

Best water solution: Enlarge Pools 9, 10

At issue | March 11 Herald-Leader editorial "PSC stuck with wrong options; neither water plan better than fixing dams"

By Tom Dugan

The debate riffs on about the Kentucky River versus the Ohio River as source points, and who and how the water should be delivered, but Central Kentuckians remain water-poor.

I'm happy to see the Kentucky River solution is back on the table, given the support offered in the Herald-Leader's editorial. But Kentucky American and Louisville Water Co. remain squared off on what has become a battleground where injury will be inflicted on farm landscapes no matter which of two proposed pipeline routes is cut: Kentucky American's from Pool 3 or Louisville's from Shelby County.

Today, as during the worst of last year's drought, there is that surplus 15 million gallons of water running over and through a leaky wall at Lock and Dam 9, behind which Kentucky American stores and withdraws our daily water supply.

Toward the end of 2008, however, the new dam will be completed at Valley View, after which the most

economical add-on would still be to attach crest gates to this and Dam 10 to retain all the water we in Lexington and surrounding counties require, even in the severest drought.

That's the quantity side of the issue, but what about quality?

New research says water supplies in Louisville and other metropolitan areas contain hormones and other drugs that utilities pipe into farms, homes and businesses. My horse farm clients will not be happy to hear of possible "feminizing effects" from the female hormones that stallions ingest while drinking city-supplied water. Not the best thing for Kentucky's largest farm economy: thoroughbred breeding.

So I ask the PSC, the Urban County Government and the two water utilities to look at buying more water frontage along Pools 9 and 10 and making improvements or enlargements to the existing water storage and treatment systems as a much wiser and cheaper investment compared to the \$165 million for Kentucky American's Pool 3 solution, or the as-yet-unknown costs of the Louisville pipeline.

Tom Dugan of Lexington is a hydrogeologist.