

McCreary County Agriculture Development Council

Comprehensive Plan

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McCREARY COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

OVERVIEW OF COUNTY

McCreary County is located in Southeastern Kentucky on the northern end of the Cumberland Plateau. Approximately seventy percent of our land is owned by, either the federal, state or local government. This leaves little land for private use.

Our major farm enterprises are beef cattle and hay. In 2012 McCreary County ranked 111 out of 120 for total farm cash receipts in the state. Cash receipts were just over \$1,000,000 in 2012.

- 2,400 Cows and calves
- 2,800 Acres of hay
- 65 Beekeepers
- No tobacco
- Very little grain

McCreary County is heavily forested, however approximately ninety percent of our forested land is owned by the federal and state government.

In 2012 we had a total of 155 farms comprising of 18,000 acres. We rank 113 in the state for grain production. We have no dairy, tobacco, or swine farmers. We have three commercial poultry operations. There is also no complete line farm supply store.

Livestock represented 65% of farm receipts in 2012 earning a 109 ranking in the state. 45% of the farms were in woodlands, 29% in pasture, 18% in cropland in 2012.

The majority of our farmland is dry ridge tops, hillsides, or wet creek bottoms. There is very little prime farmland in McCreary County. Most of our farmland is suited for grass, livestock, or trees.

McCreary County has historically had high unemployment rates and poverty rates. The majority of our jobs within the county are: Federal Government, local School System, one factory with medium skilled low pay (compared to state average) or forestry related jobs.

A Federal Maximum Security Prison is located in the county; however it has no impact on the local farm economy.

ASSESSMENTS

Strengths

- Farmers Market established in 2014
- Have the following cost share equipment available to local farmers: no-till seed drill, pasture sprayer, two lime spreaders, manure spreader and pasture drag
- Available Forage
- Committed livestock producers
- Knowledgeable producers
- Available markets
- Forestry

Weaknesses

- Age of most farmers
- No local veterinarian
- No implement/equipment dealer
- No complete line farm supply
- Distance to feed mills
- Lack of farm labor
- Government transfer payments

Opportunities

- More vegetable production opportunities
- Forage improvement and utilization
- Improve beef herd genetics
- Beef producer adopt proven production practices
- Opportunities for younger farmers

Threats

- Government purchasing more and more private land
- Water quality issues
- Farmers not adopting proven practices
- Farm land being developed into non-agriculture uses
- Average age of farmers increasing
- Development taking farm land for roads, buildings, etc

COUNTY COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

The objective of the McCreary County Council is to use the small amount of money in a way that it will have the greatest immediate impact for our farmers. Since we already have a good beef cattle base the council feels that is where they can have an immediate impact.

The council feels like farmers can get immediate results from participating in CAIP and expanding the equipment cost share program. What little money we get better serves all farmers in this program.

Mission Statement:

It is our mission to encourage farmers to participate in these projects that will give them some quick return and boost the agriculture economy in McCreary County. We also hope that by participating in these programs that beef producers will see the advantage of these practices and will adopt them into their beef production program for years to come.

Short Term Goal:

- Participate in CAIP
- Forage Improvement will continue
- Continue to expand the equipment cost share program
- Continue to assist local Beekeepers

Long Term Goals:

- Continue to expand the equipment cost share program
- Showcase cost share equipment at field days

- Beef producers begin more detailed record keeping
- Educate youth on importance of farm records
- Farmers continue using superior genetics
- Farmers continue to using forage improvement practices
- Farmers adopt recommended herd health practices and practice them on a regular basis

Tactics for Leveraging Funds:

- Participating farmers/organizations must supply at least 50% of funds for all projects they participate in

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The Council will adopt an evaluation scoring sheet for each program. The council will let the McCreary County Development Association administer the funds and programs.

Success Determined By:

- Yearly evaluations completed by participating farmers/organizations
- Number of times and acres of forage improved by using the cost share equipment
- Yearly records that participating farmers return to the council
- Farmers self evaluations
- Number of farmers wanting to participate in projects