

Knox
Agricultural Development Council

Update of
**KNOX COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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Knox 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 Knox County

In 2012, Knox County had 243 farm operations on 33, 531 acres which represented 13.6% of total county land.

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

- Traditional agricultural production

Beef: Beef production is now the leading livestock commodity with approximately 7,000 head of cattle, county wide. Beef production is the lead commodity in agriculture commodities as they traditionally have for many years. In the past programs have been based primarily on production practices. However efforts have been made to expand marketing opportunities dealing with beef cattle. Nevertheless facilities and funding for such programs have not been attained.

Forestry: Knox County has approximately 175,000 acres of forest land which brings in an average agriculture income of \$7-8 million to the county each year.

Vegetable Production: Vegetable production has great potential in our area, especially with the decrease of tobacco quota pounds. However, production is limited at the present time due to marketing outlets and uncertainty associated with production and marketing.

Crop Production: With rich bottom land along the Cumberland River, it allows very suitable production for corn and soybeans but with the fluctuation of grain prices and increase in production costs, profits are marginal.

- Non-traditional agricultural production
 - Income from Agri-tourism \$4000
 - Eight producers growing garden plants
 - Ten producers growing flowers and ornamentals
 - More high tunnel production expected
 - Forestry

New & emerging agricultural production

- Value added to traditional farm crops
- Horticulture production
- Farmer's Market

- Tobacco dependency

No Crop growers in the county at present time.

b. Demographic Data

- Social data

Population of Knox County as of 2010 census is 31,883

51.8% female and 48.2% male

70% living in rural area and 30% urban

The unemployment is at 6.5%

The median household income is \$20,303

- Economic data

Agriculture in Knox County

- Average size of farms: 119 acres
- Average value of agricultural products sold per farm: \$7198
- Average value of crops sold per acre for harvested cropland: \$183.91
- The value of livestock, poultry, and their products as a percentage of the total market value of agricultural products sold: 34.12%.
- Harvested cropland as a percentage of land in farms: 21.58%
- The percentage of farms operated by a family or individual: 96.54%
- Average age of principal farm operators: 56 years
- Corn for grain: 959 harvested acres
- Vegetables: 34 harvested acres
- Land in orchards: 4 acres
- Knox County has 347 farms with 41,464 acres in Farms in 8,948 acres in crop land.
- Knox County is currently in a depressed state as a result of coal mining depression, timber profit reductions and lack of local job opportunities. Many of the local population have used tobacco for supplemental income. Furthering the problem for new and young farmers also are the rising land prices due to the development of local farms in subdivisions.

2. Assessments of the County

a. Strengths

- Strong local Farmer's Market
- Former tobacco farms in Knox County could be converted to vegetables with very little machinery investment.
- Most Knox County farmers have experience, land, facilities need for the potential to double beef production.
- Knox County has a very progressive agricultural community.
- Knox County is suitable for expanding in forages.
- There are good roads leading in and out of the county.

b. Weaknesses

- Landowners need improved marketing information on private timber sales.
- There is a need for better commercial vegetable marketing outlets in our area.
- Most farmers have little capital in which to start new ventures.
- There is a need for better beef herd management.
- There is a need for education and machinery for alternative crops and livestock.

c. Opportunities

- With loss of jobs, a workforce is available.
- With local demand for local produce the marketing locally is a potential.

d. Challenges

- Youth willing to farm but no profitable choices.
- Many young people are moving away.
- Rising land costs and low farm prices make it nearly impossible for young people to go into farming.
- Lack of good jobs available for those who farm part time.
- No choices at present time to replace or subsidize tobacco.

3. County Council Objectives

a. Mission/Vision Statement

To develop profitable agriculture in the county and surrounding area to benefit generations.

b. Short term goals

The Knox County Phase I tobacco Board feels that by enhancing agricultural income in (1) beef production (2) alternative crops (3) alternative livestock (4) wood products and by helping with programs in these areas, this would improve life for all of Knox County.

c. Long term goals

- (1) Area Vegetable Marketing Cooperative
- (2) Support for group marketing alliances of all livestock
- (3) Financial support for area forestry education
- (4) Provide needs for alternative crops and livestock to tobacco

d. Tactics for leveraging funds

- Regional partnerships
 - Knox County Conservation District
 - Knox County Farm Service Agency
 - Cumberland Valley RC&D Council
 - Farm Bureau

- State Agricultural Development Board resources

Use Local State Legislative endorsements and area advisory Council Members

- Other local/state/federal resources
 - Kentucky Cattleman's
 - Kentucky State Horticulture Council
 - Division of Forestry

3. Evaluation & Review

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

At this time Knox County is using the CAIP Program so state recommended Evaluation is used.

- b. How is success and failure measured?

Positive response, profitability, or efficiency.

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

As needed to meet the ever changing needs of the county.