MENIFEE COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

FOR

INVESTING PHASE I
TOBACCO SETTLEMENT MONIES

TO

IMPROVE FARM INCOME
Menifee County Agriculture Development Council

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I. Overview of Menifee County

A. Agricultural Statistics, Trends and Projections:

The 2002 Census of Agriculture for Menifee County shows a 13% decrease in number of farms with only 334 farms in the county. Total land in farms has decreased 8% from 40,154 acres in 1997 to 37,012 acres in 2002. However, the average size of farms has increased slightly from an average of 105 acres in 1997 to 111 acres in 2002.

The market value of agricultural products sold has decreased by 36% from $4,048,000 in 1997 to $2,592,000 in 2002. Crop sales accounted for 67% of the total market value with $1,726,000 total sales. Menifee County livestock sales accounted for 33% of the total market value with $865,000 total sales. The average market value of production per farm in 2002 was $7,759 which is down 27% from $10,569 in 1997.

In Menifee County there are 334 principal operators of which 37 are women. The total number of farm operators is 460 of which only 3 are Hispanic. The average age of Menifee County farmers is 52.5 years old. Of the 334 principal operators in the county, 161 consider their primary occupation to be farming. However, it is believed that the majority of these are retired workers who earned their income off the farm before retirement. It is interesting to note that 201 of the 334 principal operators listed, worked at least some days off the farm. However, 164 of those 201 worked more than 200 days off the farm to help provide additional income.
The average per farm production expenses were $6,896 with the average net cash returns $2,152. In 2002 $346,000 was the total income from farm related sources for all Menifee County farms. Of the 334 farms, the following statistics apply:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Farms</th>
<th>Gross Sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>Less than $2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>$2,500 to $4,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>$5,000 to $9,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>$10,000 to $24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>$25,000 to $49,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$50,000 to $99,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$100,000 or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We had 467 acres of tobacco in 2002 with a total production of 731,886 pounds of tobacco. In 1997 we had 918 acres of tobacco for a total production of 1.6 million pounds. This tobacco loss represents the beginning of the farm crisis in Menifee County.

The trend in Menifee County shows a decrease in farm income caused by an increase of residential use of farmlands, farms being used for cabins and residential homes. Living on a farm or retiring to a farm has become a way of life, more so than a means of family support. Without significant opportunity for increased farm profit this will remain true for many Menifee Countians who check farming as a principle occupation for census records. However, we know that some residences of Menifee County are looking for serious means of improving farm profit to supplement family income.
Our traditional agriculture production of tobacco, beef and forages is outlined in the many years of the Kentucky Agricultural statistics report. Their statistical findings are of no surprise to agricultural leadership in Menifee County. However, their analysis does not include our ever-growing non-traditional agricultural production with the forest industry. The tobacco quota cuts has insured that income from timber sales have exceeded our income from burley tobacco.

Another opportunity is our local Farmers Market. Local growers are presently selling every Friday during the growing season in our facilities Frenchburg. Also, we feel that good farmers, given the opportunity and market, can and will economically produce horticulture crops and timber products viable for our county and area. Other agricultural enterprises include goats, horses, and hay sales, hunting leases, camping and lodging facilities close to Cave Run Lake and Red River Gorge.

B. **Demographic Data:**
- Population Update – Kentucky by the Numbers
- Agriculture Update – Kentucky by the Numbers
- Kentucky Agricultural Statistics
- USDA NASS Kentucky

C. **Inventory of Resources:** *(based upon 2002 census data)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco Acreage</td>
<td>467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle Numbers Including Calves</td>
<td>3,838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmland (acres)</td>
<td>37,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvesting Cropland (acres)</td>
<td>6,931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forage (acres)</td>
<td>5,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastureland (acres)</td>
<td>7,947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Pasture</td>
<td>1,938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodland Pasture</td>
<td>3,608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodland (acres)</td>
<td>14,951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People (population)</td>
<td>6,809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers (# farms)</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle Occupation (# as farming)</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cave Run Lake (recreation &amp; fishing)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Boone National Forest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II.  Review of the Process

A.  The initial Comprehensive Plan was developed with input from 10% of the burley farmers attending a public forum to discuss uses of the Phase I Tobacco Settlement monies. A survey was sent to 520 farmers and agriculture related people with 13% responding with ideas to invest our funds in Menifee agriculture. Also, information was gathered from local agricultural business and government organizations. Agriculture Development Council meetings were advertised in the local newspaper as open to the public. A series of newspaper articles were utilized to inform the public about House bill 611. The initial plan was prepared by the Menifee County Agriculture Development Council with the Cooperative Extension Service, Dave Cooper, administrating the process.

