



## CAMPBELL COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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### The Importance of Farmland Preservation: Research from Campbell County's Conservation District

- **In 1945, the Campbell County Conservation District (CCCD) was founded by a vote of the citizens. At that time, more than 80% of Campbell's acres were farmland across 1,292 farms. By 2022, only 40% of Campbell's land was farmland, down to 493 farms. Campbell County is not alone in the decline of farmland – In the last 20 years, Kentucky has lost 1.4 million acres of farmland and 17,000 farms. Kentucky farms are disappearing.**
- **Campbell County has experienced steady growth** in population, housing, and business activity over the past decade. However, this growth reduces agricultural land, transitioning toward urban and suburban land use patterns. **This shift has financial implications for the county's budget, underscoring the fiscal challenges of balancing residential development with budget sustainability, emphasizing the need to foster commercial growth for its higher revenue contributions, and to preserve agricultural land for its cost-effectiveness and role in supporting environmental and community sustainability**
- **Why farmland preservation is important:**
  - Enhance the support of Campbell County Agribusinesses by supporting local farmer markets and producers, and discovering what is locally grown in Campbell County.
  - Regenerative Farming involves stewardship and conservation of land using the best management practices for soil health, which improves topsoil regeneration, enhances biodiversity, improves water cycles, and enhances the health and vitality of farm soil.
  - Campbell County's responsibility is to ensure the community's access to local safe and ethical foods, resulting in productive farmland. But limited farming resources threaten the overall health of our communities.
  - Farm Preservation is a challenge due to the lack of succession plans or conservation easements on so few farms, and poses challenges for new and young farmers. Access to farmland transition resources, marketing resources, and information is essential to support these individuals and connect them with growth opportunities.
  - Economic viability of Campbell County Farms brings awareness of the components needed to stay in motion to sustain thriving agriculture communities and successful County growth.
- **The Cost of Community Services (COGS) study** examined the fiscal year 2023-24 revenue and expenditures in Campbell County, focusing on three categories of land use: residential, commercial/industrial, and farmland properties. The study evaluated the amount of money generated by each category and the corresponding public services costs (e.g., public safety, government administration, schools, courts, etc.).
  - According to the COGS study, for every \$1 of revenue generated from residential properties in Campbell County, \$1.20 was spent on providing services for those properties. For commercial/industrial land, .62 cents were spent for every \$1 received, and for farmland, 50 cents were spent for every \$1 received.
  - 74% of the revenue came from residential properties, 25% from commercial/industrial, and 1% from farmland. Out of total expenditures exceeding \$228 million, 85% was

- allocated for services related to residential land use, 15% for commercial/industrial uses, and less than 1% for farmland.
- Farmland, while small in size for revenue generation, is cost-effective while protecting the environment and advancing community sustainability.
- **CCCD conducted a survey in 2025 on Campbell County landowners' opinions.** Survey results from 97 landowners and future farmers showed that farmland is a priority for our citizens:
  - 60% prefer to keep their land for agricultural purposes even after they no longer own it.
  - 84% of landowners would be inclined to preserve their land if a tax benefit were available.
  - Residents believe rural Campbell County is significant and plays an integral role in the county's identity. The century-old history of agriculture needs to be protected, encouraging preservation of farmland.
  - Preserving the shrinking agricultural area is crucial for maintaining the county's cultural heritage. Preserving rural Campbell County is critical to safeguarding rural communities, protecting watersheds from residential development, minimizing construction and development, and maintaining air and noise quality.

Campbell County must recognize the cultural heritage, cost-effective nature, and positive environmental impact of farmland.

Rural Campbell County is vital for future generations to have access to sustainable communities, access to safe and healthy locally grown food, and to maintain a balanced ecosystem.

**Residential and commercial development must be balanced with preserving agricultural land for its cost-effectiveness and role in supporting environmental and community sustainability.** By prioritizing the preservation of rural lands and supporting local farms, we can work towards a more sustainable and resilient future.