

Trimble County
Agricultural Development Council

Update of
COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Trimble 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

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture Trimble County ranks 76th in products sold out of Kentucky's 120 counties. The average market value of agricultural products sold is \$12,111. Crops are \$9,688 and livestock at \$2,423. The total number of farms is 469 with 65,954 acres. The average farm size is 141 acres. The county is bisected by two major highways, U.S. 42 and U.S. 421. The county seat of Trimble County is Bedford, with a population of 609 residents. The city of Milton (population 573) lies along the Ohio River adjacent to Madison, Indiana. The two towns are connected by the new Milton/Madison bridge. Ninety-five percent of Trimble County's 8,787 residents are rural. Trimble County ranks 104th in population of Kentucky counties. There are two elementary schools and one Junior/Senior High School in the county.

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

- Traditional agricultural production:
2017 Census (Change from 2012): A total of 65,954 acres (+ 19%) comprising 469 (+7%) farms; Average farm size is 141 acres (+11%); Soybeans - 10,613 acres (+ 124%); Corn – 2,342 acres (+ 83%); Cattle – 8,230 head (+17%); Total cropland 30,365 acres (+ 60%); Pasture land of all types 21,733 acres (+ 3%); All hay land 11,056 acres (+ 29%). Ninety-nine percent of all farms are traditional family farms.

- Non-traditional agricultural production:
Vegetables - 39 acres (+ 5%); Orchards - 75 acres (- 29%); Sheep - 274 head (- 20 %); Goats - 111 Head (- 71%).

- New & emerging agricultural production:
Trackside Butcher Shoppe – Trackside is owned by Trimble County Residents and located in Campbellsburg, Ky. It is a regional processor of locally produced livestock. Trackside also has a retail store on-site. The facility is expanding in 2020.
Maggie's Garden and More – Maggie's is a local roadside market specializing in homeopathic soaps, candles, bath salts, flowers, mulch, Kentucky Proud ice

cream, and more. The market received funding from the Kentucky Department of Agricultural Development (KADF) in 2019 for the development of a roadside market located at the former Lyons Club in Milton. Their goal is to encourage and promote sustainable agriculture in Trimble County.

PHARM, LLC. – Is a Natural Food Market and Ice Cream/Coffee Shop. The mission is to re-establish Bray's Fruit Market which has been a local landmark in Trimble County since the 1930's. PHARM, LLC applied for KADF funds in 2019 to renovate and upgrade the market. Opening in 2019, PHARM, LLC offers organic and local produce, flowers, honey and sorghum. The roadside market also features a coffee shop and homemade ice cream. Space in the market is available for other local producers to sell on consignment. Currently CBD Oil Products are processed, packaged and sold here.

Abrams Nursery – Purchased property in Trimble County through the Beginning Farmer Loan Program (BFLP), with Farm Credit Mid-America as the participating lender to expand his nursery where he produces more than 140 varieties of shrubs and trees and employs more than 20 people.

Hemp oil - At least three producers in the county are involved in hemp production for oil.

Tobacco dependency - Tobacco production has steadily declined since the tobacco buy-out. The 2017 Census of Agriculture indicates 566 acres of tobacco, a 20 percent decrease from 2007. In 2020 tobacco acreage is likely below 100 acres.

b. Demographic Data

- Social data - Average age of farmers has increased to 59.4 years. Forty percent of farmers are full-time while sixty percent are part-time. Sixty Four percent of farm operators are male. Sixty-six percent of farms have internet access.
- Economic data - Market value of all crops sold was \$12,111,000 (+33%); Total net cash farm income - \$2,589,000 (+131 %). Government payments totaled \$356,000 (- 31%), with an average per farm receiving - \$9,139 (+229%). Total farm production expenses were at \$11,158,000 (+17%), with an average per farm of \$23,790 (+9%). The average estimated value of land and buildings per acre - \$3,245 (+3%). Due to the economic impact of the corona-virus pandemic on farm operations in 2020, the USDA offered the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) to provide assistance to farmers who suffered price declines in commodities, had losses due to supply chain disruptions, or faced additional marketing challenges. Eligible commodities in phase one of CFAP included non-specialty crops. Corn, soybeans, wheat, wool, livestock, dairy, fruits and

vegetables. During Phase I of CFAP, 117 producers applied through their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) and received \$314,383 in assistance for livestock and grain commodities. Phase II of CFAP is still ongoing. So far, seventy-nine producers have received \$199,336 in assistance. Additional commodities added to Phase II included alfalfa, hemp, row crops, and tobacco.

