

# **BRECKINRIDGE COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

### **Submitted By:**

**Greg Moore (Chairman)**  
**Sandy Compton (Secretary)**  
**James Lee Burks**  
**Marion French**  
**Elizabeth Gipson**  
**Brandon Henning**  
**Isaak Jeffries**  
**Kathy Mattingly**  
**Terry Norton**  
**Carol M. Hinton (Staff Support)**

## **Overview of County**

Breckinridge County lies in the central part of the state and its northern end lies against the Ohio River and its southern edge is lined by Rough River. The land mass is the sixth largest at 567 square miles. According to the 2017 census, 361,459 acres were in land acres; 275,105 acres are in farmland. This represents an increase of 6% in land in farms with a 4% increase in the number of farms, from 1,304 farms to 1,357 farms.

## **Agricultural statistics, trends, and projections**

Agriculture sales account for \$99,439,000 income into the county. Over 50% of the income is from livestock sales which includes but not limited to the sale of cattle, poultry, and sheep.

Tobacco has been the mainstay of the county; we are ranked number one (1) in the production of tobacco with over 3,000 acres in production. Tobacco production has been threatened by the markets but there is hope that new uses will be found for it that will boost the market. Some tobacco farmers are now in the experimental hemp production stages. This could be a great industry for tobacco growers to gain more income but the future of hemp production in Kentucky is unclear at this point. Tobacco is labor intensive and so is HEMP, therefore the two (2) crops will be able to utilize the H2A labor that so many have become very successful in navigating through the program.

Breckinridge County producers are diversified, and they continue to explore new 'niche' crops and markets. The county also has a history of production in bell peppers for canning, pickling cucumbers, banana peppers, pimento peppers, fresh market tomatoes, sweet corn, pumpkins, and small vegetable production for fresh market delivery. Direct marketing of lamb, beef and pork to specialty markets has been increasing, but with limited places to process the animals we are still in the beginning stages of this enterprise.

With the improvement of sheep genetics, producers have been adding sheep to the farming operation. The county is now ranked fourth in sheep production, however we see limited utilization of the sheep/goat cost share programs.

## **Demographics**

The county ranks 59<sup>th</sup> in the state for poverty level with 19.2% persons that reside in the county considered impoverished in 2010. 59% percent of those attending school qualify and use the free lunch program.

The unemployment rate for the county is 7.1%. The top three (3) industries in Breckinridge County as of 2013 were: Trade, Transportation, & Utilities 21.7%; Services 13.8%; and Manufacturing 9.1%. Agriculture only employs .4% of Breckinridge County's workforce. The average weekly wage of an agriculture employee in Breckinridge County is \$555.

There is a significantly high rate of teens not in school and not working or 16.6%. But low percentages, just 9% of high school students do not graduate on time.

## **Inventory of Resources**

Breckinridge County is very fortunate to have a long list of supportive agriculture businesses, local livestock stockyard, veterinarians, a plentiful supply of raw products, such as, corn, soybeans, wheat, lumber (timber), and livestock. The Government and civic organizations that supply continuous support of the activities and programs that involve the farming community, such agencies include but are not limited to: Conservation District, FSA, Extension Office, Farm Bureau, Farm Credit, Rotary Club, Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce, Church Organizations, and Supportive Fiscal Court.

Last but not least, Breckinridge County is very fortunate to have the most important resources, which are its people, the land, and surrounding bodies of water.

## **Developing the Comprehensive Plan**

The plan has come together with information from many sources, and tons of information is on file to aid in filling out proposal form.

## **III. Assessments**

The county has many strengths. The first and most important is the agricultural rural community in which we live. The vast amount of open farmland is a resource that we do not take lightly. We are located between Louisville (to the North), Owensboro (to the West) and Bowling Green (to the South), and all are within 1 to 1 ½ hours from any part of the county. We are located south of the Ohio River, and we have Rough River Lake at our southern edge. With the vast amount of land, we have an abundant supply of raw products, such as, corn, soybeans, wheat, lumber (timber), and livestock. As well as strengths, the county has some weakness also. Some of those strengths of the county could also be viewed as a weakness. For instance, we are a very rural county, which leads to no easy access to highways and we are some distance from a larger population that would be able to consume our raw farm products. The county has no strong system of transportation of raw products or finished products, by railroad or by water. Because of the small population, there has been very little work to provide access to countywide water and sewer systems.

