

Carter County
Agricultural Development Council

Update of
COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2015

Submitted by:

List County Council Members

John Buck
George Willis
Carl Stephens
Rebecca Suttles
Herbie Suttles
Tracey Elliott
David McGlone
Epp David Kiser

Carter 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

Carter County is in the Northeastern part of Kentucky. The total land area is 260,410 acres, or about 407 square miles. The topography generally consists of long and narrow ridge tops, steep hillsides, and narrow valleys. Most of the county is wooded. The number of farms operators in Carter County in 2012 was 786. On the 786 farms, a total of 22,629 acres are being farmed with 16,774 harvest crop land. The 2012 census shows 289 farms with a net gain and 497 with a net loss.

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

- Traditional agricultural production

Beef production is the most important livestock enterprise in Carter County with 6,000 beef cows and a total of 14,083 head of all cattle in 2012. The county has been involved in production of crops such as peppers, cabbage, and pumpkins as well as horticultural crops such as small fruits, bedding plants, and mums. It also has 1,457 acres dedicated to corn for grain.

- Non-traditional agricultural production

- New & emerging agricultural production

There is potential in other livestock enterprises such as goats (69), bison (1), rabbits (2), bees (24) and free range chickens as markets are developed.
*parentheses indicate number of farms per 2012 census

- Tobacco dependency

Burley tobacco was the most important agricultural commodity in Carter County prior to the loss of tobacco quota. Carter County is only producing 30% of the burley tobacco today that it once did prior to when the quota cuts began.

b. Demographic Data

- Social data

Grayson is the county seat and is located in the eastern part of the county. The county has a total population of 27,493 with 10,319 households. The median income is \$36,406.00. The county is mostly middle aged with the largest portion of the population (roughly 14%) is aged 45-50; the next largest age group is 35-40. The majority of the population possesses only a high school diploma.

- Economic data

Manufacturing and industry in nearby towns provide most of the employment and the higher paying jobs. Most of the jobs within the county are at a barely above minimum wage. The county has a ham processing plant, which employs approximately 500 workers. Located in Grayson is Grayson Rural Electric Co-op Corp employing a number of workers and servicing 6 counties. AT&T and Cintas also approximately 1150 and 190 people respectively.

2. Assessments of the County

a. Strengths

Carter County is dissected by I-64, which is the main East-West traffic artery in Kentucky. The AA Highway opens access from the North and serves as a link to I-64 at Grayson. Carter County has two state parks and hosts Rudy Fest, Memory Days Celebration, Funtober Fest and a County fair. Carter County has adequate infrastructure to support farming, agri-business and agri-tourism with the existing road system, water and sewage system, all of which are continually being improved and extended. City water is currently available to approximately 98% of County residences and businesses. Carter County has many active civic groups: the American Legion Post, Jaycees, Rotary Club and Lions Club. The cities can now sell alcohol and the county boasts one winery.

b. Weaknesses

One of the main weaknesses in Carter County is the availability of markets and the distance to these markets for farm products. There is virtually no added value to our agricultural commodities. The dwindling local labor force with dependency on migrants increasing. The majority of farmland in Carter County is rolling, subject to erosion, and easy to abuse.

c. Opportunities

One of Carter County's greatest opportunities lies in our large forage base. There are opportunities to better utilize our forage and to increase our livestock production. This can include expanding and improving and on farm added value to our current beef industry as well as other livestock enterprises i.e.: Goats, Sheep, Equine. Our bottomland offers opportunities to expand production of horticultural crops such as fruits and vegetables and forage crops. Grape production offers opportunities as well. There are opportunities to teach marketing techniques such as group marketing, and value added commodities and forestry management could also be considered. Increasing number of local farmers are selling meat and produce to State Parks, lodge dining rooms.

d. Challenges

The continued loss of tobacco quota and the overall uncertainty of the tobacco program continues to be our largest threat. Farmland is continually being threatened. The numbers of farm operators are decreasing and the lack of interest in youth to stay on the farm is increasing. An increasing number of farms operators are reaching retirement age, therefore leaving the farm life. A number of farms are being developed into housing projects. Small farmers have to compete with large farmers for markets and also must deal with more restrictive environmental controls.

3. County Council Objectives

a. Mission/Vision Statement

The Carter County Agriculture Development Council seeks to improve the sustainability of the family farm and to maintain the quality of life. We hope to explore new agricultural enterprises and expand existing farming activities to increase agricultural income in Carter County. We hope to maintain the rural economy for the present and future generations.

b. Short term goals

Our short-term priorities include supporting the Carter County Farmers Market, promoting the meat goat industry, livestock marketing and improving livestock genetics, improved forage pasture and crops, also providing adequate storage for Hay. We promote Agri-Tourism and support county and regional efforts in agricultural diversification including fruits and vegetable products. Also marketing techniques and on farm value added projects.

c. Long term goals

The Carter County Agriculture Development Council would like to work to encourage cooperation between farmers and the community and promote the importance of agriculture to our region. We want to work to promote a strong work ethic, a confident sense of independence, good decision making and commitment to family and community. We want to foster an atmosphere that will courage our youth to return to the family farm. We want to promote value added, retained ownership, and new agriculture enterprises. We would also like to promote group marketing of livestock.

d. Tactics for leveraging funds

▪ Regional partnerships

The Carter County Agriculture Development Council wants to encourage and support regional projects. We want to encourage group proposals with broad base benefits. The council expects applicants to show an in kind contribution and show evidence that they are buying into the proposal. Proposals that show a payback system to keep projects ongoing is encouraged. All projects must show evidence of benefit to the agricultural community.

▪ State Agricultural Development Board resources

The Carter County Agriculture Development Council wants to encourage and support regional projects. We want to encourage group proposals with broad base benefits. The council expects applicants to show an in kind contribution and show evidence that they are buying into the proposal. Proposals that show a payback system to keep projects ongoing is encouraged. All projects must show evidence of benefit to the agricultural community.

- Other local/state/federal resources

3. Evaluation & Review

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

The Carter County Agriculture Development Council evaluates all proposals based on the criteria developed by the State Agriculture Development Board. All Applicants are reviewed regardless to race, color, age, gender, religion, disability, or national origin.

All participants receiving funding are required to give periodic progress reports. Agricultural Advancement Council members may make randomly selected site visits and pictures of facilities are required to assure completed projects are in compliance with documented guidelines.

- b. How is success and failure measured?

The investment of County funds have provided; Genetic improvement having to largest number of participants. Hay and Commodity storage has the highest dollar investment. Beef cattle handling facility is the next highest dollar investment. Handling facilities in effect, has enabled farmers to prepare calves for CPH 45 sales and that have made Kentucky cattle more popular in feed lots throughout the United States.

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

This Comprehensive Plan of the Carter County Development Council can be and will be revised as needed.

You may save this document to continue editing or to email at a later date.
If the email link provided below does not work, please save document and email to:
Tammysue.miller@ky.gov

Send Via Email

2. Assessments of the County

a. Strengths

The Grayson Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Commission and Olive Hill Chamber of Commerce are also active in promoting growth of Carter County. Carter County has a progressive school system of K-12, two Vocational Agriculture Departments currently employs full time, part time and substitute teachers. Kentucky Christian University continually works to expand their curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities for prospective students and the community.

Grayson is the home to a regional Farm Service Agency office and a regional Farm Credit Service office. The Carter County Extension Service continues to serve the needs of the clientele and extension programs are well accepted and supported. Olive Hill is home to the Fourth of July Celebration.

Carter County soils are productive with most of the cropland being silt loam. The County also has adequate climate and rainfall, which averages 43 inches per year, to obtain good crop yields.