B.  The Revised Comprehensive Plan was prepared after consultation with the Menifee County Agriculture Development Council. The Agriculture Development Council reviewed the current plan, discussed the Phase I funding and appropriations from previous years, and made necessary changes for the growth and development of the county. The plan was prepared in conjunction with the Cooperative Extension Service Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Julie Murphy, administrating the process.
III. Assessments

*Strengths*

The strengths of Menifee County are found in its people who care about and make farming a way of life. Menifee County is home to 334 farms containing about 37,012 acres in farmland. We are located in the beautiful Daniel Boone National Forest, which takes up 46,857 acres in Menifee County with many more acres of privately owned woodlands. We are located between Cave Run Lake and the Red River Gorge, and feel that tourism can become a major part of our economy. In addition to the forests, our rolling hills are well suited for livestock and forage production. Most all who live in Menifee County feel it is a great place to raise a family, but it has become a difficult place to make a living farming.

*Weakness of Menifee County*

The weakness or needs of Menifee County farmers include the lack of new enterprises and the need for the expansion of existing agricultural production. Very few young people are staying on the farm to make their living. Most of our farmers are part-time producers, and make their living off the farm or have retired to a farm.

The median household income is $25,472 dollars. Only 58% of the people over 25 years of age are high school graduates and 8% have college degrees. There are no marketing opportunities within the county for livestock and tobacco other than. Our forestry industry is made up of logging and rough sawed lumber sales. There is no medium to larger urban centers in the county, the majority of commerce and employment is outside our county in Mt. Sterling and Morehead.

*Opportunities:*

- Beef and forages
- Agricultural Diversification
- Agri-Tourism including recreational and sporting uses of farmland
- Value added timber products
- Research, Development, Experimentation and Education
**Threats:**

- Lack of markets
- Loss of farmland by sale for construction of weekend cabins.
- Loss of farmland for home construction.
- Increase in farmland prices above level for equitable return to farming.
- Young people not staying on the farm.
- Loss of the family farm.
- Few secondary wood industries
- Inefficient utilization of forage crops
- Continual loss of tobacco income.

**IV. County Council Objectives**

*Mission/Vision/Goal Statement*

The Menifee County Ag Development Council wants farming to remain a vital part of their rural economy. We are proud farmers who wish to make a stand together to live in a community where agriculture is a valued part of community life. We want everyone to have the opportunity to farm profitably while using environmentally sound farming practices. We want our government to be responsive to the needs of the Menifee County farming community. As a Council, we have been given a once in a lifetime opportunity to invest in the future of agriculture in Menifee County. It is our goal to promote agriculture and related industries for current farmers and for future generations.

**A. Short Term Priorities**

To prompt proposals in the major areas for improving farm income
To prioritize major areas most likely to improve farm income
The percentages allotted to major areas are:
  - Beef and forage – 75%
  - Agricultural Diversification – 10%
  - Tourism including recreational and sporting uses of farmland – 8%
  - Value added timber products – 5%
  - Research, Development, Experimentation and Education – 2%
B. **Long Term Goals**

Utilize Phase I Tobacco Monies to help fund projects that are successful in improving farm income.

Create new markets for all agricultural products:
- Increase cattle numbers
- Increase forage utilization
- Create opportunities in agri-tourism
- Improving income from our timber resources
- Improve research development, experimentation and education opportunities

C. **Tactics for Leveraging Funds**

1. Partnership
   - Low or no interest loans
   - Matching grants – 50-50 grants
   - Join with UK, MSU, Mountain Rural, Clark Energy, Farm Bureau, NRCS, and local banks to add dollars for proposals and college scholarships for adults and students making the transition from farm to public work.
   - Multi-county proposals are encouraged

2. State Ag Development Board Resources Ways to access State Board Funds

3. Other Local/State/Federal Resources
   - Local banks,
   - Farmers Service Agency
   - Farm Credit Service
   - Kentucky Department of Agriculture
   - Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)
   - USDA
V. Evaluation and Review

A. Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals for Block of Money to Investments in Menifee Agriculture

- Priorities to tobacco farmers
- Does proposal meet Ag Development Council’s short-term priorities and long-term goals?
- How will the proposals use dollars from other sources? Insure Phase I monies to help the largest number of tobacco farmer’s possible.
- Dependence on agriculture
- Completeness, documentation and merit of the proposal.
- Does the proposal enhance farm income?
- Is proposal compatible with local comprehensive plan?
- Does proposal offer diversification?

B. How will Success and Failure be Measured?

- Ag stats indication of increase in sales of farm products.
- Increase farm income from increase in cattle numbers
- Number of individuals assisted to make the transition from farm to non-farm jobs.
- Increase sales at Farmers Market
- Improvement in farmer cooperatives to assist in marketing farm products.
- Number new markets reached.
- Number of successful new enterprises.

C. County Comprehensive Plan to be revised as needed to suffice different proposals.

For revision to take place the Agricultural Development Council must assess the needs of the county and ensure that they are taking all measures in reaching those.