

Pulaski County Agriculture Development Plan

May 12th, 2025

Pulaski County Phase I Agriculture Development Council Members:

Brian Carrigan, Chair

Alicia Logsdon

Greg Wilson, Vice Chair

Mark Burnett

Alex Gibson, Secretary

Sarah Skinner

Austin Ballou

Marty Wilson

Will Bingham

Pulaski County Comprehensive Plan for Agricultural Development

Overview of County

Pulaski County is located in the South Central region of Kentucky, located approximately 80 miles south of Lexington. It is the third largest county in terms of land area (653 square miles) in the Commonwealth. Forty-five percent of the land is forested.

Traditional Agriculture:

- Tobacco ~488 acres
- Cattle—63,502 head
- Forage production—43,555 acres
- Grain—Corn- 10,500 acres, Soybeans- 22,202 acres, Wheat- 3,363 acres
- Vegetables - tomatoes, peppers, pumpkins, melons (~266 acres).

Non-traditional Agriculture

- Fruits -apples, peaches, strawberries, blackberries, blueberries (~95 acres)
- Floriculture production -7 commercial greenhouse growers
- Poultry-56,000 birds sold in 2022
- Timber Industry

New, Emerging Agriculture

- Grapes
- Hair Sheep- 2,097 head
- Direct Marketing of Cattle
- Ag Tourism

Demographic Data

- Aging faster than the average for the Commonwealth (12.5%)
- 10th fastest growing county in Kentucky
- Unemployment rate is 6.1%
- High school dropout rate is 3%
- Average age of farmer is 57.6 years (2012)
- 93% of farmers work off the farm
- Pulaski County is a regional labor market center for supplies, livestock sales, retail sales, and employment

Inventory of Resources

- Somerset Community College (part of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System) University Center of Southern Kentucky.
- Many banks and loaning institutions

- Good community leadership
- Thriving lake and tourism industry
- Good highway system (US 27 and 80, Cumberland Parkway, (potentially interstate connection))
- Medical complex
- Four school systems
- Improved Infrastructure (City Water, Black-top Roads)

Review of Process

The Pulaski County Agricultural Development Council held 3 community meetings to gather public input as to how they think the county's share of the tobacco settlement money should be spent.

The Council also sent out a survey to approximately 1200 tobacco producers. A summary of the results is below:

1. Out of 143 surveys, the percent interested in expanding, improving, or starting a new enterprise in:
 - Beef production -- 81%
 - Forage production -- 34%
 - Vegetable production -- 19%
 - Grain production -- 15%
2. Out of 143 surveys, the percent saying the reason they did not try a new farm enterprise was due to:
 - Lack of available markets -- 41%
 - Lack of resources -- 41%
 - Lack of labor -- 37%
 - Too much risk -- 35%
 - Profitability uncertainty -- 30%
 - Lack of production information -- 1%

-In the 2025 review of the 2007 survey the county council felt that all needs expressed have been met, either through the C.A.I.P program or the shared use equipment program.

Assessments

Strengths

- Strong community and agricultural leadership
- Strong agricultural history
- Physical infrastructure (roads, water, electric)
- Regional labor market
- Cooperative city and county governments
- Training centers
- Versatile land capabilities
- Improved forage quality and quantity

- Improved livestock efficiencies
- Shared Use Equipment
 - 5- No-till drills
 - 3 -Pasture Sprayers
 - 2- GPS Light bars
 - 2 Post Driver
 - Weed Wiper
 - Lime Spreader
 - Bale Wrapper
 - Recycle Trailer
 - Cattle Head Chute

Weaknesses

- Agriculture labor availability
- Lack of livestock show facility
- Lack of some infrastructure to rural areas

Opportunities

- Growing local economy including population increase, health complexes, and other factors
- Value-added emphasis on local products (beef, timber, forages, vegetables, etc)
- High school green house
- Livestock show facility
- Agriculture promotions / Public Education
- Expansion of Natural gas/ other utilities to rural areas of the county.

