

Webster County

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# Agricultural Development Council

County Agricultural Development Councils have the responsibility to evaluate the needs of the local agricultural economy. The updated County Councils should identify projects and projects best suited for agricultural development in the county.

Update of

## COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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

October 15, 2020

1. Overview of County

2017 Census of Agriculture data shows a total of 199 farms; a decline of 1 farm since 2012. Total agriculture product sales for corn, soybeans, cattle and poultry total \$144,882,000.00. Poultry sales account for 67.7%, Corn and Soybean sales account for 38% and beef cattle account for 4.5%. Tobacco production has declined since the buyout but significantly less over the past 3 years.

### Submitted by:

List County Council Members

- Audie Cherry - Chariman
- Brandon Clark - Vice Chairman
- Kathryn Leslie - Secretary
- Barrett Ranes
- Darrin Buchanan
- Sarah Scott
- David Asher
- Ben Turley
- Samuel Tapp

3. Agricultural Statistics, Trends, & Projections (Agriculture Data)

\* Traditional agricultural production

Increasing yields in corn and soybean production

Increasing input cost

Lower commodity prices

\* Non-traditional agricultural production

Yoders Custom Butchery

Daniels Berry Patch

Jeremy Benson's Family Farm and Pumpkin Patch

Farmers Markets: Farmers Market Vendor

Hidden Hills Vineyard & Game

Deer Creek Lodge

# Webster 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

2017 Census of Agriculture data shows a total of 499 farms: a decline of 1 farm since 2012. Total agriculture product sales for corn, soybeans, cattle and poultry total \$144,882,000.00. Poultry sales account for 57.7%, Corn and Soybean sales account for 36% and beef cattle account for 4.5%. Tobacco production has declined since the buyout; but significantly less over the past 3 years.

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

- Traditional agricultural production

Increasing yields in corn and soybean production  
Increasing input cost  
Lower commodity prices

- Non-traditional agricultural production

Yoders Custom butchering  
Daniels Berry Patch  
Jeremy Benson's Family Farm and Pumpkin Patch  
Farmers Market/Farmers Market Vendors  
Hidden Hills Whitetail & Game  
Deer Creek Lodge

- New & emerging agricultural production

**Webster County Farmers' Market**

Increasing registered home bakers using KY Proud products

Hemp production

Increase in equine operations (thoroughbred and pleasure)

- Tobacco dependency

In 2017, 190 acres dark air-cured tobacco was harvested with a record yield of 2,895 lbs/ac. Since that time, there has been a 60% reduction in dark air-cured tobacco production.

**b. Demographic Data**

- Social data

Population estimates for 2019 was 12,942. The median household income is \$40,947. The median household income for the state is \$52,295.00

- Economic data

Public School system is largest employer in county

Agriculture is a substantial revenue source for county

**2. Assessments of the County**

**a. Strengths**

Productive land

Good market access for grain

Farmers well respected in the community

Lenders willing to work with farms

Strong support and Cooperation from agencies - FSA, NRCS, Extension Service

Education resources - Vocational Agriculture, Extension, Ag Tech program and

Henderson Community College and Madisonville Community College

Good transportation to markets

Farmers Market

Eagle Truss Company



b. Weaknesses

- Limited livestock markets
- Shortage of labor, especially skilled labor
- Inadequate supply of irrigation water
- Weak market base for vegetables in county on a large scale
- Loss of Dotiki coal mine
- Loss of tobacco contracts
- Lack of livestock processing plants

c. Opportunities

- Increase beef production
- Improve hay quality
- Development of I-69 project in county
- Expand farmers market and other local food sources

d. Challenges

- Competition for farm property (among farmers and non-farm use)
- More restrictive regulations in agriculture
- Cost of operation
- Lack of skilled labor for farming operations; truck drivers, large equipment operators, etc.

### 3. County Council Objectives

a. Mission/Vision Statement

The Webster County Agricultural Development Council shall cooperatively promote, preserve and expand the rural economy through business and education opportunities.

b. Short term goals

Help all operations

Continue to support the ag tech programs at KCTCS and Vocational agriculture program at Webster County High School

Promote Youth incentive program for Webster County 4-H and FFA students

c. Long term goals

Promote and enhance traditional and non-traditional agriculture

Promote Agriculture Literacy

Promote Entrepreneurship

d. Tactics for leveraging funds

- Regional partnerships

Use KADF as a source of match to encourage partnerships with local private and public entities.

- State Agricultural Development Board resources

- Other local/state/federal resources

State cost-share programs through NRCS and Conservation District

### 3. Evaluation & Review

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

The council advertises in the local papers that applications are being accepted for cost-share opportunities. The Green River Area Beef Improvement Group, Inc. is the administrator for the funds. The applications/proposals are reviewed by this board. In the past several years, the county funds have been in CAIP.

- b. How is success and failure measured?

The program administrators are responsible for evaluating each application.

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

As requested by GOAP. The county council will meet and discuss the plan and make needed and necessary changes.

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