



## Kentucky Agriculture's Strategic Roadmap Themes from 120+ participants across 28 focus groups

### Prioritize workforce development; provide an adequate employee base and broaden young people's understanding of career opportunities in agriculture.

- Local skilled workforce needed
- Statewide need to provide training
- High school e.g. prep, internships, career exploration beyond farming
- Community College e.g. certifications
- Universities: need new learning - both in ag and outside e.g. health

### Help farm transitions & sustain Kentucky farmlands.

- Succession planning: training, assistance, support
- Farmland protection: need coordinated effort with industrial developments, people inheriting farms who don't want to farm, new residents, urban sprawl, etc.
- Young/new farmers: connecting resources, funding, mentorship
- Integrating urban/minority/first generation farmers
- Access and managing overwhelming number of resources: need a centralized point to leverage these and develop understanding of federal/state programs.
- Policies to meet changing needs and not inhibiting business

### Engage agriculture in Kentucky's economic development discussions.

- Identify state and countywide economic contributions
- Build relationships with local, regional, and state economic development staff
- Provide production values and economic indicators for farm and agribusiness contributions to community, region, and state
- Help elected officials understand agriculture's economic contributions (tax base, employees, community contribution, vendors, infrastructure, etc.)
- Ag people need to be part of economic development and/or chamber boards (local, regional, state) to develop understanding

### Continue diversification and innovation across farm, food, fuel, and fiber.

- Relationships between producers, processors, biorenewable fuels, fiber, etc. to tap into new product opportunities
- Bringing new agri and food businesses to the state
- Expanding international markets
- Impact of development funds encouraging innovation and diversification
- Mentorship and educational program to assist farmers in exploring diversification
- Value chain sustainability requirements & new climate opportunities e.g. Carbon Credits
- Provide technology training and support for precision ag and automated agriculture, AI, data systems, etc.

## **Kentucky Agriculture's Strategic Roadmap Focus Group Themes (continued)**

### Foster more supply chain coordination to improve market access.

- Processing e.g. large-scale beef, small-scale dairy
- Local market creation e.g. distilleries, processors seeking Kentucky products
- Aggregation for distribution or wholesale for produce
- Relationships with buyers e.g. grocers, school systems, hospitals
- International opportunities

### Create more value-added markets across Commonwealth.

- Build awareness/promotion of certifications: KY Proud, Veteran Grown, Appalachian Proud
- Farmers market development
- CSA/Urban Ag/Direct to consumer
- New product innovation with unique partners
- Bringing more Kentucky products to shelves

### Grow collaboration, coordination, and communications within Kentucky ag.

- Foster cooperative relationships through more networking
- Internal and external messages about ag aren't coordinated
- Where can we coordinate legislative approach?
- Increase outreach to new, smaller, or those with historical divide
- Coordinate and grow school outreach programs in urban, suburban, and rural
- Regional coordination
- Help regulators understand agriculture

### Build understanding around farm and food amongst all Kentuckians.

- K-5, middle school, and high school engagement (prioritized in that order)
- Civic/community group presentations needed
- What are the opportunities with business group presentations?
- Legislative relationships (local, regional, state)
- Involvement in chamber & economic development programs (state, regional, local)
- Regulatory and government bodies e.g. water quality, local government planning
- Divide isn't just rural vs. urban; many in rural communities don't understand farming
- Farmer appreciation – they feel devalued, help them tell their story.

### Develop agriculture's partnerships in food and health space.

- Food processors, retailers, institutions,
- Health professionals: RDNs, administrators
- Leverage ag's role in food is medicine
- Potential connection: helping farmer mental and physical well-being
- Food banks and addressing food insecurity
- Distilleries and opportunities to leverage tourism or Kentucky grown
- Chefs – how can we leverage local?

*Focus groups conducted by Michele Payn, Cause Matters Corp. Feel free to e-mail  
mpayn@causmatters.com with questions or additional thoughts.*

