

Help protect farm transitions & sustain Kentucky farmlands.

HIGH (Crisis) Priority

2/15 Working Group Participant Name & Organization

Ben Conner, UK College of Ag	Rebecca Kernodle, KY Ag & Env. In Classroom
Joe Cain, Burley & Dark Tobacco Prod. Assoc.	Henry Duncan, KY Woodland Owners
Dean Schamore, USDA	Amanda Robertson, USDA
John W. McCauley, USDA FSA	Eddie Melton, KY Farm Bureau
Steve Beam, NRCS	

2/15 Working Group Notes

1. *What specifically needs to be done in this area?*

- Are there specific groups that work with farmers & prospective producers to plan for the future? Educators?
- Tax incentives for transitions (life insurance options) – incentives for production ag.
- Build equity: the main asset we have is land – equity.
- The big thing we need to do is make farming more profitable to entice others to want to farm.
- Estate planning and life insurance options.
- Information is often there but not widely known.
- Foreign or land speculation questions?
- Has to start early!
- Help to put all of the puzzle pieces together.

“It is nearly impossible for a young farmer to get started today.”
– Focus group participants

2. *Who needs to be involved?*

- Estate planners and tax advisors.
- Commodity groups can help educate young people to spark interest.
- Government agencies that have funds to assist in transitions (easements).
- Education is the key!
- Legislators – federal and state

3. *How can we move this forward in a measurable way?*

- Coordinate more educational opportunities to provide estate planning.
- Technical bulletins from government agencies (NRCS, FSA, etc.) to promote services and opportunities available.
- Improve profitability.

Ideas generated from 120 focus group participants

- 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.

“What is going to happen to our farmland with development and all of these people moving in?”
– Focus group participant

[Sign up for Farm Transitions working group here](#)

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

HIGH Priority

2/15 Working Group Participant Name & Organization

Laurie Mays, KY Chamber of Commerce Found.	Gary Huddleston Agribusiness Ind. Network
Nancy Cox, UK College of Ag	Sheldon McKinney, KY FFA Foundation
Von Barnes, KYSU Extension	Michelle Shane, KY Board of Vet Examiners
Steve Velasco DVM, State Veterinarian	Laura Berry, KFEC Expositions
Andrea Sexten, ECU Ag Dept. Chair	Paige Dupin, KFEC Expositions

2/15 Working Group Notes

1. *What specifically needs to be done in this area?* **Communication**

- Connection between high school and universities, connecting better with ag teachers. Provide resources to them to when needed.
- Communicating/bridging the gap of communications.
- Employers are being pushed to target certain populations about agriculture and how they can transfer skills to ag. How do we as an industry project ag to these populations?
- Centralized place for the resources created to ease how to find them.

2. *Who needs to be involved?*

- Businesses
- Educators: high school, universities, community colleges
- Ag groups: Commodity groups, corporations, KDA

3. *How can we move this forward in a measurable way?* Statewide career fair

- Central hub of communication to improve how we communicate. Connect ag resources, network, and individuals.
- Focus on how to capture those not in ag to see the opportunities available.
- Aligning developed materials for teachers to use.
- Develop experiential opportunities.
- Networking: Connect high school teachers with same contacts that universities use.
- Simplify and streamline opportunities to not overwhelm teachers/educators that are already overworked.
- Train ag companies on how to pique interest of young people.

Ideas generated from 120 focus group participants

- 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.

“Our next generation of workers need to be a skilled workforce. Not a lot of students coming out of local ag program; we need to find the right people to give them the right training.” –
Focus group participant

[Sign up for Workforce Development working group here](#)

Engage agriculture in Kentucky's economic development discussions.

HIGH Priority

2/15 Working Group Participant Name, Organization

Curtis Bradley, ABAK	Brandon Reed, KOAP
Drew Graham, KFB	Dave Maples, KY Cattlemens
Jerry Brown, KY Woodland Owners	Nick Carter, UK College of Ag
Bob Helton, Bluegrass AgTech Dev Corp	Laura Knoth, KY Corn/KY Small Grain

2/15 Working Group Notes

1. *What specifically needs to be done in this area?*

- Develop the mindset that ag is economic development.
- Engage the economic development cabinet to ensure ag economic development opportunities are capitalized on.
- Promote use of Ag Districts to explain value of ag land.
- Reinvigorate PACE.
- Beginning Farmer Loan Program
- KOAP Programs
- Identify prime farmland and find a way to incentivize protecting it,
- Maintain the farms and woodlands we have, then focus on those farms & woodlands being more sustainable, more profitable.

