

Wolfe County
Agricultural Development Council

Update of
COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Submitted by:

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Wolfe 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 Kentucky Office of Agricultural Policy staff may provide guidance to county councils throughout this evaluation.

1. Overview of County

Wolfe County is a rural county located in Eastern Kentucky. Eligible farm land is at a premium due to the increase in tourism being seen in the Red River Gorge area. As new producers have moved to the area we have witnessed growth in vegetable and herb production as well as bee keeping all while maintaining our traditional agriculture practices of home gardening, cattle, small animal and hay production. A previous county dependent on tobacco, our producers have worked diligently to diversify their operations to stay in business. After our last census, we lost 17 farmers in Wolfe County.

- a. Agricultural statistics, trends, & projections (i.e. Census Data)
 - Traditional agricultural production
 - \$695,000 in reported cattle sales
 - 5,869 acres of hay production
 - 25 acres of vegetables
 - \$40,000 in reported poultry and egg sales
 - \$91,000 in reported horse and mule sales
 - Non-traditional agricultural production
 - herb production for value added products
 - Bee Keepers and honey market expanding
 - Fresh cut flower farms and increasing and producing (currently 4)

- New & emerging agricultural production
 - addition of multiple new high tunnels
 - cut flower farms (tourism market with RRG)

- Tobacco dependency

Zero producers as of current have any tobacco dependency many thanks to the funds that have helped diversify and change operations.

b. Demographic Data

- Social data
 - 243 farms
 - 266 male producers, 163 female producers
 - 56 are under the age of 35 years old
 - 105 producers are over the age of 65
 - 268 producers are between the age of 35-64
 - 429 producers are white (all reported)

- Economic data

- 37,779 acres in farm production
- 155 acres is average farm size
- 13,344 acres of woodland
- \$8,609,000 market value of products sold

2. Assessments of the County

a. Strengths

- access to local sale markets
 - two local farmers markets
 - livestock sale market in County in addition to two more within an hour
- great tradition of farming and heritage
- good local boards to assist producers when needed
- good lay of land for those who do desire to farm
- good road access to gain materials and to ship products

b. Weaknesses

- farther distances to larger cities for supplies local facilities don't keep
- aging population of producers
- reduced interest since last census
- reduced farm land due to tourism expanding

c. Opportunities

- good markets available for selling produce
- lots of new grants and funding to expand operations
- business resources available for planning guide
- great extension programming available
- access to state specialist

d. Challenges

- expensive to start or change enterprises or improve operations
- cost of equipment
- land has increased in pricing drastically as a effect of tourism spiking in the RRG
- short profit margins, increased transportation cost

3. County Council Objectives

a. Mission/Vision Statement

To further expand production agriculture in Wolfe County while helping existing producers make new advanced practices priority and providing funding to help them make those decisions easier.

b. Short term goals

- increase new practices with producers
- make producers better aware of options that they have available
- increase attendance at local ag meetings and councils
- do what is best for the community as a whole rather than singular situations

c. Long term goals

- help producers to create operations that stay in business in the long run
- create generational operations that can be passed down
- continue as a council to do what is best for the public as a whole rather than singular situations

d. Tactics for leveraging funds

- Regional partnerships
 - Mountain Cattleman's Association
 - Wolfe County Farmers Market
 - Wolfe County Tourism

- State Agricultural Development Board resources
 - yearly funding
 - special project requests are available
 - project managers to assist along the way

- Other local/state/federal resources
 - NRCS regional office in West Liberty
 - Local Soil Conservation Office Campton Kentucky
 - Local Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation

3. Evaluation & Review

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

Projects are brought before the ag development council for review. At that meeting, the individual project lead can discuss the goals and objectives of the project. The council will look at what the particular goals are of our local ag at the time and determine if it would benefit the agricultural program in our county and region.

- b. How is success and failure measured?

Success and failure are measured by a set of standards that are set before the project begins. This helps determine if it is aiding the communities and region like the project goals outlined. Additionally, discussing with local stakeholders and producers to determine what the agriculture community in Wolfe County believes.

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

When the current plan expires, the group will meet to review the needs of the county needs as well as the needs of the producers. The county development board will meet to determine what is best for the future of agriculture in our community and evaluate opportunities that may be available to our people.

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