

Knox County  
Agricultural Development Council

Update of  
**COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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**Submitted by:**

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# Knox 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

In 2022, Knox County had 293 farm operations on 32,034 acres. That is approximately a 13% reduction in the number of farms and a 17% loss of farm land.

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

- Traditional agricultural production

Beef: Beef production is now the leading livestock commodity with approximately 3,300 head of cattle countywide. Beef production is the lead commodity in agriculture commodities as they traditionally have for many years. In the past programs have been based primarily on production practices. However, efforts have been made to expand marketing opportunities dealing with beef cattle.

- Non-traditional agricultural production

- o Income from Agri-tourism \$14,000
- o Twenty five producers growing garden plants
- o Fifteen producers growing flowers and ornamentals
- o More high tunnel production expected
- o Forestry

- New & emerging agricultural production
  - o Value added to traditional farm crops
  - o Horticulture production
  - o Farmers' Market

- Tobacco dependency
  - o None at this time.

b. Demographic Data

- Social data

Population of Knox County as of 2022 census is 29,773  
 50.1% female and 49.9% male  
 65% living in rural area and 35% urban  
 The unemployment is at 5.2%  
 The median household income is \$34,254

- Economic data

Agriculture in Knox County

- o Average size of farms: 109 acres
- o Average value of agricultural products sold per farm: \$2,684
- o Average value of crops sold per acre for harvested cropland: \$1,625
- o The value of livestock, poultry, and their products as a percentage of the total market value of agricultural products sold: 28.14%.

**2. Assessments of the County**

a. Strengths

Strong local Farmers Market

- o Former tobacco farms in Knox County could be converted to vegetables with very little machinery investment.
- o Most Knox County farmers have experience, land, facilities need for the potential to double beef production.
- o Knox County has a very progressive agricultural community.
- o Knox County is suitable for expanding in forages.
- o There are good roads leading in and out of the county

b. Weaknesses

- Landowners need improved marketing information on private timber sales.
- o There is a need for better commercial vegetable marketing outlets in our area.
- o Most farmers have little capital in which to start new ventures.
- o There is a need for better beef herd management.
- o There is a need for education and machinery for alternative crops and livestock.

c. Opportunities

- With loss of jobs, a workforce is available.
- o With local demand for local produce the marketing locally is a potential.

d. Challenges

- Youth willing to farm but no profitable choices.
- o Many young people are moving away.
- o Rising land costs and low farm prices make it nearly impossible for young people to go into farming.
- o Lack of good jobs available for those who farm part time.
- o No choices at present time to replace or subsidize tobacco

### 3. County Council Objectives

a. Mission/Vision Statement

To develop profitable agriculture in the county and surrounding area to benefit generations.

b. Short term goals

The Knox County Phase I tobacco Board feels that by enhancing agricultural income in (1) beef production (2) alternative crops (3) alternative livestock (4) wood products and by helping with programs in these areas, this would improve life for all of Knox County.

c. Long term goals

- (1) Area Vegetable Marketing Cooperative
- (2) Support for group marketing alliances of all livestock
- (3) Financial support for area forestry education
- (4) Provide needs for alternative crops and livestock to tobacco

d. Tactics for leveraging funds

- Regional partnerships
  - Knox County Conservation District
  - o Knox County Farm Service Agency
  - o Cumberland Valley RC&D Council
  - o Farm Bureau
  - Natural Resource Conservation Services
  
- State Agricultural Development Board resources
  - Use Local State Legislative endorsements and area advisory Council Members

- Other local/state/federal resources
  - Knox County Cattleman's
  - Kentucky Cattleman's
  - o Kentucky State Horticulture Council
  - o Division of Forestry

### 3. Evaluation & Review

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

At this time Knox County is using the CAIP Program so state recommended Evaluation is used.

- b. How is success and failure measured?

Positive response, profitability, or efficiency.

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

As needed to meet the ever changing needs of the county.

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