

LESLIE COUNTY

Agricultural Development Council

**Update of
COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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LESLIE 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

Leslie County is located in southeastern Kentucky. The county is made up of 253,690 acres of rugged mountainous land and is 402 square miles. The county is situated on the head waters of the Middle Fork of the Kentucky River. The river literally cuts the county in half as it runs its northerly course to the Buckhorn Reservoir in Perry County.

According to the latest 2010 census figures the county population is 11,310 down from the 2000 figures of 12,401. Based on the 2000 figures, the projected population in the year

2014 will be 10,918. The city of Hyden, the only incorporated city in the county, has a

Population of 365. The population of Leslie County is classified as rural non-farm with 15.6% over 65 and 6.1% under 18.

The county's public water system is accessible to about 75% of the population. The public sewer system serves the county seat of Hyden and a few miles surrounding town. Electricity and telephone service is available to everyone in the county. A 40 bed hospital in Hyden serves most of the county's health needs with five rural outreach clinics in more isolated parts of the county. Fire protection is provided by seven volunteer fire departments. Leslie County has a county-wide house to house solid waste collection program.

- a. Agricultural statistics, trends, & projections (i.e. Census Data)
 - Traditional agricultural production

Besides forestry, Leslie County agriculture is primarily home vegetable gardens. Farming is the primary source of income for less than ten people in the county. The terrain is rough mountain land with approximately 232,500 acres of it in woodlands, most of which has such poor soil it could only be used for forage. Currently I know of less than ten farms in Leslie County. Horses are the largest livestock operation in the county and it is largely recreational.

- Non-traditional agricultural production

- New & emerging agricultural production

No new production

- Tobacco dependency

WE have no known farms still actively growing tobacco in the county.

b. Demographic Data

- Social data

See above comments

- Economic data

Leslie County's economy has been based on the coal mining industry, which has been in a steady decline. Oil and gas fields play a minor role in the county's economy as a whole. The timber industry plays a major part in the local economy. We have one major sawmill and a couple family owned small sawmills and independent loggers. Issues involving the Daniel Boone National Forest can greatly affect loggers in this county as the National Forest encompasses a large portion of county land. Buckhorn Reservoir covers approximately 2,000 acres including flood plane acres. Approximately 80% of all the land in the county is owned by the U.S. Government, mining companies and absentee landowners.

Tourism has a limited impact on our economy.

The unemployment rate in the county is approximately 9.4%. Approximately 22.6% of the population is below the poverty level.

2. Assessments of the County

a. Strengths

Development of timber processing facility

- Plentiful wildlife (Elk reestablished which provides tourism and hunting opportunities)
- Utilizing the Extension Office from programs available
- Access to good roads

b. Weaknesses

- Limited lodging for tourism
- No industrial development
- Limited opportunity and infrastructure
- Coal business declined
- Population declined
- Very limited opportunities for new graduates

c. Opportunities

- Capitalizing on Natural Resources and Timber
- School of Traditional and Bluegrass Music
- Frontier Nursing University
- Recycling
- Educational Programs for the sustainability of reforestation and small farming techniques

d. Challenges

- Lack of ability to work together for common goals
To engage landowners to participate in programs and educational opportunities

3. County Council Objectives

a. Mission/Vision Statement

- The Leslie County Agricultural Development Council seeks to work with Leslie County citizens to promote the diversifying of agriculture in the county. We will serve as a resource for producer's to try new ideas and improve on current agricultural operations. We will also help those who have not been in agriculture start a new venture. We hope to serve as a 'clearing house' for public and private organizations to cooperate to help produces get their ideas off the ground.

b. Short term goals

Encourage children to become involved in gardening /ag production.
Invest the balance of Leslie Co. Agricultural Development funds within eighteen months.

c. Long term goals

- Work toward adding equipment to the shared use to benefit Leslie County.
Develop relationships with local organizations and government entities for future programs.

d. Tactics for leveraging funds

- Regional partnerships
 - RC&D, Cumberland Vally, NRCS, UK Cooperative Extension Service, other local and State entties.
 - Leslie Co Chamber of Commerce

- State Agricultural Development Board resources

- Other local/state/federal resources

3. Evaluation & Review

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

Annual Progress Report

- b. How is success and failure measured?

Feedback from individuals that have participated in programs [participant feedback].

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

Every 5 years input from the ag community, county Council and Cooperative Extension Office will b used.