2. Assessments of the County

a. Strengths

Available land with skilled farmers; (2) Rural farming heritage; (3) Knowledge base to grow a wide diversity of crops; (4) Ability to supply local food markets; (5) Tools and technology that are transferable to alternative crop production; (6) Close proximity to I-71, Louisville, Indianapolis and Cincinnati markets; Good climate with adequate rainfall; (7) Farm improvements already made because of KADF Cost Share Program, C.A.I.P.

b. Weaknesses

Descendants of traditional farm families are two to three generations removed from the farm; (2) Majority of our youth are rural non-farm; (3) Loss of Vo-Ag program at local high school; (4) Loss of forage/pasture ground to grain crops; (5) Ability to supply a consistent supply of product to local food markets; (6) Lack of marketing infrastructure and processing that match our ability to produce; (7) Loss of forage/pasture land also hinders our ability to increase cattle numbers.

c. Opportunities

Better utilize and manage existing livestock and forage base; (2) Increase opportunities for locally (farm to table) produced meat sales through Trackside Butcher Shoppe; (3) Interest in industrial hemp production will increase as marketing and processing infrastructure are developed.

d. Challenges

(1) Farm succession; (2) Loss of cultural heritage; (3) Decline of scenic, rural landscape; (4) Increasing land values make it difficult for young interested farmers; (5) Volatile, and ever changing markets; (6) High costs of farm inputs (fertilizer, labor, utilities, feed, chemicals, cash rent); (7) High cost of farm equipment.

3. County Council Objectives

a. Mission/Vision Statement

- To be good stewards of the funds entrusted to our care.
- To be fair and equitable in the selection of recipients and distribution of funds.
- To make sure awarded funds are used for their stated purpose.
- To equip producers to become better managers, more financially sustainable, and good stewards of the land.

b. Short term goals

- Continue C.A.I.P. program to assist farmers in making on-farm improvements.
- Encourage genetic improvements in local beef herds.
- Develop evaluation form to assess success of C.A.I.P. projects.
- Petition the Trimble County School Board to continue the Vo-Ag/FFA program to encourage agriculture career development and preserve our agricultural heritage.
- Explore feasibility of a local Farmers Market/local foods market.
- Explore the feasibility of a county/regional animal compost facility at the landfill.

c. Long term goals:

- Develop a brand name for locally produced meats by Traxside Butcher Shoppe.
- Petition the GOAP to allow C.A.I.P. funds to be used in a Poison Hemlock/noxious weed eradication program.
- Petition the GOAP to allow C.A.I.P. funds to be used for seedstock producers to purchase bulls.

d. Tactics for leveraging funds:

- Regional partnerships - Continue networking with other county agricultural development councils.
- State Agricultural Development Board resources - The Trimble County Agricultural Development Council is willing to support and facilitate worthy entrepreneurial projects for funding.
- Other local/state/federal resources - USDA Program funds, Kentucky Agriculture Finance Corporation, Farmers Bank of Milton, Bedford Loan and Deposit Bank, Kentucky Sheep and Goat Development Office, Trimble County Fiscal Court, Trimble County Soil Conservation District, Farm Service Agency, Kentucky Farm Bureau.

3. Evaluation & Review

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

(1.) Applications will be considered on their merit, CAIP applications are scored according to state guidelines, and approved. (2.) Applications must be completed properly. (3.) Requests must be based on sound business practices. (4.) Cooperative projects will be given priority over individual projects. (5.) Small farms will be given equal access to funds as large farms. (6.) Funds will be distributed without regard to age, race, sex, or disability. (7.) No one individual will receive more than 50 percent equity of the proposed project, up to a maximum of \$2,000. (8.) Council members will not be present for discussion and vote on requests made by themselves or immediate family members.

b. How is success and failure measured?

Results of producer questionnaires will be used to determine success or failure of projects.

c. How will the county comprehensive plan be revised?

The Trimble County Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed and updated every 5 years.

Planning and Zoning and Its Effect on Trimble County Agriculture

Over the years, the residents and farmers of Trimble County have been very skeptical about the prospects of planning and zoning, and its impact upon their way of life. “Will I be told what I can and can’t do with my land? Will they prevent me from selling my farm? Will I be told what I can and can’t grow? Can I sub-divide my farm between my children?”

As the development of the Trimble County Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance progressed, with contributions from public officials, business leaders, farmers, retired teachers, citizens and public meetings, the Planning Commission was keenly aware of these concerns.

By Kentucky law, a comprehensive plan must be developed and adopted before zoning regulations are written and approved by the Fiscal Court. It serves “as a guide for public and private actions and decisions to assure the development of public and private property in the most appropriate relationships” (KRS 100.183). The Trimble County Comprehensive Plan contains a “Vision Statement” along with nine elements: Agriculture, Land Use (required), Natural Resources, Community Facilities (required), Housing, Economic Development, and Transportation (required). Each element contains a set of goals and objectives. This plan is the guide by which the zoning ordinance must be implemented. In other words, the zoning ordinance must conform to the goals and objectives of the Trimble County Comprehensive Plan. The agricultural element of the Trimble County Comprehensive Plan states the following Agricultural Goal: The rural and agricultural characteristics of Trimble County shall be maintained. This plan contains five objectives:

- **Objective A:** Preserve the agricultural and rural heritage of Trimble County.