Threats

- Agriculture land pressures (urban sprawl)
- Increasing environmental demands on farmers
- Difficulty in finding labor
- Intolerance of normal farming practices by new rural residents
- Invasive species
- Black Vultures
- Government regulations
- Animal rights groups

County Council Objectives

Based on statistical information secured for Pulaski County and input from producers at meetings held across the county, the Pulaski County Agricultural Development Council proposes to support projects that will contribute to agriculture production long-term. We adopt the following Mission Statement:

Mission Statement

To assist in the development of a long-term, sustainable agricultural economy for Pulaski County.

Short-Term Priorities

- To encourage the expansion of existing enterprises that show economic promise in the long-run
- To promote the development of new enterprises for the long-term
- Increase awareness for farm safety
- Help develop more direct to consumer marketing
- Increase Value added products

In the next 5 years, this Council puts forth the following goals for Pulaski County:

Beef cattle production

- Increase net profit per head by 5% (use of better genetics, herd health programs, and better marketing) based on 5 year market average prices

Forestry

- Increase land owners awareness of forestry management opportunities
- Increase land owners awareness marketing opportunities

Forages

- Increase yields per acre by 5%
- Increase utilization of legumes

Horticulture

- Vegetables -increase production per acre by 3-5%
- Fruits -increase production per acre by 3-5%
- Grapes -increase production per acre by 5-7%

Grain

- Increase acreage by 5% and yields by 10% per acre based on current levels of each

Long-Term Goals

A stable and expanding agricultural economy in Pulaski County.

This Council puts forth the following goals for Pulaski County:

Beef cattle

- Increase net profit per head by 5-10% based on five year average market prices
- Increase net profit through better marketing processes
- Livestock show facility

Forages

- Increase yields per acre by 10%

Horticulture

- **Vegetables** –increase acreage by 10% based on 2022 levels
- **Fruits** –increase acreage by 10% based on 2022 levels
- **Grapes** –increase acreage by 10% based on 2022
- Levels Increase net profit through better marketing processes

Grain

- Increase acreage by 5% and yields by 10% per acre based on current levels of each
- Expansion of natural gas to rural parts of the county

Education

- Increase the public understand of Agriculture in the community and the effects it has on them.
- Better understating of agriculture products and the processes and practices used to get those products.

Tactics for Leveraging Funds

- The Council will require 50% cash match from the applicant (receipts and cancelled checks required) where commodity-related activities are involved.
- Depending upon the Pulaski County Council review, part of the 50% match may be subject to in-kind contributions.
- Any individual participating in the grant program will be limited to \$5000.00.
This policy may be subject to review by the Council depending on circumstances.
- Consideration for funding will be based on:
 - 1) How the proposal fits into the Pulaski County Agriculture Development Plan
 - 2) The number of farmers/families impacted
 - 3) The chances for long-term success
- **Regional Partnerships**
 - Farm Bureau
 - Kentucky Cattlemen's
 - Soybean Growers
 - Corn Growers

- Poultry Federation
- Farm Credit
- **State Agricultural Development Board Resources**
 - State Funding
 - KAFC
 - Energy Program
- **Other local/state/federal resources**
 - **FSA**
 - **NRCS**
 - **Conservation District**
 - **USDA Rural**
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Evaluation and Review

Applications will be received and reviewed by the Council in a timely fashion so that a smooth, orderly flow will be provided to the state board for their consideration and approval.

If all funds are dispensed by the Council at the end of the funding period (April 2002), applications pending consideration and evaluation will be considered first, provided program funding is continued.

County Plan Reviewed and Adopted on February 19, 2001
County Plan Revised and Adopted on April 2, 2001
County Plan Revised and Adopted on December 20, 2007
County Plan Revised and Adopted on October 19, 2020
County Plan Revised and Adopted on May 12, 2025

Signed _____
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