

Barren County
Agricultural Development Council

Update of
COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

June 1, 2025

Submitted by:

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Barren County

Comprehensive Plan Update

County Agricultural Development Councils have the responsibility to evaluate the needs of the local agricultural economy. The updated County Comprehensive Plan should identify programs and projects best suited for agricultural development fund investments in the County.

The Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy staff may provide guidance to county councils throughout this evaluation.

1. Overview of County

Barren County is located in the south-central part of Kentucky, near the Mammoth Cave National Park. The county has an extensive agriculture base and is noted for the diversity of agricultural production. The county is extremely large in land mass with 253,834 acres involved in agriculture production (according to the 2022 Census figures). The Census also lists 1,621 total farms in Barren County, averaging 142 acres per farm.

There are two watersheds associated within the county; one being the Green River/Mammoth Cave watershed and the other draining toward the Barren River. Barren River Lake reservoir is a man-made storage area. It serves several communities and most of Barren county, as well as, some surrounding area with public water. The reservoir controls flood hazards downstream toward Warren County, which is extremely beneficial to that area. Besides serving as an excellent water source for the communities, Barren River Lake Reservoir is a recreational asset year-round for tourists and recreational fishing.

a. Agricultural statistics, trends, & projections (i.e. Census Data)

▪ Traditional agricultural production

According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, Barren County ranked 14, a total of \$181,330,000 was received from agricultural production. Burley tobacco production netted \$13,907,000. Forage was produced on 59,476 acres, ranking Barren County #1 in KY. Barren County ranks #1 in KY in both beef and dairy production.

▪ Non-traditional agricultural production

Barren County ranks 9th in KY in the production of goats. Poultry production is increasing thanks to regional poultry processing companies. Horticulture (mostly vegetables and some fruits) is increasing annually. Farmer's marketing opportunities have led to develop of agriculture enterprises that add value to farm products

- New & emerging agricultural production

Grain production in Barren County has seen a significant increase in acreage. In 2022, over 16,800 acres of corn for grain and over 20,000 acres of soybeans for grain were harvested (2022 Census of Agriculture).

- Tobacco dependency

Barren County dependency on burley tobacco continues a slow decline. In 2006 Barren County was the state leader in burley production as 2022 Barren County has slipped to 3rd in KY.

b. Demographic Data

- Social data

Population data for Barren County was obtained from 2020 Census. Barren County had a total population of 44,670. 20,496 were males and 21,677 were female. 23.6% were under 18 years of age. 16.5% of the people are 65 years old or older. Racial breakdown is 88.1% are white. 4.26% are Hispanic, 3.65% are African American, and 0.1% are of other races within Barren County. Glasgow, the county seat, had a population of 14,561.

- Economic data

Statistical projections are for a population of 43,148 in 2020. There were 22,255 housing units in Barren County in 2020. Home ownership rate for 2020 was 68.2%, with a median home owner-occupied value of \$105,400 with 2.51 people per home. Unemployment steadily declining from high in 2020 of 12.6% to the current level of 4.6%

2. Assessments of the County

a. Strengths

Barren County, noted as a large agriculture dependent community, is a "hub" for surrounding communities for retail outlets and industry. It is also considered a diverse agriculture community, progressive in modern production methods and aggressive in environmental practices. Terrain is varied, from gently rolling to land with only slight slopes and is available with adequate amounts of water resources. Soil types are varied as well, with the majority being clay loam based and highly fertile and productive. Many soils are extremely deep and moderate to well drained. Most soils are highly capable for excellent crop production. Improvements to road infrastructure on I65, Louie Nunn Parkway, and Veterans Outer Loop increase access to markets.

b. Weaknesses

Lower projected commodity prices grain and tobacco as compared to their production costs are affecting county producers. A need to stabilize agricultural commodity markets and provide at least parity in the marketing of farm products for the farmer would be of extreme benefit to producers. Marketing techniques, whether for an individual's farming operation sales or farmer group efforts, have a true need for improvement if farmers are going to be profitable. Outside of local consumes of feed grains, grain must be trucked a minimum of 45 miles from Glasgow to elevators.

c. Opportunities

Improve the capacity of our agriculture community to identify and address opportunities that could benefit our citizens.

Attain sustainability of agricultural economic development systems that can allow us competitiveness in the global market.

Encourage the adaptation of healthy food through the development of high quality selective agricultural products growers can produce and market locally and beyond.

Stimulate the opportunity for young people to enter or remain in the agriculture production sector and maintain their farming programs to have a viable business of farming in Barren County.

d. Challenges

Market uncertainty is a true threat to any commodity considered for production. With the recent changes of the burley tobacco industry, farmers are faced with the needs to add income for their farm to stay afloat. Meeting cash flow problems and mortgage requirements is becoming a burden for many farm families. The financial

stress is hitting a high level and causing producers to become very concerned over their future. Farm policy, nation wide is in real need for adjustments.

Opportunities to blend a potential income into the farmers' producing future, is a simple but frequently asked question still by many local farmers.

3. County Council Objectives

a. Mission/Vision Statement

Mission Statement:

The Barren County Agricultural Development Council has a mission to promote agricultural means of income and assistance to sustain an adequate standard of living for Barren County farmers.

b. Short term goals

The council wants to get any many and varied applications as possible from those entities who are interested, to fund projects that their constituents need support with, in order to create a modern position in their commodity's marketplace. The Barren County ADC would like to invest county funds in all areas outline in current CAIP specifications, agriculture diversification programs and Agriculture Educational programs to assist as many Barren County farmers, as possible. Barren County ADC is not interested in setting goals for dividing the funds according to percent allocations due to the unknown opportunities that may be submitted and be positively responsive to the needs of Barren County' s agriculture future.

c. Long term goals

The Barren County Agricultural Development Council wants to invest Phase I Tobacco Settlement Funds allocated to Barren County along with any other matching funds that qualify in the agriculture community to give long-range returns to Barren County producers. Continuing investment in all areas of County Agriculture Improvement Program that empower Barren County producers to become viable in the long term. Farm infrastructure and facilities, genetic improvement and forage improvement are seen as long term goals.

d. Tactics for leveraging funds

▪ Regional partnerships

The Barren County ADC will welcome cooperative projects that align with the ADC objectives and goals. Regional and state organizations such Barren River Area Development District and Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development can be valuable assests in developing partnerships. As per Barren County ADC policy the applicant must provide at least 50% of the project funds, with the exception of educational proposals which may be considered for a higher level of cost share.

▪ State Agricultural Development Board resources

- Other local/state/federal resources

The Barren County ADC will cooperative with local, state, & federal government agencies when applicable. The objectives and goals of the Barren County ADC will be the guiding principles in any and all partnerships.

3. Evaluation & Review

- a. How are proposals evaluated and does this process need modified?

The Barren County ADC will use the special form, developed by the state board, to rank all proposal applications submitted to the ADC for priority to their goals within the county plan. Each proposal is review and discussed by the Barren County ADC and rated in accordance with the ADC objectives and goals.

- b. How is success and failure measured?

The Barren County Agriculture Development Council requests an updated progress report on approved proposals annually or one report upon completion if it occurs less than one year from the beginning of the project. The progress reports are reviewed to assure that the objectives and goals of the Barren County ADC are being met.

- c. How will the county comprehensive plan be revised?

Evaluation and review shall be in accordance with the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board rules and guidelines. All proposals and recommendations for funding approval will be forwarded to the Kentucky Agriculture Development Board after the Barren County Agriculture Development Council rates each proposal, as directed. Final approval will be made by the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board. The Barren County ADC will seek input from stakeholders before any revisions are made.

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