2. *Who needs to be involved?*

- Economic Development Corp./Governor's office
- KDA/KOAP/KY Division of Forestry
- Kentucky General Assembly
- Local economic development/community leaders
- KIA – KY Infrastructure Authority
- Bluegrass AgTech Development Corp.
- Ag industry commodity orgs and ag industry leaders need to work with above.

3. *How can we move this forward in a measurable way?*

- Engage economic development in KAC.
- Ensure the economic development multiplier.
- Ensure ag projects qualify for economic development incentives – at all levels – don't miss the middle.

Ideas generated from 120 focus group participants

- 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.

“Economic development at all levels of government could benefit from better understanding of agriculture.”
– Focus Group Participant

[Sign up for Economic Development working group here](#)

Foster more supply chain coordination to improve market access.

HIGH Priority

2/15 Working Group Participant Name, Organization

Brent Lackey, KCARD

Mark Vidoureck, Farm Credit Services

Jennifer Hardin, KY Assoc. of Meat Processors

Tod Griffin, AgriBusiness Assoc.

2/15 Working Group Notes

1. *What specifically needs to be done in this area?*

- Distribution opportunities: how to get raw product to consumer.
- Development of infrastructure.
- Livestock/beef industry.
- Produce: school/institutional sales.
- Chicken & egg scenario: processing plant vs. finishing operation.

2. *Who needs to be involved?*

- Producers
- Every consumer!
- Economic development officials (local and state)
- Policymakers (local and state)
- UK, Regional universities
- Labor is key

3. *How can we move this forward in a measurable way?*

- Take a page out of the economic development recruitment playbook. Kentucky is geographically advantaged and has the resources needed for larger supply chain companies.

*How is Kentucky ag going to stand out in 10 years?
(Summary of supply chain related responses)*

Collaboration & Investment: coordinated efforts in local meat processing, poultry growth, and support for small producers contribute to a more robust and interconnected supply chain.

Diversification & Innovation: growth of niche products showcases a commitment to expanding the ag portfolio. Supply chain coordination facilitates the introduction of new products like maple syrup and sustainable practices like no-till and cover crops.

Local Focus & Quality: focus on local markets and prioritizing the consumption of locally produced high-quality goods through the value chain.

Sustainability & Environmental Practices: supply chain coordination aids in adopting sustainable practices and meeting goals collectively e.g. reducing carbon footprints and implementing conservation partnerships.

Innovation & Technology Integration: use of AI and technology presents opportunities for small farmers. Supply chain coordination facilitates the integration of technology, enhances marketing strategies and overall efficiency.

Ideas generated from 120 focus group participants

- 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.

“We are well situated with tourism, horses, bourbon, breweries, food. How can we make sure these are all Kentucky supply chains in a really explicit way?”
– Focus Group Participant

[Sign up for Supply Chain working group here](#)

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

HIGH Priority

2/15 Working Group Participant Name, Organization

Steve Kull, KY Division of Forestry

Hunter Jones, KOAP

Ryan Burnette, Hickory Grove Farm

Chelsea Smither, KOAP

Zach Bennett, Louisville Ag Club

Tony Brannon, WAVE Ag

2/15 Working Group Notes

1. What specifically needs to be done in this area?
 - Continue to develop ideas to diversify co-ops, share technology, and in certifications e.g. KY Proud.
 - Continue to invest more ADF into diversity and innovation.
 - Produce/vegetables – needs expanding
 - Transition from tobacco – utilize labor
 - Innovation – value-added, integrated ag
 - Diversify food sources for livestock e.g. Bourbon & Distillers Grain.
 - Who is considered a farmer? Diversity.
 - Create innovation: regional focus, e.g. Lexington, WAVE Ag.
2. Who needs to be involved?
 - KDA/KOAP, KADB
 - Academia: research and technology
 - Policymakers: Remove barriers to technology e.g. drones
 - All ag organizations and agribusiness – can contribute to specific area.
3. How can we move this forward in a measurable way?
 - Recognition of diversification efforts of specific farmers and making them feel important, not forgotten.
 - Listing of all current commodities grown and marketed in Kentucky.
 - Incentivize investments in diversity and innovation.

We're missing the middle of the value chain connection from small and mid-size farms to sell into markets."

– Focus Group Participant

Ideas generated from 120 focus group participants

- 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.

"Unless there is change, we'll struggle in 10 years. Diversification allows us to stand out."

– Focus Group Participant

[Sign up for Diversification working group here](#)

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

HIGH Priority

2/15 Working Group Participant Name, Organization

Marianne Smith Edge, AgriNutrition Edge
Jamie Guffey, KY Poultry Federation

Susan Jones, WKU/AHEC
Alan Watts, WDKZ

2/15 Working Group Notes

1. *What specifically needs to be done in this area?*

- Connect healthy eating & lifestyle back to the farmer.
- Farmers in the food space: Chefs, health professionals.
- Create opportunities to connect, in-person, what is being done on the farm breakdown myths with health professionals & school groups.

