

Garrard County
Agricultural Development Council

Update of
COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Submitted by:

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Garrard 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

Garrard is a picturesque county located in the beautiful southern bluegrass region of the Commonwealth. Although its total area of 236 square miles ranks the county as Kentucky 29th smallest, burley tobacco and beef cattle production are big business in Garrard. The county is annually among the state's "Top 20" counties in the pounds of burley tobacco grown and in the number of beef cattle produced. The rolling topography is well suited for burley tobacco production on the ridges and beef cattle grazing on the hillsides. Garrard is reputed to have the most tobacco greenhouses of any county which, perhaps, can be attributed to the strong relationship between the UK Extension Service and the tobacco producers. Local producers got involved on the cutting edge technology of hydroponic production of burley transplants back in the early 1990s.

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

▪ Traditional agricultural production

According to the 2012 census, Garrard County has 805 farms with 127,235 acres in some type of farming. The average size of farm in Garrard County is 158 acres with the median size of 82. So, you can see there are a lot of small farms in the county.

There are 518 farms that list they have cows and calves on inventory with 41

▪ Non-traditional agricultural production

There is very limited non-traditional agriculture production in Garrard County. There have been a few small farmers try some vegetable production for sale at farmer's markets. The county's proximity to Lexington makes this a viable enterprise.

- New & emerging agricultural production

Garrard County has seen an old crop come back into production. Industrial hemp is showing some promise as a new source of farm income.

- Tobacco dependency

Garrard County is still very dependent on tobacco production as a major source of farm income.

b. Demographic Data

- Social data

Garrard County has a population of 16,800. Approximately 4,500 people live within the city limits of Lancaster, the county seat and only corporate city. The remaining 12,300 county citizens, obviously, live either on farms in rural areas, or in small communities (such as Paint Lick, Buckeye, Bryantsville, and Cartersville) scattered across the county. Twenty two percent of the county's population lives at or below the poverty income level. 44.2% of the children enrolled in the Garrard County Public School System are eligible for t

- Economic data

Traditionally, the county's economy has been highly dependent on the farming sector and its agriculture income. Currently, wage and salary employment represents the single largest type of employment with farm proprietors ranking as the second largest group although there has been a significant decline in the number of proprietors through the 1990s. The pace and nature of change in Garrard is quickly moving the county toward a future

2. Assessments of the County

a. Strengths

Garrard County is known as a rural community with traditional values. The County is located within 30 minutes of several surrounding large cities; Lexington, Richmond and Danville. The county is greatly blessed with natural resources such as productive soils, water (rivers, creeks, streams, lakes, adequate rainfall, etc.), and climatological conditions that allow for a broad-spectrum of agricultural enterprise production choices. These choices are, however, limited to some degree in many sections of the county by the sloping nature of the land and the resulting erosion considerations. Garrard has an abundance of forage production, but it is far from its potential. Improved and intensified management schemes would likely result in the development of value

b. Weaknesses

With the exception of ready-made markets for tobacco, beef cattle, dairy production, and a couple other livestock enterprises (i.e. hogs and lambs) the marketing for locally grown production lacks structure. A major emphasis needs to be placed on market development before traveling down the road toward the production of any potentially profitable enterprise. Garrard has very little industrial base resulting in the previously mentioned fact that 62.2% of the workforce leaves the county each day as they travel to their place of employment. Although it is difficult, if not impossible, to know just how many are involved; migrant, seasonal, and generally Hispanic workers make up a significant portion of the agriculture labor force in Garrard County. While a few o

c. Opportunities

Garrard County's proximity to Lexington and lower land values has drawn people to locate in the county bringing with it a number of diverse backgrounds.

d. Challenges

Garrard County is basically a rural community with limited employment opportunities. The population is primarily made up of multi-generation farmers that have traditional farming methods and little diversification. The rolling hills and lack of large tillable acreage makes it difficult to transition away from beef cows and tobacco.

3. County Council Objectives

a. Mission/Vision Statement

The Garrard County Agricultural Development Council will invest monies from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund in innovative proposals that have the potential to increase net farm income and positively affect the quality of life of tobacco farm families and the communities in which they live. Highest priority for funding will be assigned to those proposals that the Council deems to be sound investments in the future success of agriculture in Garrard County. Among the means through which this can be accomplished are: stimulating existing and ne

b. Short term goals

The Garrard County Agricultural Development Council will support the County Agricultural Investment Program with the cost share funds and encourage co-operation among individuals to come together to develop proposals that are broad-based in their scope and show potential benefit to multiple parties.

Again, the council feels that the appropriate use of Phase I funds is in those projects/programs which are deemed to be investments in the future of Garrard County's agriculture. Individual applications that will result in these funds being used in conventional USDA-like cost-sharing programs will receive a lower priority.

c. Long term goals

The long term goal of the Garrard County Agricultural Development Council is to encourage an atmosphere of cooperation among producers, rural and town citizens, and public and private sectors toward efforts that maintain and enhance both the economic and historic aspects of Garrard County agriculture. The improvement of existing farming enterprises, expanding new enterprises, developing markets and providing educational opportunities will also remain of major importance in the council's efforts to strengthen the agricultural economy of Garrard County.

d. Tactics for leveraging funds

- Regional partnerships

- The Garrard County Agricultural Development Council will expect proposals to show evidence of in-kind, matching money, or other support equal to at least 50% of the total cost of the project for which any application is submitted. Proposals should clearly outline to whom the funds will be directed and who will be responsible for the expenditures. The council reserves the right to waive cost-share requirements for special proposals from not-for-profit agency.

- State Agricultural Development Board resources

- Groups or individuals interested in submitting an application for Phase I funds can download an application from the web site www.agpolicy.ky.gov or they can pick one up at the Garrard County Extension Office located at 1302 Stanford Road in Lancaster.

- Other local/state/federal resources

Garrard County Ag Development Board will utilize local financial institutions, city and county government and seek outside resources.

3. Evaluation & Review

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

Proposals will be evaluated on their perceived potential to increase production efficiency, improve marketing effectiveness, broaden the educational base, add value, and/or create new products with new markets for Garrard County farmers.

- b. How is success and failure measured?

The bulk of monies available, it is anticipated, will be utilized toward making traditional enterprises more efficient and/or more profitable. Obviously, positive returns are expected for those individuals/groups that invest in and participate in those types of project and/or programs.

Returns on investments in education are often difficult to measure and may only be adequately and fairly evaluated over an extended period of time. Wise invest

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

The Garrard County Agricultural Development Council constructed this plan based on the current information available. As the county's situation evolves and changes to the degree that the council deems it necessary to revise any portion(s) of the plan, such revision will take place. Additionally, should there be changes at the state board level in philosophy, policy, practices, and procedures, etc., the county council may find it necessary to adjust this plan in reaction to these changes. The plan will be reviewed at least annually; but, should the council consider it necessary, a review and a resulting revision may take place at any time that the council feels it can be improved through such revision.

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