

# **NELSON COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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## **Submitted by:**

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## **OVERVIEW OF THE COUNTY**

Nelson County is situated on the western edge of Central Kentucky Bluegrass Region. We are served by two excellent public school systems, Bardstown Independent and Nelson County, as well as outstanding parochial and private schools.

Nelson County has a diverse agriculture community consisting of tobacco, grain, forages, beef, dairy and swine. Crop (63%) and livestock (37%) income are a fairly even income source bringing in \$67,099,000 in 2017. Among Kentucky's 120 counties, Nelson County ranks 14<sup>th</sup> in number of cattle, 24<sup>th</sup> in number of hogs and 18<sup>th</sup> in milk production. For the 2017 crop year Nelson County produced 22,175 acres of corn, 33,156 acres of soybeans and 5,350 acres of wheat. The value of tobacco was \$3,399,000 and ranked 31<sup>st</sup> in the state. Nelson County also ranks 9<sup>th</sup> statewide in hay production with over 39,906 acres.

Nelson County agriculture is blessed with several very active organizations throughout our community. Among these are the Nelson County Farm Bureau, The Kentucky Home Pork Producers, The Nelson County Beef Cattle Association, Nelson County High School and Thomas Nelson High School FFA and the Nelson County 4-H Program. In cooperation with the local Agriculture Extension Service these organizations provide a very strong voice for Nelson County agriculture.

## **DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

Nelson County is located in the heart of the state. The county is approximately 35 miles south of Louisville and 50 miles west of Lexington. Bardstown the county seat is located on Bluegrass Parkway and 15 minutes from Interstate 65. Because of our location the county is growing rapidly.

The U. S. Census 2013 data estimates for Nelson County are stated below:

**Population**

<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Under 18</b>	<b>Over 65</b>
45,388	22,492	22,896	10,978	6,609

**RACE**

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<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Two+</b>
31,049	2,239	275	953	784

**EDUCATION LEVEL**

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89.2% of individuals over the age of 25 have a High School degree or higher

17.2% individuals over the age of 25 have a Bachelor's degree or higher

<b>Persons Per Household</b>	<b>Family Households</b>
2.6	17,491

<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>Persons Below Poverty Level</b>
\$57,469	10.9%

<b>Building Permits</b>	<b>Persons Per Square Mile</b>
811	108.7 Nelson County

**Farms**

Fourteen hundred and thirty four (1434) farms produced an average of \$46,792 in goods sold.

Nelson County has 3 separate school systems with a total of 20 different schools. We are within 50 miles of 7 colleges and universities. More than 27,000 individuals are employed by Nelson County industries at an average wage of \$612 per week.

Nelson County is a very highly developed county with a strong leadership base. Bardstown and Nelson County Planning and Zoning have a completed comprehensive plan for the county and they also have an industrial park.

There are 17,491 households in Nelson County with 57.4% of the counties population living in a rural setting but not on a farm.

**REVIEW OF THE PROCESS**

The Nelson County Agriculture Development Board has sought input from many sectors of the

community. A public meeting was held January 30, 2001 at the Nelson County Civic Center in Bardstown. Our local newspaper printed two articles prior to the meeting announcing the boards intention to seek public input. Seven committees were formed to help develop and channel ideas. The committees were as follows: Beef, Dairy, Swine, Horticulture, Grain, Forage and Hay, and Miscellaneous. A member of the County Agriculture Development Board will serve as chairman of each committee.

The County Board has also asked the County Farm Bureau, Beef Cattle Association, Pork Producers and the Nelson County High School FFA for input.

## **ASSESSMENTS**

### **Strengths**

We have many strengths in the Nelson County's Agriculture Community. We are blessed with very diverse, fertile farmland that is capable of producing row crops, livestock, fruit, vegetables, timber, or aqua culture. We have approximately 76,000 acres of harvested crop land that in 2006 produced over 10.8 million dollars in sales of corn, wheat, soybeans and tobacco. Also in 2006 Nelson County livestock produced over 23.4 million dollars in sales of beef, dairy and swine.

Other strengths would include excellent natural resources, education opportunities and transportation systems that include railroad and good highway access. Nelson County is also blessed with a diverse industrial sector. These facilities provide an excellent source of off farm income that supplements a large number of Nelson County farm families. New Farmers Market Facility has seen an increase in vendors and sales of direct marketed goods.

### **Weaknesses**

Off farm income decreases dependence on farming thus decreasing efficiency.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

Expansion of timber industry.

Expansion of the livestock industry with better utilization of available resources. Forages, nutrition, and marketing.

Expansion of farmers market activities for both consumer and vendor.

## **THREATS**

Urbanization causing increased land prices above agriculture viability and division of farm land into smaller tracts.

Higher fuel prices coupled with extreme increases in production costs threaten long and short term

viability and sustainability of our local farm sector.

Urban expansion is a threat to the livestock industry in the ability to manage their waste and odor.

Restrictive environmental standards threaten the viability of both crop and livestock operations.

## **COUNTY COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

### **Mission/Vision Statement**

The Nelson County Agriculture Development Council will invest monies from the Kentucky Agriculture Development Fund in proposals that have the potential to increase net farm income and positively effect the quality of life of farm families and Nelson County. The Council will support innovative ideas in existing farming activities and development of new enterprises.

### **Short Term Priorities**

To assist applicants to develop proposals that are innovative and will improve existing agriculture enterprises or provide new agriculture opportunities for the future.

To support proposals that are environmentally and economically sound.

### **To support applications within the following areas:**

**Forage Crops** - Forage seeding, storage and handling equipment. Forage marketing enterprises.

**Livestock** - Manure handling equipment. Genetically superior breeding animals and animals for expansion of existing enterprises. Livestock handling equipment. Portable and stationary equipment to aid marketing ventures. Marketing studies to promote packer-producer alliances. Individual meat processing ventures.

**Grain Crops** - Marketing efforts aimed particularly at the distilleries. Facilities to aid in having quality grain. Railroad grain and feed facilities. Soil science and GPS research and development.

**Horticulture Crops** - Efforts to increase production of fruit and vegetable crops. Marketing efforts for fruit, vegetables and other value added farm enterprises.

**Miscellaneous** - Technology and information advancement. Education opportunities for both adults and youth.

## **LONG TERM GOALS**

- To make existing farming enterprises more sustainable.
- To continue to improve the agriculture marketing infrastructure.
- To provide expanding opportunities for education of the agriculture community.

## **Leveraging Tactics**

The Council will need to see evidence from the proposals that cost share which includes in-kind, matching money or other support equal to 50% of the total cost of the project will be provided. The council reserves the right to lower the cost share requirements and limits for non-profit agencies and associations and for proposals that have the opportunity to help great numbers of farmers. The council reserves rights of refusal for applications they feel do not fall within the scope of the Nelson County Comprehensive Plan.

## **Evaluation and Review**

The Council will evaluate each application using the application evaluation criteria outlined by the State Agriculture Advancement Council. Proposals with clear goals and objectives, strong business and cost share plans and having the opportunity to increase farm profitability will be given strong consideration.

Applicants may be asked to provide reports to the Council on the progress of individual projects. Farm visits before and after project completion may be needed to evaluate the progress of each project. Copies of expenditures (receipts/canceled checks) shall be made available to the Council upon request. Applicants will be encouraged to share their projects with other farmers through field days, tours and written reports. The success or failure of each project will be based on the goals of the project and its impact on farm profitability.