2. *Who needs to be involved?*

- Farmers, chefs, public health, RDNs
- Employers & health insurance
- School lunch programs
- K-5 students
- Convenience store: increase partnerships to promote health food in Kentucky

3. *How can we move this forward in a measurable way?*

- Create opportunities to involve more: diverse conversations among specific group meetings, e.g. farmer/health professional/chef panels.
- Increase ag in the classroom.
- Create/develop health promotion/screenings program for farmers/ag community.
- Create incentives for improved health practices e.g. financial incentives for farmers.

*“Who do you need to work with that you’re not today?”
(Top responses from 28 focus groups)*

Cross-Sector Collaborations: non-traditional ag groups; urban organizations; technology, construction, manufacturing sectors; bourbon/distilleries, health institutions.

Economic Development & Corporations: boards/staff, employers; land conservation groups; policymakers.

Agricultural Groups: stronger collaboration with various ag orgs, including regulatory matters, students, work with chefs/healthcare on food origins.

Government Bodies & Agencies: local planning commissions, legislators, regulatory bodies, and agencies like USDA Rural Development, and Economic Development Councils (EDC).

Media & Communication Channels: better tell the story of agriculture & promote positive messages; utilization of social media audiences; reach out to niche media outlets.

Education & Research Institutions: educational institutions, land grant universities, and research; workforce development through 4-H/FFA and Kentucky Community College system; technical assistance.

Community & Civic Organizations: civic clubs, community alliances, and groups not typically involved; community gardens; partnerships between local needs and ag.

Consumer & Health Groups: healthcare practitioners, RDNs, organizations focusing on the intersection of food as medicine.

Youth & Minorities: include minority and diverse groups within ag; target youth to consider opportunities in agriculture through internships and mentoring programs.

Ideas generated from 120 focus group participants

- 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?

“There is growing momentum to understand about where food comes from and how it is produced.”

– Focus Group Participant

[Sign up for Food & Health Partnerships working group here](#)

Create more value-added markets across the Commonwealth.

HIGH Priority

2/15 Working Group Participant Name, Organization

Dennis Craig, LAC-KALA – Blackacre Conserv.
David Knopf, USDA/NASS
Laura Stephenson, UK College of Ag
Nikki Whitaker, KY Cattlemens Assoc.

Larry Clark, KY Farm Bureau
Renee Carrico, KY Farm Bureau
Portia Brown, KY Woodland Owners Assoc.
John Chism, KDA

2/15 Working Group Notes

1. *What specifically needs to be done in this area?*
 - Promotion of value-added aspects.
 - Identifying the value-added markets.
 - Growing farmers markets and assisting producers to enter those markets.
 - Understanding consumer preferences.
 - Look at health aspect of products to add value.
2. *Who needs to be involved?*
 - How does AI fit into this – technology?
 - Economic marketing models – how to
 - Health professionals – for the producers
 - Universities, KCARD, KDA, Extension
 - Everyone!
3. *How can we move this forward in a measurable way?*
 - Identify the existing value-added programs first and promote those.
 - Identify the investments we're all going to make.
 - Gather existing programs/consumer preferences/find the measurables.
 - Complementary programs.

*How is Kentucky ag going to stand out in 10 years?
(Summary of value-added related responses)*

Diversification & Branding: Value-added products contribute to diversifying by creating a unique brand for KY ag and promoting as distinctive in market.

Agri-Tourism: Value-added experiences in agri-tourism involve educating visitors and creating new markets, providing additional revenue streams for farmers by offering unique experiences and products.

Quality: Value-added practices, such as emphasizing high-quality products and developing niche items like maple syrup, contribute to standing out in local markets. These efforts enhance the perceived value of Kentucky agricultural products.

Environmental Sustainability: Sustainable practices, including no-till and cover crops, can be considered value-added, appealing to environmentally conscious consumers, potentially commanding premium prices.

Market Development: The emphasis on diversifying ag products and exploring new markets aligns with value-added strategies. Introducing unique and differentiated products contributes to the economic value of the agricultural sector.

Alternative Fuels & Environmental Sustainability: Exploring alternative fuels and sustainable practices align with value-added efforts. Contributing to reducing carbon footprints through innovative approaches adds economic and environmental value through supply chain.

Ideas generated from 120 focus group participants

- 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
- 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.

“We are missing value-added end users compared to the national scene. We are not a mover of the market - we have to create our own market and be diligent in finding premium pay.”
– Focus group participant

[Sign up for Value-added working group here](#)

Grow collaboration, coordination, and communications within Kentucky ag.

