washington as a “best practice” plan for its use of this approach.
- He called attention to the Progress Report document and the work that a group of six KAC committees had performed in monitoring the various goals and objectives. However, no further updates have been conducted since 2009, so the work of the current Task Force is very important in this regard.
- Rogers then introduced Todd Clark, one of the two Co-chairs of the Task Force, for further remarks.

Todd Clark focused on the successes and accomplishments of the 2007 plan.

- To illustrate with some live examples, he called on Dr. Wade Northington, Director of the Breathitt Animal Diagnostic Center to give some background on the efforts to upgrade the state’s two major animal diagnostic labs.
- Dr. Northington described the process of getting funding for both the U of K and the Murray Breathitt labs through the legislature. Having these project endorsed as “Top 10” priorities by the KAC’s strategic plan, with all of Kentucky’s agricultural interests speaking with one voice, was vitally important to the success of this effort. The U of K lab was fully funded in 2008 and is now open.
- The Breathitt lab has been slowed by the economic downturn and the inability of the state to fund any new bonded project in 2010. However the Governor has now allocated \$4 million to the Breathitt project for site acquisition and architectural design in his current budget, which keeps the project moving forward with the expectation that during the 2014 legislative session the project could receive approval to bond the full construction cost.
- He again stressed the importance of having “Agriculture speak with one voice, together, in Frankfort”.
- Todd Clark then introduced Aaron Goodpaster, the Task Force representative of the Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association, for a briefing on the accomplishments in support of large animal veterinarians that were made possible because these initiatives were included as priorities in the 2007 plan.
- Dr. Goodpaster described the success in obtaining funding for the low interest loan program to support large animal vet practices, which was funded through KADF; and the student loan debt payment program to encourage young vets to make a commitment to

working in large animal practices in underserved areas. The Cattlemen's Association provided a leadership donation of \$100,000, which then was supported by KADF with a \$1 million investment. To date three loans have been made from this fund; the loans must be paid back within 3 year.

- These successes could not have been accomplished without the support of Agriculture as expressed through the strategic plan.
- The KVMA is still working to advance other goals in the plan, related to funding student positions at Auburn and Tuskegee.

Sharon Furchess then explained the process for Task Force's work for the balance of the day.

- She introduced Dr. Lori Garkovich of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, who will facilitate the Task Force discussions

Dr. Garkovich led the Task Force through several exercises over the balance of the day, in order that everyone present could become acquainted with each other, and to begin the process of identifying issues that are important to Kentucky Agriculture, and that may over the course of the planning process become part of the Strategic Plan's goals and objectives.

These exercises included:

Before lunch

"Brainstorming Introductions" – all Task Force members were asked to introduce themselves, the organization they represented, and to answer two questions: *What do you see as the greatest challenge, and the greatest opportunity for Kentucky agriculture in the next 5 years?* These responses were to be provided within 30 seconds.

After Lunch

"Breakout Group Brainstorming" – Task Force members were divided into small groups across the room, and asked to spend approximately 10 minutes discussing each of the following questions:

- *What are the opportunities or challenges for Kentucky agriculture and rural communities in the next 5 years?*
- *What are the challenges to capturing these opportunities or overcoming these challenges?*
- *Realistically, what can the Kentucky Agricultural Council and its member organizations do to address these obstacles?*

After each 10-minute period, a spokesperson for each group gave a report on the key points identified in their respective discussions. It was noted that the level of detail surfaced during these discussions was increasingly focused, and broad patterns of common interest begin to appear across the great number of points identified.

The material from both morning and afternoon brainstorming discussions was captured by staff on flip chart pads and will be summarized in a document to be distributed to the Task Force in preparation for its second meeting (May 30).

Before lunch, Keith Rogers provided an overview of the planning process. The process is modeled on many of the same steps that were used during the 2007 planning process. He noted that, “the Plan cannot be everything to everybody”. He covered operating procedures for the Task Force, including the project timeline (with future meeting dates and deadlines for work to be accomplished). He also called attention to various documents of importance to the Task Force, notably a **Member Organization Responsibility Agreement** and a set of guiding principles.

Finally, a **Member Organization Survey** was provided to all participants. This questionnaire covers a wide range of topics of potential importance to Kentucky Agriculture and to rural communities. Each Task Force participating organization is being asked to complete the questionnaire on behalf of their organization, and to return these to the KAC staff by March 30. The forms should be completed to reflect that organization’s point of view.