

BALLARD

Agricultural Development Council

Update of
COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2015

Submitted by:

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BALLARD

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

Ballard is an agriculturally dependent far western Kentucky county at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Geologically, the county is made up of a wide band of first and second river bottoms along both rivers. This soil is relatively highly productive for crops. A large section of the central part of the county is made up of slightly sloping to rolling terrain that is good for crop production with a high percentage of no-till and conservation tillage practiced to reduce erosion. Most of the southern third of the county consists of steeper slopes, more rolling land where only the narrow creek bottoms are highly productive. In the past, large amounts of pasture and timber dominated this section of the county. With the explosion of grain production, much of this pasture ground has been brought back into crop production. Much of eastern Ballard County will become a bedroom community for Paducah, as more affluent residents want to have a small acreage escape in the countryside. All new development has been stalled in the county by the lack of progress on the new 4 lane highway 60. Currently, it is stopped at the county line. With plans to by-pass all the communities along the current route, commercial development will be slowed.

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

▪ Traditional agricultural production

Row Crop production has increased. Aside from poultry production, animal agriculture has plummeted. Breakout on attached sheet.

▪ Non-traditional agricultural production

Almost zero non-traditional ag production. One company making potpourri and scented candles from some ag products.

- New & emerging agricultural production

Increases and improvements in traditional grain crop production are about the only new or emerging trends in Ballard County.

- Tobacco dependency

Tobacco dependency has almost completely evaporated with less than 5 growers and less than 100 acres. Grain crop production has replaced tobacco.

b. Demographic Data

- Social data

Population in the county has been relatively stable since 2000, the census in 2010 showed an increase of 4 people over the number from 2007, 8249 from 8245. Lack of growth will lead to a reduction in population over time as the population ages. Population projections from the last census show that 65 and over will increase 17% by 2020 and 29% by 2030.

- Economic data

Like the population data, economic growth has been flat since 2007. Median household income has risen slightly, only \$2000. Farm size has gotten slightly bigger, average age of the farmer has increased 5 years since 2007. The surprising thing is that the number of principle operators that farming is their primary occupation is exactly the same as 2007 - 188.

2. Assessments of the County

a. Strengths

The strengths of Ballard County start with the 107,186 acres of highly productive farmland. The land has a higher productivity than expected and with the rivers blocking competition from the north and west and Paducah blocking from the east, farm rental rates are a little lower than the rest of the Purchase area. Situated on both the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, large scale grain markets are just a short distance away. Very good school system with new and modern facilities.

b. Weaknesses

Urban encroachment from Paducah to the east will cause a reduction in farmland over time. Although, ground water and wells are readily available, enough water to make use of current crop irrigation technologies is not available, unlike counties to our south. A large portion of our crop land is in the flood plains of the rivers and is therefore uninhabitable, reducing the overall tax base and limiting population and economic growth. Again, the lack of progress on the new highway 60 severely limits economic growth in the county.

c. Opportunities

Our biggest opportunity for economic growth of the county is a bedroom community for Paducah. People can live in the country and within 20 miles have all the conveniences, stores, restaurants, and medical care of people in the city. Crop production will continue to lead the way in agriculture and any advancements will come with increasing production efficiency and profitability in our major crops of corn, wheat and soybeans.

d. Challenges

What we listed as the biggest opportunity for economic growth will also be the biggest hurdle for agricultural growth in the future. The rural/ urban interface is always complicated, but as more land is used for houses the 2 will intersect more often. With this intersection comes problems. Loss of jobs from losing major employers in the area is another big challenge. No major new industries have been added to the surrounding area in 40 years. Most of our talent is being drained away when our kids leave for college and never return because the jobs are not here.

3. County Council Objectives

a. Mission/Vision Statement

Our county council does not have a formal mission/vision statement and does not need one. We are committed to helping the largest number of farmers in any way we are allowed to.

b. Short term goals

Keep funding the CAIP program as funds allow and save a little money in the account to fund any new proposals that might come forward in the future.

c. Long term goals

Our long term goals are not that different from our short term goals unless it might be to transition this money into some kind of revolving loan program as the programs like CAIP lose their effectiveness.

d. Tactics for leveraging funds

- Regional partnerships

We would welcome participating in regional partnerships, especially for any program that would add value added income for our products.

- State Agricultural Development Board resources

State ag development resources and regional resources might be important if we can ever come up with a proposal to take more advantage of our location on the rivers.

- Other local/state/federal resources

We would welcome the use of other resources but they will be hard to come by as long as grain production continues to be the agricultural focus in Ballard County.

3. Evaluation & Review

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

Very few individual proposals have ever been come before our board. Almost 100% of the funding proposals have been developed and pushed by our board. We see no need for modification at this time.

- b. How is success and failure measured?

Participation has been the main way that success or failure has been measured.

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

The Ballard County Ag Development council will meet and determine if there has been enough changes in local agriculture to warrant including other groups not represented at that time on the council.

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1A.

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

Table 1. Crop Breakdown

Crop	1999 Acres <i>KY Ag Statistics</i>	2007 Acres <i>Ballard FSA</i>	2012 Acres <i>2012 Census</i>		
Corn	25,585	30,742	31,915		
Wheat	12,512	12,000	15,901		
Soybeans	42,373	34,700	38,443		
Milo	486	333	<100		
Barley	227	-	-		
Oats	7	-	-		
Tobacco	1,560	228	<100		
Hay all types	10,000	8,200	4,661		
CRP	5,215	7,200	1,938		

Table 2. Animal Breakdown

Animal Type	1999 Numbers	2006 Numbers	2012 Numbers		
Beef – Cattle and Calves	10,000	9,400	5,681		
Hogs and Pigs	5,800	3000	0		
Dairy	400	470	150		
Poultry	4,500,000	5,000,000	7,640,335		