MEDIUM (Ongoing) Priority

2/15 Working Group Participant Name, Organization

Debra Hamelback, KVMA

Courtney Jenkins, UK Extension

Debbie Reed, MSU Breathitt Veterinary

Matt Chaliff, KY FFFA

Brian Parr, MSU

Sarah Coleman, KY Horse Council

2/15 Working Group Notes

1. What specifically needs to be done in this area?

- Kentucky ag rallies around disasters.
- Leave behinds at small farmers, new farmers, realtors, chambers of commerce, post office, tourism office, farm stores, farm bureaus, county fair board, ag venues, shows, etc.
- Identify person for each community group in county/region (and they're busy).

2. Who needs to be involved?

- Identify opinion leaders – different ag commodity groups.
- Lean on industry reps and commodity groups to provide vetted information.

3. How can we move this forward in a measurable way?

- Create leave behind.
- Livestock coalition does a great job and coordinates all livestock groups.
- Each group create a "white sheet" with goals for the year; everyone shares.

What's missing in Kentucky ag?

(Summary of ag group related responses)

Cooperation & Unity: collaborative relationships and fostering better communication are considered essential, especially among historically conflicting groups. Fragmentation among ag orgs and a lack of a unified vision hinder progress.

Communication & Storytelling: needs improvement within and outside of ag; lack of effective communication about environmental practices and challenges in telling the ag story.

Information Sharing: improved coordination calls for information sharing hub. Strengthening collaboration mechanisms and creating platforms for sharing knowledge can create a more connected community.

Education & Awareness: bridging the gap in understanding between the general public and the ag sector is needed, including incorporating ag into school curricula, creating aspiring farmer programs, and mentorship initiatives to improve overall awareness.

Infrastructure & Processing: value-added initiatives, product diversification, and middle infrastructure in processing is needed across the commonwealth.

Image Improvement: acknowledging and addressing the need to improve the image of farmers and ag is a priority to many.

Value-Added Initiatives: adding value to agricultural products through initiatives such as co-ops, carbon credits, and sustainability is emphasized. Need to enhance the economic value of products and create more resilient market opportunities for farmers.

Inclusivity: need for representation of different types of farming and encouraging diverse participation on boards and in markets is recognized.

Ideas generated from 120 focus group participants

- 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.

"A lot of great stuff is happening, but it's not always known. Need better communications platform to get ag to work together more, streamline some work, and not re-create the wheel."

– Focus group participant

[Sign up for Ag Group Coordination working group here](#)

Build understanding around farm and food amongst all Kentuckians.

MEDIUM Priority

2/15 Working Group Participant Name, Organization

Hannah Sharp-Johnson, KOAP-KDA

Lewis Bradley, Bayer Crop Science

Barbara Jones, ECU Ag Dept.

Natalie Gupton, AgSafe & KWIA

Paul Woosley, WKU Ag & Food Science

Jennifer Elwell, TeachKyAg

2/15 Working Group Notes

1. *What specifically needs to be done in this area?*

- Collaboration/communication among all ag groups in schools (KDA, EKY, TeachKyAg, FB).
 - Identify gaps
 - Collect data on impact
- Education of legislators – develop relationship with KDA and governor’s office.
- Prioritize audience

*Who needs to learn about KY agriculture?
(Top responses from 28 focus groups)*

1. **Legislators and Policymakers**
2. **Educators and Students**
3. **Healthcare Professionals**
4. **Community Leaders & Organizations**
5. **Youth for Career Exposure**
6. **Business & Economic Development Leaders**
7. **Grocery Shoppers**
8. **Local & International Markets**
9. **Media & Communication Channels**
10. **Specific Demographic Groups**

2. *Who needs to be involved?*

- Check-off programs
- Farm/commodity groups
- Retailers
- Extension
- All universities
- Food banks/closets

3. *How can we move this forward in a measurable way?*

- Where are gaps? Lots of projects across the state, but disjointed (KDA, ECU, KAEC)
 - Time & money: relying on volunteers.
 - Limitations at schools: personal opinions and curriculum mandates
- Statewide data collection on ag literacy and outreach
- Political relationships: creating a barrier for communication,
 - New opportunities with administration
 - Support for governor: can it be a bridge divide
- Opportunity with Ryan Quarles at KCTCS
- Talk with grocery store employees: seminar or corporate education of employees.

Ideas generated from 120 focus group participants

- 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.

Lack of appreciation is a stressor to farmers - they feel devalued in their research. Help farmers share story.”
– Focus group participant

[Sign up for Ag Literacy working group here](#)