Soon, the county will be faced with the problem of overflow of population from other very congested counties. At the present time there is no land use management plan. If the county lures in an industry, the county will be ill prepared for the needs of a growing population. Other major threats to the county would be the loss of the farm economy, especially tobacco, and the loss of the rural community atmosphere due to urban encroachment.

## **County Council Objectives**

### **MISSION**

The Breckinridge County Agriculture Development Council hopes to encourage projects that will strengthen local agriculture. We plan to be a resource for agriculture entities looking to begin new enterprises or increase profitability in existing ones.

### **VISION**

To look back 10 years from now and see that projects and decisions that we made have economically enhanced the lives of the people and the community. Also, to see if the money spent also helped to stabilize the farm community.

## **Short Term Priorities**

To develop a game plan for the projects, to set goals for the committee, and to reach as many producers in the county as possible. The ideas and concerns through the surveys and the open meetings will be considered when reviewing proposal forms. This will be accomplished in many new avenues, but we will continue the on-going, value-added marketing initiatives. The programs include, but are not limited to: Heartland Bred Heifer Sale and the Farmers' Produce Market.

## **Breckinridge County Priorities**

**The following listed in order of importance**

1. Beef Cattle Improvements
  - a. Better Genetics
  - b. Improvement of Market Access
    - i. Through Collaborative Sales
    - ii. Increase use of video and Internet Sales
  - c. Addition of Hands-On Educational & Marketing Facilities
  - d. Better On-Farm Management Facilities
2. Education
  - a. Develop a better relationship between producers and consumers
  - b. Encourage youth to become active in agriculture activities
  - c. Emphasize financial record keeping, production, and management
3. Better Utilization of Forages
  - a. Increase use of pastures through rotational grazing
  - b. Increased quality of forages being grown and fed
  - c. Increase use of legumes in pastures and Best Management Practices
4. Conservation Implementation
  - a. Improve farm water facilities
  - b. Increase soil PH to improve yields
  - c. Improve farm commodity storage
5. New Crop Marketing
  - a. Better Access to markets
    - i. Improvement of Local Farmers' Produce Market Facility
  - b. Increase acreage grown
  - c. Increased Opportunities for Viable Niche Markets or Commodities

## **Long Term Goals**

Long term goals for the council and the county include improvement of the marketability of raw products and to create new avenues for the production and marketing of new products and/or services. The stabilization of our farm community will help to secure the entire economy of Breckinridge County.

Explore all options for funding projects.

Proposals will be reviewed and emphasis will be given to those that have secured funds from other sources, as well as, Phase I funds. Regional Partnerships, State Ag Development Board Resources, and other funding sources will be encouraged.

**V. Evaluation & Review**

The county must first follow the recommendations of the State Board and must prioritize accordingly: Tobacco farmers will be given priority, and applicants must have sufficient equity to assure a chance for success. Small farmers have an equal access to funds as large farmers and consideration must be given to what percentage of the county’s allocation the applicant is requesting.

The applicants must show that they have a review and evaluation process in their proposal form. These plans must also show they will have a lasting impression on those participating in them, to improve their net income and their overall productivity.

**Breckinridge County Agriculture Statistics**

<b><u>2017 Crops</u></b>	<b><u>Acres harvested</u></b>	<b><u>Yield</u></b>	<b><u>Prod.</u></b>	<b><u>Rank</u></b>
Corn for grain, bu.	18,084		3,065,984	
Soybeans	42,016		2,074,136	
Wheat for grain	1,350		92,650	
Burley Tobacco	3,122		6,409,981	
Alfalfa Hay, Tons				
All other Hay	38,175		102,141	

<b><u>Livestock as of Dec 31, 2017</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Rank</u></b>
2017 all cattle & calves	43,118	
2017 Beef Cows	23,584	
2017 all hogs and pigs	1,072	

<b><u>Cash Receipts</u></b>	<b><u>Dollars</u></b>	<b><u>Rank</u></b>
2017 Crops	46,772,000	16
2017 Livestock	52,667,000	17