

Russell County  
Agricultural Development Council

Update of  
**COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

06/23/25

**Submitted by:**

List County Council Members

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- New & emerging agricultural production

Commercial vegetable production was once a booming business in the county with close to 40 farms growing and harvesting tomatoes, cabbage, or peppers. Now, this trend has switched to high tunnel production of fruits and vegetables which are mainly sold on-farm...(see attached Word document).

- Tobacco dependency

Russell County was once highly dependent on tobacco, but in 2024 no tobacco farms remain.

## b. Demographic Data

- Social data

- Economic data

Local government and manufacturing was the leading employers in 2024 according to the economic CEDIK profile. Manufacturing had an overall employment rate of nearly 30%.

## 2. Assessments of the County

### a. Strengths

Russell County has several strengths:

- Access to several agricultural services, i.e., farm equipment dealers, fertilizer dealers, chemical dealers.
- Access to four highways (127, 55, 80, & Cumberland Parkway) for shipping/transit.
- Access to a livestock auction market (Russell County Stockyards).
- Access to plenty of freshwater from Lake Cumberland and the Cumberland River, plus many streams/creeks and ponds.

b. Weaknesses

A weakness of Russell County would be that the grain markets are so far away. This makes our farmers have to travel to sell their grain products. Some producers do sell their grain locally to other producers or feed stores for livestock feed.

c. Opportunities

For the most part, producers in the county are willing to try new ideas and/or processes. With the interest of high tunnel vegetable and fruit production, more and more producers are moving towards irrigation and plastic mulch systems. This allows for expansion in their operations.

d. Challenges

The biggest challenges the county has to overcome would be:

- Subsidizing the unemployment rate because of the loss of jobs.
- Attracting agribusinesses to the county.
- Attracting and keeping large animal veterinarians.
- 4% loss in total jobs from 2019 - 2024.

### 3. County Council Objectives

a. Mission/Vision Statement

The Russell County Agricultural Development Council:

- Increase farm income, effect tobacco farmers/communities, and/or agriculture throughout the county by adding value to agricultural products and opportunities.

b. Short term goals

Short-term goals would be to prioritize investments as set forth by the mission/vision statement that immediately influences the needs of producers in Russell County.

c. Long term goals

Long-term goals would be to maintain and increase the importance of Russell County agriculture through the on-farm or project investments.

d. Tactics for leveraging funds

- Regional partnerships

The Russell County Agricultural Development Council plans to partner with local, regional, state, and federal entities to expand the reach of the investment program as needed.

- State Agricultural Development Board resources

- Other local/state/federal resources

### 3. Evaluation & Review

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

The Russell County Agricultural Development Council will evaluate and review the applications of producers according to the State Agricultural Development Board Guidelines. A brief overview follows:

- Advertise the program announcement for at least two consecutive weeks on local media outlets (radio and newspaper).
- Accept applications for at least two consecutive weeks following advertising.
- Meet as a council to evaluate and review the applications without the coversheet of the application (remove the coversheet so no identifying factors can be seen until the signature sheet at the end – application will already be...

- b. How is success and failure measured?

...scored at that point).

- Rank applicants based on the score received.
- Notify approved applicants by a letter.
- Notify waiting list/denied applicants by a letter.

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

The county comprehensive plan will be edited by the county extension agent and reviewed at the following county agriculture development council meeting. The council will make suggestions and then vote (a majority is required for passage of the revised plan).

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Tammysue.miller@ky.gov

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## **1. Overview of County**

Russell County is located in South Central Kentucky bordering Lake Cumberland and the Cumberland River. The population of the county was estimated at 17,991 in 2020 (U.S. Census, 2020). Agriculture is the in the forefront in the county with 99,006 total acres in production representing 51% of the county land (CEDIK, 2022). In 2022, crop sales (including products) were \$22,613,000 and animal sales (including products) were \$32,278,000 (CEDIK, 2022). Livestock, poultry and products made up the vast majority of sales in 2022 coming in at 59% while tobacco was under 1% (CEDIK, 2022). Cattle and calves were the overwhelming top seller in the animal sector at 78%.

Commercial vegetable production was once a booming business in the county with close to 40 farms growing and harvesting tomatoes, cabbage, or peppers. Now, this trend has switched to high tunnel production of fruits and vegetables which are mainly sold on-farm, while some are still sold wholesale, at produce auctions, or at farmers' markets.

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