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| County Emphasis |  |

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| [Concentration](https://extension.ca.uky.edu/2025-situation-statements)  *(select up to 4 from list below or the linked website)* | Small Farm Development |

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| [Situation](https://extension.ca.uky.edu/2025-situation-statements)  *(situation statements can be found at the linked website)* | Small farm development is a crucial aspect of the Kentucky agricultural sector, especially in the context of supporting rural economies and ensuring food security. The National  Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) defines a small farm as an operation with a gross cash farm income of $250,000 or less. These farms are typically family-owned and operated, and they represent more than 90 percent of farms in the U.S. These farms face challenges such as urbanization, an aging farmer population, farm consolidation, new and beginning farmers, and changing climate patterns.  Small farms play a vital role in the competitiveness and sustainability of rural and farm economies, protecting and enhancing natural resources and the environment, and maintaining rural populations. Urban small scale farm production is an emerging and fast grow segment of farm economies. The development and sustainability of small farms is important in providing a nursery for new enterprises and marketing systems, which is crucial for innovation and diversification in agriculture. Small farm development can be hindered by access to capital, markets, and technology. Additionally, owners of small farms may lack the knowledge or resources to implement sustainable practices that could improve their economic viability and environmental stewardship.  Kentucky Cooperative Extension will continue to aid small farm owners by providing educational opportunities and increasing awareness of resources offered through various programs and online platforms. This includes developing new and improved practices to reduce production costs, protect and improve soil and water resources, and offer options for specialty crop production. Extension personnel will also promote whole farm plans, estate planning, farm transitions, risk management, and market opportunities.  The development of small farms is imperative for the health of Kentucky’s agricultural sector, rural communities and emerge urban agriculture. |

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| County Situation |  |

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| Long-term  Outcomes | * Achieve a stable economic environment where small farms are consistently profitable and competitive within both local and broader markets. * Establish networks of urban farms that are integral to their local food systems, providing fresh produce and fostering urban-rural agricultural links. * Strive to have all participating small farms fully implement sustainable practices that protect and enhance natural resources. * Equip small farms to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of changing climate patterns, ensuring their sustainability and resilience. * Enhance the role of small farms in maintaining rural populations and contributing to cultural heritage, ensuring that these communities remain vibrant and connected. |

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| Medium-term  Outcomes | * Assist small farm owners in developing and implementing comprehensive whole farm plans that address financial, production, and environmental aspects. * Support the establishment of new farm enterprises that can offer innovative products and practices, enhancing the economic resilience of the small farm sector. * Provide robust support for estate planning and farm transitions to ensure the longevity of small farms across generations. * Develop and disseminate advanced risk management tools and insurance products tailored for the unique needs of small farms. * Increase the accessibility of modern agricultural technologies to small farms, coupled with training programs that enable owners to effectively use these technologies. |

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| Short-term  Outcomes | * Develop and launch targeted educational programs that focus on sustainable practices, risk management, and cost reduction specifically tailored for small farm owners. * Increase access to existing resources and tools including online platforms to increase awareness and usability for small farm owners. * Facilitate connections between small farm owners and local markets, including urban markets, to help diversify sales channels and improve income stability. * Implement trial programs for specialty crops that could be suitable for small farms, providing a new avenue for diversification and innovation in crop production. * Organize community events and workshops that foster networking among small farm owners and promote the sharing of best practices and innovations. |

Learning Opportunities

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| Audience | Specialty Crop Growers |
| Project or Activity | Programming for commercial or pre-commercial (training to be commercial growers) specialty crop production and management |
| Content or Curriculum | Publications, Fact Sheets, Workshops, Field Days, County Meetings, Regional Meetings, Field Visits, emails and phone calls |
| Inputs | Extension Specialists, Kentucky Horticulture Council, USDA funding, Dept of Labor funding, county agents, KDA, professional member organizations, governmental agencies (NRCS, FSA, etc.) |
| Date(s) |  |

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| Audience | Non-commercial urban and community gardeners |
| Project or Activity | Programming for specialty crop production and management that is non-commercial |
| Content or Curriculum | Publications, Fact Sheets, Workshops, Field Days, County Meetings, Regional Meetings, Field Visits, emails and phone calls |
| Inputs | Extension Specialists, Kentucky Horticulture Council, USDA funding, Dept of Labor funding, county agents, KDA, professional member organizations, community advocacy and faith-based groups, schools |
| Date(s) |  |

Evaluation

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| Outcome | Improved commercial production practices for specialty crops |
| Indicator | * Number of producers who reported increased yield. * Number of producers that reduced production inputs/costs. * Number of producers that improved quality, adoption of new technologies and better management practices (soil sampling, IPM, e.g.). * Number of producers that expanded or developed new markets. * Number of commercial growers who reported increased yield in specialty crops (fruit, vegetables, herbs, etc.). * Number of commercial specialty crop growers who reported reduced production inputs/costs. * Number of commercial growers who reported improved produce quality. * Number of commercial specialty crop growers who reported adoption of new technologies (acquisition of greenhouse, high tunnel, lighting, etc.) * Number of commercial specialty crop growers who reported improved management practices (soil sampling, foliar sampling, integrated pest management, cover cropping, etc.) * Number of commercial growers who reported that they expanded or developed new markets for specialty crops. * Number of new or beginning specialty crop growers. |
| Method | Grower survey, direct observation and feedback |
| Timeline | ongoing |

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| Outcome | Increased application of recommended horticultural practices for non-commercial production |
| Indicator | * Number of people that implemented environmental stewardship. * Number of people that reduced pesticide applications. * Number of people that adopted improved management practices (soil sampling, IPM, e.g.). * Number of community members utilizing the sites and/or amount of produce donated from sites. * Number of trained volunteers and/or number of self-reported volunteer hours at community sites. |
| Method | Interactions with clients, attendance at Extension educational events, direct observation and feedback |
| Timeline | ongoing |

Data Sources (select any/all that apply)

Extension Community Needs Assessment – Data Dashboard

Extension Community Needs Assessment – Respondent Comment Summaries

Kentucky by the Numbers – Secondary Data for the Community Needs Assessment

Kentucky by the Numbers Data Profiles

CEDIK County Data Profiles

**Concentrations (select up to 4 – copy and paste your selection in the concentration section above)**

Animal Production and Management

Plant Production and Management

Sustainability, Natural Resources and Wildlife Management, and Environment

Financial Security and Economic Well-Being

Food Safety, Quality, and Access

Connected & Resilient Communities

Building Leadership Capacity

Work and Life Skill Development

Health and Wellbeing

Family and Youth Development

Small Farm Development

Substance Use Prevention and Recovery

Mental Health and Well-Being