

Grant County  
Agricultural Development Council

Update of  
**COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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**Submitted by:**

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# Grant 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

Located approximately halfway between Lexington and Cincinnati, Ohio the county has a sub-metro demographic. Many of the farms and farmers are part-time on the farm and full time at a public profession. The county still remains rural as growth trends prior to the recession have fallen off. The loss of farms and farmland still continues at a steady pace. In the areas closer to the Interstate 75 corridor in the communities of Crittenden, Dry Ridge, Williamstown and Corinth. Since 2007, Grant County has experienced a 15% reduction in the number of farms falling to 812 and a 14% reduction in farm acreage. The positive to that is that marketings of the farm has increased 25%. Many farmers have shifted away from tobacco production turned back and yet again abandoned the crop for other enterprises. Rising feed costs for livestock have pushed some farms into producing row crops to utilize former tobacco ridges and bottoms to offset the higher cost of purchased feed.

- a. Agricultural statistics, trends, & projections (i.e. Census Data)
  - Traditional agricultural production
    - Tobacco
    - Cow and calf
    - Forages
  - Non-traditional agricultural production
    - Agritourism
    - Goats
    - Sheep
    - Honey
    - Produce

- New & emerging agricultural production

High Tunnels

- Tobacco dependency

Medium

b. Demographic Data

- Social data

24,875 total population

8,334 Households

1 in 5 at or below the poverty level

365 non farm establishments

1 in 10 with bachelor's degree or higher

\$46,159 median household income

Average age of a farmer is 59.5

- Economic data

241 farms have less than \$1,000 in sales

5 farms have greater than \$250,000 in sales.

347 farms have income less than \$20,000 but greater than \$5,000

## 2. Assessments of the County

a. Strengths

National and state location for access large amount of population

Forage based livestock

Developing horticulture enterprises

b. Weaknesses

Outdated, inadequate and unstable markets for agriculture products  
Acquisition of startup or expansion capital for farmers  
Risk for new agriculture enterprises to large  
Age of farm population  
Pressure to urbanize  
Inadequate fence for livestock on property no longer in agriculture

c. Opportunities

Increase in farmers willing to expand forage based enterprises.  
New location for farmer's market  
Strength of cattle markets coupled with high demand for meat

d. Challenges

Dramatic market fluctuations  
Land acquisition  
Limited to no market infrastructure  
Increase government regulations  
Apathy of community and importance of agriculture

### 3. County Council Objectives

a. Mission/Vision Statement

The Grant County Agriculture Development Council seek to be a catalyst pushing the development of projects that will enhance the economic well-being of tobacco dependent familist and expand the agriculture base of this county and region. Our focus is to help Grant County farmers 1.) Preserve family farming operations, 2.) Explore new enterprises that will stand alone or add value to an existing operation, 3.) Open and extend agriculture marketing opportunities for farmers in this county.

b. Short term goals

Support on farm efforts to further inventiveness of farmers to find markets for products

Encourage cooperation among individuals to develop proposals that are all encompassing in scope and demonstrate benefit to multiple parties

Individual project proposal that could propagate future pilot projects that possess great potential for growth and income.

c. Long term goals

Reduce or eliminate economic impact of tobacco on county

Expand forage based livestock enterprises

Create avenues to transition farms across the generation

Increase the amount of young farmers in the county

Bridge the rural and urban interface

d. Tactics for leveraging funds

▪ Regional partnerships

Identify direction of funds and tracking of expenditures

Completed budget with outlined expenses

Anticipated revenue and returns

Cash flow

Growth Expectations

Additional funding resources

▪ State Agricultural Development Board resources

Identification of direction of funds and tracking of expenditures

Completed budget with outlined expenses

Anticipated revenue and returns

Cash flow projection

Growth expectations

Additional funding resources

- Other local/state/federal resources  
Additional funding resources  
Growth Expectations

### 3. Evaluation & Review

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

Proper completion

Anticipated revenue and returns on investment

Priority to current or retired tobacco farmers

Maintain parity across scale of operations

Distributed regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, gender, blood type, allergies or national origin.

- b. How is success and failure measured?

Positive return to management on enterprise budget.

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

Survey instrument compiled by the Ag Development Council with a report as necessary

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