

Clay County
Agricultural Development Council

Update of
COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

June 2025

Submitted by:

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Clay 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 Kentucky Office of Agricultural Policy staff may provide guidance to county councils throughout this evaluation.

1. Overview of County

Clay County's total resident population is 19,592 down around 3.7 percent from in 2020. Our poverty rate has stayed the same since 2020 at 37.2%. The Hal Rogers Parkway runs through Clay County from east to west. Highway 421 (two lane road) runs north and south through the County. We are 22 miles from I-75 exits in London, KY. The growing season is at least 175 days, eight out of ten years, with average rainfall of 49 inches, 25 inches of rain falls between April and September. Clay County has over 5,202 acres in hay and row crops. In 2022, it was reported that Clay County had 178 farms which is down by 24% from 2017. Land in farms is 38,581 acres down 13% from 2017. The average size of a farm is 217 acres which is up 14% from 2017. The market value of all farm products sold was \$2,067,100 down 8 % from 2017. Total farm production expenses were \$2,052,160 which is up 4% from 2017. Sixty-nine percent of farms have internet access. Eleven farms sell directly to consumers and ninety-nine percent of farms are classified as family farms.

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

- Traditional agricultural production

Forages	3776 acres	Cattle and Calves	1,911
Vegetables	87 acres	Goats	118
Soybeans	444 acres	Sheep and lambs	172
Corn for grain	230 acres	Layers	1,123

- Non-traditional agricultural production

Organic farms	2
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- New & emerging agricultural production

- Tobacco dependency

There are less than five tobacco producers in the county down from over 2700 producers and 1750 acres in 1999. Due to labor shortages, market uncertainty and the age of an average tobacco producer, tobacco acreage is less than 200 acres in 2020.

b. Demographic Data

- Social data

There are 290 total agricultural producers in Clay County and they are broken down by 179 male producers and 111 female producers. There are 19 producers under the age of 35, 181 that are from 35-64, and 90 producers that are over 65. The race of 286 producers is white and 4 that are more than one race. There are 75 producers that are new and beginning farmers, and 37 with military service.

- Economic data

The median household income in Clay County is approximately \$39,607. 43.3% percent of Clay Countians older than 16 are employed and workers are traveling almost 30 minutes to work. Total agricultural value of crops and livestock are \$3,680,000. Crops were valued at \$2,741,000 and livestock was valued at \$939,000.

2. Assessments of the County

a. Strengths

Available Land to double and triple livestock production
Forested Acres that need to be managed
Wildlife
Gas and Oil
People

b. Weaknesses

Road networks in the far reaches of county are not good.
County is located a good distance from urban centers to sell products.
Most producers have little capital to start new ventures.
Clay County lacks crop land needed to develop row crops.
Producers lack marketing knowledge and courage as well as competent labor.
Labor force is not available.
Almost 30% of forested land is in the Daniel Boone National Forest. Logging is limited and tax dollars to the county are not realized.
Private forested land generally is not managed.

c. Opportunities

FCI-Manchester, Clay County School System, Redbird Schools, Oneida Baptist Institute, the Clay County Detention Center, Advent Health and the Laurel Creek Nursing Home have either students or residents that eat 2-3 meals per day at their location.
Abundance of reclaimed, strip-mined land.
Forested land and forest resources.
More small ruminant production.

d. Challenges

Youth are not interested in agricultural careers and the youth population is declining.
Land prices are rising, making it difficult for young producers to go into agriculture.
More markets are needed in many avenues but especially for low grade timber so landowners can afford to do forest stand improvement projects.

3. County Council Objectives

a. Mission/Vision Statement

To develop profitable agriculture in the county so that farmers will be able to produce a level of farm income sufficient enough to maintain farm viability whether full or part time. The Clay County Agriculture Development Council will encourage efforts to try different enterprises using traditional and new opportunities for marketing.

b. Short term goals

Increase profitability to existing agricultural enterprises through CAIP funds.
Maintain a shared-use equipment for county producers partnering with the Clay County Farm Bureau and the Clay County Conservation District.

c. Long term goals

Continue the search for agricultural enterprises that have the potential to produce income to keep family farms viable. The Clay County Agriculture Development Council strongly supports regional projects and regional marketing initiatives..

d. Tactics for leveraging funds

▪ Regional partnerships

The Clay County Agriculture Development Council has joined with area counties to invest in the WTA Beef Marketing Alliance facility as well as improvements to the facility. We will continue to look for regional projects in which to invest.

▪ State Agricultural Development Board resources

The Clay County Agriculture Development Council will continue to utilize County Agriculture Investment Programs (CAIP) to help producers to position themselves to compete in their chosen enterprises. We will continue to take applications for non-CAIP projects that meet state guidelines.

- Other local/state/federal resources

Kentucky Department of Agriculture
Kentucky Cattlemen Association/Kentucky Beef Network
Kentucky Horticulture Association
Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development
Kentucky State University
Community Farm Alliance

3. Evaluation & Review

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

Each proposal will be evaluated and reviewed based on the merit of the plan, matching funds, profitability for producers and project feasibility for the applicant and county producers.

- b. How is success and failure measured?

The success or failure of a program is measured by the council based on growth potential. The determining factor for success of a program is whether local producers will receive benefit through increased profits or growth potential in the future.

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

The county comprehensive plan will be revised as needed and a complete revision will be done every five years. If at any time it is determined that new or emerging issues have been omitted and need to be addressed, the plan can be re-evaluated or modifications can be added.

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