

Magoffin County
Agricultural Development Council

Update of
COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Submitted by:

List County Council Members

Avavan Deaton
Dallas Patrick
Laura Risner
Brandon Holliday
Tim Carty
Chuck Ward
Donald Gardner
Paul Brown
Brent Tackett

Magoffin 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 Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy staff may provide guidance to county councils throughout this evaluation.

1. Overview of County

Magoffin County is a rural county in Eastern Kentucky with a total population of approximately 12,200 individuals spread throughout 13 communities. Of the total population, nearly 1,800 people reside in Salyersville, the county seat. Salyersville is home to many businesses including fast food chains and service stations which receive substantial business from those traveling the Eastern end of the Mountain Parkway.

Coal was an integral part of the county's economy, but as coal companies have been driven out of the area in the last several years, the income and employment opportunities derived from coal have obviously declined. In addition, tobacco was a significant contributor to the local ag economy, and the buyout resulted in many farmers struggling to find ways to continue to be profitable. However, the majority of the tobacco farmers have transitioned their operations to another form of agricultural production such as crops, hay and forage production, beef cattle production, or nontraditional forms of commercial vegetable production.

a. Agricultural statistics, trends, & projections (i.e. Census Data)

▪ Traditional agricultural production

According to 2017 Ag Census data, crops (with hay and forages being the top crop in number of acres at 4,434 acres) are the most popular and the most profitable agricultural commodity in the county, followed by livestock and horses. The report indicated the total number of farms in the county at 335 and the average size at 131 acres. Of the 546 producers, 175 are female.

▪ Non-traditional agricultural production

Non-traditional agricultural production in the county includes berry production, high tunnel and greenhouse vegetable production for early and late season crops, as well as meat goat production, and the production of honey, poultry and eggs.

- New & emerging agricultural production

The most notable new and emerging agricultural production practices in the county include high tunnel and greenhouse vegetable production. Fruit and berry production is also seeing a steady increase.

- Tobacco dependency

Tobacco dependency is nearly irrelevant in Magoffin County. The council can not identify any local producers of tobacco at this time.

b. Demographic Data

- Social data

The current population of Magoffin County is approximately 12,200, an 8.8% decrease from 2010. The population is projected to continue to decrease into 2021. The majority of the population is between the ages of 45-64, followed by those ages 25-44. 98% of the population is white, and African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians and those wishing not to disclose make up the remaining 2%. There are 5,084 households with 28% of those households housing children under 18 years of age.

- Economic data

Magoffin County consistently records one of the highest, if not the highest, unemployment rate in the state. In August 2020 that rate was more than 18%. In addition, the county has a poverty rate of 28.4%, which is well-above the national average. The median household income is approximately \$29,000/year. On-farm income accounts for, on average, \$4,269 per year for agricultural producers.

2. Assessments of the County

a. Strengths

The strengths of Magoffin County, in general, include the ease of access to the county by way of the Mountain Parkway (which is currently being expanded), the support offered to the community from local businesses and organizations, the accessibility of healthcare, and the potential for growth. The strengths of agriculture in the community include, but are not limited to, the diversity and variety of agriculture practices which have been made possible the County Agricultural Investment Program, as well as other government-funded programs and opportunities, which have allowed farmers to easily transition to new practices and make improvements that result in more efficient operations.

b. Weaknesses

The weaknesses of Magoffin County come in forms which greatly affect the agriculture in the county. The topography is not great for agriculture or development, as 53% of the county is forestland, and the bottomland land is prone to flooding which creates challenges when determining the proper usage of the area. The average farm size in the county (131 acres) also poses a weakness to the agricultural community, as well as the fact that some of the larger farms in the county are sitting idle or not being utilized to their full potential. In addition, the lack of ag suppliers (farm supply stores) is a major inconvenience to farmers in the county.

c. Opportunities

There are many current opportunities for growth and development in the county, and new opportunities are slowly emerging. In 2015, the county began its first-ever Farmers' Market and which has created a great way for farmers to supplement their farm income, as nearly \$6,000 is realized every year at the market through USDA administered food instruments and grants that encourage the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables for seniors and low-income families.

The council also sees potential to develop several strip mines in the area for research and education.

d. Challenges

The county council has identified many challenges for the county, most of which pose greater challenges for young/new farmers including funding opportunities/programs, opportunities for education and for young people to get involved, and access to land.

The limited resources in the county, lack of interest in farming among the younger generation, and the perceived attitudes toward farming are also obstacles for the ag community.

3. County Council Objectives

a. Mission/Vision Statement

The Magoffin County Agricultural Development Council strives to improve and support all agricultural practices in the county.

b. Short term goals

The council's short-term goals include assisting in providing information to the community about funding opportunities and assisting in providing cost-share to local farmers. The council would also like to continue to fund new and innovative projects for agricultural education, especially involving youth, as well as provide educational experiences in agriculture which will allow youth to explore agricultural careers.

Cattle genetics, forage improvement, vegetable production, and improved marketing strategies are also goals of the council.

The council is also anxious to start construction on the new permanent farmers' market facility.

c. Long term goals

The long-term goals of the council:

*Maintain cost-share funding opportunities for local farmers.

*Fund as many active farmers as possible in the approved investment areas.

*Positively influence farming in the county.

*Continue to explore new crop opportunities.

d. Tactics for leveraging funds

▪ Regional partnerships

Develop and implement programs, as well as work toward project goals with other agricultural businesses and organizations in the area which could possibly provide funding (for projects such as the East KY Heifer Development Project), including:

*Kentucky Farm Bureau

*Natural Resources Conservation Service

*Farm-Credit Services

*USDA Rural Business Development

▪ State Agricultural Development Board resources

The council will assist with locating matching funds and leveraging resources for state-funded projects and allocations.

- Other local/state/federal resources
 - *Alltech--Pikeville, KY
 - *Local Banks and Businesses
 - *USDA Rural Business Development
 - *Big Sandy Area Development District

3. Evaluation & Review

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

Proposals are evaluated based on how they fit into the priorities and goals of the council, as well as the completeness of the proposal and documentation, the merit of the proposal, and the potential of the proposal to increase on-farm income and marketing opportunities for local producers.

- b. How is success and failure measured?

Projects/investments are inspected annually to maintain the integrity of the council-funded programs. The success and failure is measured by the following:

- *Number of failed new farming enterprises
- *Number of successful new farming enterprises
- *Increased on-farm income from the sale of livestock, produce, and on-farm products
- *Agricultural statistics increase/decrease

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

The plan will be revised on an as-needed basis under the direction of the county council members.

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