

# **Pulaski County Agriculture Development Plan September 2015**

## Pulaski County Phase I Agriculture Development Council Members:

Charlotte Stewart, chairman

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# Pulaski County Comprehensive Plan for Agricultural Development

## Overview of County

Pulaski County is located in the South Central region of Kentucky, located approximately 80 miles south of Lexington. It is the third largest county in terms of land area (653 square miles) in the Commonwealth. Forty-five percent of the land is forested.

### Traditional Agriculture:

- Tobacco-488 acres
- Beefcattle—31,547 head
- Dairy -31,500,000 pounds of milk produced
- Forage production -60,000 acres
- Grain—Corn- 12,864 acres, Soybeans- 12,827 acres, Wheat- 2,653 acres
- Vegetables - tomatoes, peppers, pumpkins, melons (266 acres)

### Non-traditional Agriculture

- Fruits -apples, peaches, strawberries, blackberries, blueberries (95 acres)
- Floriculture production -7 commercial greenhouse growers
- Poultry-40,000 birds sold in 2012
- Timber Industry

### New, Emerging Agriculture

- Grapes –6 acres planted in 2000
- Hair Sheep
- Direct Marketing of Cattle
- Hemp
- Canola-500 acres

### Demographic Data

- Aging faster than the average for the Commonwealth (12.5%)
- 10<sup>th</sup> fastest growing county in Kentucky in the 1990s
- Unemployment rate is 5.4%
- High school dropout rate is 9.1%
- Average age of farmer is 57 years (2012)
- 93% of farmers work off the farm
- Pulaski County is a regional labor market center for supplies, livestock sales, retail sales, and employment

### Inventory of Resources

- Somerset Community College (part of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System)
- Many banks and loaning institutions
- Good community leadership
- Thriving lake and tourism industry
- Good highway system (US 27 and 80, Cumberland Parkway, potentially 1-66)
- Medical complex

- Four school systems
- Improved Infrastructure ( City Water, Black-top Roads

## **Review of Process**

The Pulaski County Agricultural Development Council held 3 community meetings to gather public input as to how they think the county's share of the tobacco settlement money should be spent.

The Council also sent out a survey to approximately 1200 tobacco producers. A summary of the results is below:

1. Out of 143 surveys, the percent interested in expanding, improving, or starting a new enterprise in:

- Beef production :\_ 81%
- Forage production -- 34%
- Vegetable production -- 19%
- Grain production -- 15%

2. Out of 143 surveys, the percent saying the reason they did not try a new farm enterprise was due to:

- Lack of available markets -- 41%
- Lack of resources -- 41 %
- Lack of labor -- 37%
- Too much risk -- 35%
- Profitability uncertainty -- 30%
- Lack of production information -- 1%

-In the 2015 review of the 2007 survey the county council felt that all needs expressed have been met, either through the C.A.I.P program or the shared use equipment program.

## **Assessments**

### **Strengths**

- Strong community and agricultural leadership
- Strong agricultural history
- Physical infrastructure (roads, water, electric)
- Regional labor market
- Cooperative city and county governments
- Training centers
- Versatile land capabilities
- Improved forage quality and quantity
- Improved livestock efficiencies
- Shared Use Equipment
  - 4- No-till drills
  - 2 Pasture Sprayers
  - 2- GPS Light bars
  - Post Driver
  - Weed Wiper

- Lime Spreader
- Cover Crop Roller Crimper
- Bale Wrapper

### **Weaknesses**

- Lack of Grain Transfer station
- Agriculture labor availability
- Lack of livestock show facility

### **Opportunities**

- Growing local economy including population increase, health complexes, and other factors
- Value-added emphasis on local products (beef, timber, forages, vegetables, etc)
- New Extension office
- Farmer Market Pavilion
- Certified kitchen
- Slaughter house
- High school green house
- Livestock show facility
- Agriculture promotions

### **Threats**

- Agriculture land pressures (urban sprawl)
- Increasing environmental demands on farmers
- Difficulty in finding labor
- Intolerance of normal farming practices by new rural residents
- Invasive species
- Black Vultures
- Government regulations
- Animal rights groups

## **County Council Objectives**

Based on statistical information secured for Pulaski County and input from producers at meetings held across the county, the Pulaski County Agricultural Development Council proposes to support projects that will contribute to agriculture production long-term. We adopt the following Mission Statement:

### **Mission Statement**

To assist in the development of a long-term, sustainable agricultural economy for Pulaski County.

### **Short-Term Priorities**

- To encourage the expansion of existing enterprises that show economic promise in the long-run
- To promote the development of new enterprises for the long-term
- Commercial kitchen
- Increase awareness for farm safety

- Help develop more direct to consumer marketing
- Increase Value added products

In the next 5 years, this Council puts forth the following goals for Pulaski County:

#### **Beef cattle production**

- Increase net profit per head by 10% (use of better genetics, herd health programs, and better marketing) based on current market prices

#### **Forestry**

- Increase land owners awareness of forestry management opportunities
- Increase land owners awareness marketing opportunities

#### **Forages**

- Increase yields per acre by 10%
- Increase utilization of legumes

#### **Horticulture**

- Vegetables -increase production per acre by 3-5%
- Fruits -increase production per acre by 3-5%
- Grapes -increase production per acre by 5-7%

#### **Grain**

- Increase acreage by 10% and yields by 15% per acre based on current levels of each

### **Long-Term Goals**

A stable and expanding agricultural economy in Pulaski County.

In 10 years, this Council puts forth the following goals for Pulaski County:

#### **Beef cattle**

- Increase net profit per head by 8-10% based on current market prices
- Increase net profit through better marketing processes
- Livestock show facility

#### **Forages**

- Increase yields per acre by 25%

#### **Horticulture**

- **Vegetables** -increase acreage by 100% based on 2001 levels
- **Fruits** -increase acreage by 10% based on 2001 levels
- **Grapes** -increase acreage by 100% based on 2001
- Levels Increase net profit through better marketing processes

#### **Grain**

- Increase acreage by 20% and yields by 25% per acre based on current levels of each

- Improve Grain Handling infrastructure

### **Tactics for Leveraging Funds**

- The Council will require a 50% cash match from the applicant (receipts and cancelled checks required) where commodity-related activities are involved.
- Depending upon the Pulaski County Council review, part of the 50% match may be subject to in-kind contributions.
- Any individual participating in the grant program will be limited to \$4500.00. *This policy may be subject to review by the Council depending on circumstances.*
- Consideration for funding will be based on:
  - 1) How the proposal fits into the Pulaski County Agriculture Development Plan
  - 2) The number of tobacco farmers impacted
  - 3) The chances for long-term success

- **Regional Partnerships**

- Farm Bureau
- Kentucky Cattlemen's
- Soybean Growers
- Corn Growers
- Poultry Federation
- Farm Credit

- **State Agricultural Development Board Resources**

- State Funding
- KAFC
- Energy Program

- **Other local/state/federal resources**

- **FSA**
- **NRCS**
- **Conservation District**
- **USDA Rural**
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### **Evaluation and Review**

Applications will be received and reviewed by the Council in a timely fashion so that a smooth, orderly flow will be provided to the state board for their consideration and approval.

If all funds are dispensed by the Council at the end of the funding period (April 2002), applications pending consideration and evaluation will be considered first, provided program funding is continued.

County Plan Reviewed and Adopted on February 19, 2001

County Plan Revised and Adopted on April 2, 2001

County Plan Revised and Adopted on December 20, 2007

County Plan Revised and Adopted on September 2015

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Charlotte Stewart, chairman