

Fleming County
Agricultural Development Council

Update of

COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

04/29/2025

Submitted by:

List County Council Members

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Fleming
**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

Fleming County consists of 224,493 land acres and 128 water acres. The county is diverse with the southern, central, and northern parts of the county being similar to the Bluegrass Region of Kentucky, and the eastern part of the county being part of the foothills of the Allegheny Mountains. Ag production varies with 35% share of sales type being crops and 65% being Livestock, poultry, and products. Land in farms by use breaks down as: 66,449 acres cropland, 54,762 acres pastureland, 27,688 acres of woodland, and 8,907 acres of other in 2022 . The livestock inventory in 2022 was: 39,548 cattle and calves, 735 broilers and meat-type chickens, 289 goats, 137 hogs and pigs, 1384 horses and ponies, 1682 layers, 540 pullets, 1977 sheep and lambs, and 20 turkeys. The top crops in acres in 2022 were: 39,506 acres of forage, 9798 acres of soybeans, 3600 acres of corn for grain, and 600 acres of corn for silage From the USDA census report in 2022, commodity values in Fleming County were as follows: Cattle and calves \$21M; Grains \$10M; Dairy Products \$5.5M; Other crops and hay \$5.5M; with other commodities bringing the total value of commodities to \$48.9M.

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

- Traditional agricultural production
 - Beef
 - Hay
 - Dairy
 - Grain
- Non-traditional agricultural production
 - Vineyards/Grapes
 - Organic Vegetables
 - Specialty Crops for Farmers-market type sales
- New & emerging agricultural production
 - Hay
 - Various Organic products
- Tobacco dependency

Tobacco dependency has continued to decline in Fleming County. On the 2022 estimates for tobacco production in Fleming County the estimated revenue was \$231,000, with it not making the list for top crops in acres for Fleming County.

b. Demographic Data

▪ Social data

According to the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, in 2020 the county had a population of 15,082, with the county seat and largest city of Flemingsburg at 7,721. Fleming County had a total of 3,933 jobs in 2022. The median age from the Census 2023 5-year estimates for Fleming County is 41. The total number of farms changed by -11.4% between 2017 and 2022. 193 farmers are under the age of 35, 822 farmers between 35-64 years of age and 563 that are 65 and older. 992 farmers were male and 586 were female.

▪ Economic data

In Fleming County, the unemployment rate for 2021 was 2%. 19% of the population were below the poverty level in 2021.

2. Assessments of the County

a. Strengths

- Beef, Forage, & Grain
- Forestry &-Wood Products
- Farmers Market/Diversified Products
- Ag Business Markets including
 - Stockyards
 - Multiple Farm Supply Stores
 - Slaughter Houses
 - Tractor suppliers
- Closeness to urban markets

b. Weaknesses

- Age of Farmers increasing
- Other new crops/ income opportunities to grow farm income

c. Opportunities

- Educational opportunities are key
- Improving efficiency in beef production
 - Improving hay quality through better storage and production
 - Exploring new markets in ag
 - Remaining profitable in tough grain markets

Welding institute to bring individuals and attention to the county
-opportunity for education on transitions and management.

d. Challenges

- Low commodity prices bring less income for producers
- Farmer's ability to manage market risk
- Increasing age of the farmer
- Lack of interest in farming from younger generation
- Financial burden of start-up cost for young and new farmers.

3. County Council Objectives

a. Mission/Vision Statement

The mission of the Fleming County Agricultural Development Council is to promote a thriving farm economy which sustains not only agriculture but our small town and rural way of life.

b. Short-term goals

Short term goals include assisting farmers in education on managing risk, creating business plans and marketing of products. Extension will play a large role in promoting and making available educational opportunities to help producers transition to new enterprises. The focus of extension will be to promote educational programs and teach producers to be as efficient and effective of producers as possible.

c. Long-term goals

The long-term goal will be to have a well-educated farming population in general. Extension will work with funding administrators to create an environment where extension education is tied to funding programs. Educational subject matter will be related to CAIP programs. Educational sessions will be made available during convenient times for producers. Educational sessions will be held often enough for Fleming County producers to have ample opportunity to attend.

d. Tactics for leveraging funds

- Regional partnerships
 - Kentucky Beef Network
 - Kentucky Cattlemen's Association
 - Horticulture Council
 - Kentucky Dairy Development Council
 - Mason County Community and Technical College
 - Morehead State University
 - Kentucky Farm Bureau

- State Agricultural Development Board Resources
 - Kentucky Office of Agricultural Policy Staff
 - KOAP Finance
 - KAFC
 - Kentucky Center for Agricultural and Rural Development
 - Energy Programs
 - State Funds

- Other local/state/federal resources
 - Farm Service Agency
 - Natural Resources Conservation Service
 - Kentucky Proud
 - Kentucky Department of Agriculture
 - Grow Appalachia
 - Kentucky State University
 - Organic Association of Kentucky

3. Evaluation & Review

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

Proposals are presented to the council in a manner that illustrates the goals of the project on a large scale. The council reviews the information and discusses whether the proposal would be of benefit to the county and aid in accomplishing the goal and vision of the county council. A council representative responds to the proposal with the council's decision in a timely manner. This process needs no modification.

- b. How is success and failure measured?

The council will request a review from entities that received money. If the entity has followed through with their proposal and it is meeting the goals and vision of the council then it is deemed a success. If there is no review made or the entity fails to follow through with the plans or if the actions of the party receiving money are not in line with the goals and vision of the council, it is deemed a failure.

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

The county council reserves the right to modify and adjust the comprehensive plan as it deems necessary as the needs and priorities of the county's agricultural producers change.

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