

Menifee
Agricultural Development Council

Update of
COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Submitted by:

List County Council Members

Mike Helton

Jacob Lawson

Ralph Collinsworth

Tonya Means

LeAnn Reed

Hector Acala

Greg Spencer

Chuck Craft

Javen Smallwood

Mary McCarty

County Extension Agent for
Agriculture and Natural
Resources

P O Box 85

Frenchburg KY 40322

606-768-3866

mary.mccarty@uky.edu

Menifee

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

Menifee County has a steady population 6,341, according to United States Quick Facts Census. The trend in Menifee County shows a decrease in farm income caused by an increase of residential use of farmlands, farms being used for cabins and residential homes. Living on a farm or retiring to a farm has become a way of life, more so than a means of family support. Without significant opportunity for increased farm profit this will remain true for many Menifee Countians who check farming as a principle occupation for census records. However, we know that some residences of Menifee County are looking for serious means of improving farm profit to supplement family income.

- a. Agricultural statistics, trends, & projections (i.e. Census Data)
 - Traditional agricultural production
The Census in 2022 showed that farmland has decreased 25% since 2017. The average farm acreage is 116. 47% of Menifee County farms raise livestock and 53% of Menifee County farms raise crops. The average age of the Menifee County Farmer is 57.1. The total farm related income according to the 2022 Ag Census increased by 165% according to the 2022 report.
 - Non-traditional agricultural production
New crops and new enterprises are showing promise. Some of those crops showing promise range from Sweet potato to Yaks. Farmers market and vegetable production stays steady each year.

- Tobacco dependency
Menifee County is like most of Eastern Kentucky it depended very highly on tobacco. There is zero tobacco grown in Menifee County in 2025.

b. Demographic Data

- Social data
Menifee County population had a 3.7% increase according the 2024 Census quick facts. 96.8% of the county in Caucasian, 1.1% is African American, and 1.5% is hispanic. 78.4% of resident are high school graduates or higher. Only 10.9% of the county has their Bachelors degree.
- Economic data
The average commute to work is 39.5 minutes one way. 25.1% of the county is below the federal poverty level. The median household income for the county is \$44,672.

2. Assessments of the County

a. Strengths

The strengths of Menifee County are found in its people who care about and make farming a way of life. Menifee County is home to 213 farms containing about 35362 acres in farmland. We are located in the beautiful Daniel Boone National Forest, which takes up 24724 acres in Menifee County with many more acres of privately owned woodlands. We are located between Cave Run Lake and the Red River Gorge and feel that tourism can become a major part of our economy. In addition to the forests, our rolling hills are well suited for livestock, forage, and forestry production.

b. Weaknesses

The weakness or needs of Menifee County farmers include the lack of new enterprises and the need for the expansion of existing agricultural production. Very few young people are staying on the farm to make their living. Most of our farmers are part-time producers, and make their living off the farm or have retired to a farm. The median household income is \$44,672 dollars.

c. Opportunities

- Beef and forages
- Agricultural Diversification
- Agri-Tourism including recreational and sporting uses of farmland
- Value added timber products
- Research, Development, Experimentation and Education

d. Challenges

- Lack of markets
- Loss of farmland by sale for construction of weekend cabins.
- Loss of farmland for home construction.
- Increase in farmland prices above level for equitable return to farming.
- Young people not staying on the farm.
- Loss of the family farm.
- Few secondary wood industries
- Inefficient utilization of forage crops
- Continual loss of tobacco income

3. County Council Objectives

a. Mission/Vision Statement

The Menifee County Ag Development Council wants farming to remain a vital part of their rural economy. We are proud farmers who wish to make a stand together to live in a community where agriculture is a valued part of community life. It is our goal to promote agriculture and related industries for current farmers and for future generations.

b. Short term goals

To prompt proposals in the major areas for improving farm income

To prioritize major areas most likely to improve farm income

The percentages allotted to major areas are:

- Beef and forage – 75%
- Agricultural Diversification – 10%
- Tourism including recreational and sporting uses of farmland – 8%
- Value added timber products – 5%
- Research, Development, Experimentation and Education – 2%

c. Long term goals

Utilize Phase I Tobacco Dollars to help fund projects that are successful in improving farm income.

Create new markets for all agricultural products:

- Increase cattle numbers
- Increase forage utilization
- Create opportunities in agri-tourism
- Improving income from our timber resources
- Improve research development, experimentation and education opportunities

d. Tactics for leveraging funds

- Regional partnerships
 - Low or no interest loans
 - Matching grants – 50-50 grants
 - Join with UK, MSU, Mountain Rural, Clark Energy, Farm Bureau, NRCS, and local banks to add dollars for proposals and college scholarships for adults and students making the transition from farm to public work.
 - Multi-county proposals are encouraged
- State Agricultural Development Board resources

- Other local/state/federal resources
 - Local banks,
 - Farmers Service Agency
 - Farm Credit Service
 - Kentucky Department of Agriculture
 - Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)
 - USDA

3. Evaluation & Review

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

Proposals go in front of the Council for discussion and then labeled as high priority or low priority.

- b. How is success and failure measured?

- Ag stats indication of increase in sales of farm products.
- Increase farm income from increase in cattle numbers
- Number of individuals assisted to make the transition from farm to non-farm jobs.
- Increase sales at Farmers Market
- Improvement in farmer cooperatives to assist in marketing farm products.

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

For revision to take place the Agricultural Development Council must assess the needs of the county and ensure that they are taking all measures in reaching those.