- **Objective B:** Enhance and maintain viable farms as working resources; agricultural land should be preserved to protect Trimble County's agricultural Industry.
- **Objective C:** Promote a stable agricultural base for the county while accomplishing orderly development, and maximum land utilization should be maintained.
- **Objective D:** Encourage land development practices so not to negatively impact adjacent lands.
- **Objective E:** Recognize that farms are investments, and the owners shall be allowed to maximize their use and valued potential.

Planning and Zoning Survey of the Trimble County Cattlemen Association

In June of 2019, the Chairman of the Trimble County Planning Commission spoke to the Cattlemen's Association about planning and zoning. A survey was conducted prior to the presentation. The cattlemen and farmers were asked: (1) Do you support Planning and Zoning in Trimble County? Forty-six percent responded yes and fifty-four responded no. (2) Do you believe Planning and Zoning will inhibit your ability to (a) Farm: Twenty-one percent, yes and seventy-nine percent, no; (b) Develop your land: Thirty-five percent, yes and sixty-five percent, no; (c) Transfer your land to your children: twenty-three percent, yes and seventy-seven percent, no; (d) Sell your land: thirty-five percent, yes and sixty-five percent, no. (3) Have you read the Comprehensive Plan? One hundred percent responded, no. (4) Have you read the planning and Zoning Ordinance? One hundred percent responded, no.

Following the presentation, a post evaluation/survey was conducted. (1) Do you support Planning and Zoning in Trimble County? The response was evenly split with fifty percent yes and fifty percent no, an increase of four percent in favor. (2) Do you believe Planning and Zoning will inhibit your ability to (a) Farm: six percent said yes and ninety-four percent no, a positive increase of fifteen percent, (b) Develop your land: twenty-one percent said yes and seventy-nine percent said no, a positive increase of fourteen percent; (c) Transfer your land to your children: Fifteen percent said yes and eighty-five percent said no, a positive increase of eight percent; (d) Sell your land: twenty-eight percent said yes and seventy-two percent said no, a positive increase of seven percent.

Agriculture Exemption from Planning and Zoning

KRS100.111 (2) defines “Agricultural Use” as: A tract of at least five (5) contiguous acres for the production of agricultural or horticultural crops, including but not limited to livestock, livestock products, poultry, poultry products, grain, hay, pastures, soybeans, tobacco, timber, orchard fruits, vegetables, flowers, or ornamental plants, including provision for dwellings for persons and their families who are engaged in the agricultural use on the tract, but not including residential building development for sale or lease to the public. This includes acreage used for horses and wineries.

Chapter 100 of the Kentucky Revised Statutes is commonly referred to as the enabling act for planning and zoning. Under [KRS 100.203](#), cities and counties may enact zoning regulations. However, Section 4 of [KRS 100.203](#) specifically exempts land used for agriculture from zoning regulations — except for *setbacks*, *use of flood plains*, and *mobile homes*. This "**agricultural supremacy clause**" ([KRS 100.203 \(4\)](#)) does not simply make a farm a legal nonconforming use but takes it outside the zoning ordinances' jurisdiction, although not outside the master or comprehensive plan. That is an important distinction because by exempting agricultural land from application of the zoning ordinance, the provisions of [KRS 100.203](#), which deals with changes in nonconforming uses, do not apply. A community can still plan, even develop, a comprehensive or master plan, and go so far as to adopt a zoning map including all the property in its jurisdiction, whether used for agriculture or not. However, as long as the land is used for agricultural purposes, the adopted zoning regulations (except for the three exceptions above) do not apply or attach to the property... There is no requirement that a person make the best agricultural use or be efficient in the operation of a farm. Some farmers don't like cattle, horses, or any animals. Some ranchers don't like growing crops. Some people consider farming a career, while others treat it as a hobby or a second job. One owner may decide to bushhog the fields, while another may decide to allow nature to take its course and encourage gradual reforestation. Adjacent owners may have mixed uses on one tract, and a single crop may be produced on another. Some crops, like hay, may be harvested twice a year, while others, like some trees, may produce only one harvest per generation. None of these scenarios is less agricultural or silvacultural than another, although their intensity, efficiency, and profitability may all be different... The land may produce timber, firewood, flowers, ornamental plants, or wildlife habitats, which again may be a poor choice, but is undeniably an agricultural use. In a few years, the owner may decide to cut everything down and raise cattle or even ostriches. The point is that a user of agricultural land can change one agricultural use to another with impunity. *Grannis v. Schroder*, 978 S.W.2d 328, 330 (Ky. Ct. App. 1998).