

Graves County Comprehensive Plan 2025 Update

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

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

Overview of County

Graves County is an agricultural community. Agricultural acreage based on the 2022 Census of Agriculture is in the 255,000 acre range. Soybeans, corn, and wheat are routinely grown in rotation throughout the county with soybeans growing on 38% of the acreage, 24% of land is utilized for corn and 9% sowed in wheat. The total value of crop sales in the county has increased to roughly \$473,755,000 with tobacco continuing to make a significant contribution at 17% of crop sales.

Livestock production remains a major agriculture endeavor in Graves County with animal sales totaling \$332,891. 94% of all livestock sales are attributed to poultry sales.

a. Agriculture statistics, trends, and projections (i.e. 2022 Census Data)

* Traditional agriculture production

Crop acreage as reflected in the 2022 Census of Agriculture were:

Soybeans - 97,696
Corn – 61,862
Wheat – 22,315
Pastureland – 12,495
Forage- 10,429
Forest – 10,018

* Non-traditional agricultural production

One very successful non-traditional agricultural crop is pecans. Graves County has approximately 40 acres of pecans now proving to be profitable. Nursery operations have been established and appear to have a future.

* New and emerging agricultural production

Fruit and flower production

* Tobacco dependency

Tobacco remains a major source of income for Graves County farmers. In 2022 tobacco accounted for \$8,441,000 in sales.

b, Demographic Data

* Social Data

White - 92.7%
African - American - 4.2%
Asian – 0.6%
Hispanic - 8.2%
2 or more races – 2.8%
American Indian - 0.6%
Native Hawaiian and other - 0.1%

* Economic Data

Total Income from:

Farm Operations – 473,755,000
Agri-tourism & Recreational Services - \$\$\$,\$\$\$
Crop Sales including Products – 140,864,000
Animal sales including Products – 332,891,000

Assessments of the County

a. Strengths

Graves County with its thousands of fertile farm acres is geographically located within a one to one and a half day transit time to most eastern US cities. Rail, river, and roadway provide fast, efficient modes of transportation. Locale with access to affordable, reliable transportation are conducive to the development of value added and niche markets.

The County has access to two excellent education systems with both a county and an independent school system offering Kindergarten through 12th grade education while being ranked in the top 10th percentile of Kentucky schools.

Graves County residents have access to a quality trades school and is within close proximity of a community and technical college and accredited university engineering programs. All offer excellent opportunities for continuing education.

b. Weaknesses

Farm profitability

c. Opportunities:

Agritourism

Vegetable production

d. Challenges:

Weather

Economic/Political Climate

County Council Objectives:

a. Mission/Vision Statement

The mission of Graves County Agricultural Development Council is to increase agricultural productivity and profitability by supporting programs and activities both present and future. The Council's goal is to increase Graves County supporting innovation in existing farm endeavors and facilitating new opportunity development. Our goal is to encourage better utilization of existing resources in current farming activities and to develop new innovative enterprises to provide profitable future opportunities.

b. Short Term Goals

Promote KADF opportunities
Educate agriculture community about seeking funding
Make funding available

c. Long Term Goals

Promote more efficient use off County Agriculture Resources
Add value to county commodities when possible
Provide Educational Opportunities to Farm Families
Encourage development of non-traditional farm enterprises
Encourage profitable cooperative efforts in the area
Facilitate programs aimed at sustainability of natural resources
Promote preservation and proliferation of wildlife and native plants

d. Tactics for leveraging funds

*. Regional Partnerships

Strengthen communications between agencies represented on Agriculture Development Council.
Work with area banks with regional presence and other lending institutions for maximization of funding opportunities
Partner with local educational institutions to educate and promote agriculture while exploring opportunities to leverage funds.

* State Agricultural Development Board Resources

The Graves County Agricultural Development Board will encourage leveraging of county funds through cost share, in-kind replacement, or matching of local, state or federal monies when the opportunities present themselves. County Proposals may require the participant fund a minimum of 50% of the total cost of the proposal. Multi-county or regional efforts are strongly encouraged to benefit the greatest number of affected farmers.

* Other Local/State/Federal Resources

Grants/Cost Shares

Evaluation and Review

- a. How are proposals evaluated and does this process need modified?
Proposals will be evaluated on their potential to increase production capabilities, improve marketing efficiency, add value, or create new products with new market potential. Proposals requiring multiple counties, regional or state funds must demonstrate economic benefits to Graves County and surrounding farmers.

- b. How is success and failure measured?
Proposals must use the official Kentucky Development Fund Investment Program "Request for Proposals". Forms. The Graves Agricultural Development Council requires a minimum semi-annual progress report on grants funded by County monies. More frequent reports will be accepted. The Council reserves the right incomplete or inadequate forms to be corrected and resubmitted. Council will review county plan yearly to make any needed adjustments.

- c. How will the county comprehensive plan be revised?
The Graves County Agriculture Development board will look at the comprehensive plan periodically to revise any weaknesses that the plan may have.