

**Ky Ag Council Strategic Planning Task Force
FFA / 4H Youth Focus Group Responses on Issues Facing Ky Agriculture
June 13, 2012**

What do you see as the greatest opportunities in Kentucky's agricultural sector or for Kentucky's rural communities?

Agritourism - enabling the general public to tour farms in order to become more aware of the industry

Youth organizations (FFA, 4-H)

The youth with an interest in ag

Farmer's markets

Kentucky Proud

Kentucky Proud - industry turning to individual small town producers

Suburban moms who care about the food they feed their families

The appeal of rural communities

Ability to make a difference in rural communities

Biofuels

There are lots of opportunities but they are not taken to full advantage (we need to spread the word so that more people know about programs and opportunities)

Many job opportunities

Ag grants

More communication about opportunities in agriculture

Not every person is able to know what is going on in FFA

Diversity of opportunities

The ag economy is getting better

KY is a big supplier of cattle for the nation and we should be able to tap into more opportunities from this

KY and US farmers are able to produce more with less resources every year

Because of agriculture there is less hunger and poverty

Learning to embrace diversity like wineries with the effect of the tobacco buy-out

The horse industry

What do you see as the greatest challenges in Kentucky's agricultural sector or for Kentucky's rural communities?

Population increases putting pressure on development of land

There are less and less resources from tearing down farms to build urban places

Scarcity of land because of population growth

Rural communities are becoming more urban. If you don't live on a farm, you are out of luck

Communities are changing too fast

Bad publicity (e.g., mad cow disease, pink slime, etc.) leading to bad reputations for farmers

People's resistance to GMOs

People are afraid to buy crops that have been genetically modified because they are not educated on it

Stereotypes about agriculture and farmers

Media is the devil it downgrades ag

Ignorance by people - a lack of ag literacy

People just don't know or recognize the importance of agriculture

Because people don't know about farming they won't fight to protect or preserve it

People's expectations of agriculture are a challenge

Need more advocacy for agriculture

Persuading the public to invest time learning about basic agricultural concepts (Where does your food come from?)

Agriculture is the best kept secret

People don't realize the importance and impact of KY agriculture on the state and local economies

KY farming is important in people making a living but do people know this?

Failure to be effective advocates for our purposes

The perception that there are no jobs for the future in agriculture

Lack of job opportunities to work on a farm because 90% are family owned

More and better educational opportunities in rural communities

Loss of ag teachers in public schools

Greater support for schools

More funding for county ag programs

Insufficient notification about grant opportunities

The diversity in agriculture

The ways in which region/location can influence ag opportunities

Overcoming regulations

Shortage of labor throughout the industry

The economy

Gas prices

Price of feed

Difficult to receive farm loans

Input costs

What would need to change for you to see a professional career in some aspect of agriculture for yourself?

More funding, more money in industry jobs

More funding

More jobs available for those interested in agriculture

Job security for farmers

Respect for farmers and recognition for how important agriculture is for our state

The general public needs to become more aware of the experience, knowledge and distinguished work ethic embodied by producers/farmers (thus becoming more appreciative of members within the ag industry)

Larger advertisement promoting ag literacy

Make it known that the farmer is still alive and well

Make me more proud to be part of ag

Be an advocate for ag yourself and try to tell everyone

Eliminate stereotypes of ag

FFA and 4-H more advertised and so that kids would see opportunities in ag for their future

More cooperation with local officials

What do you hope will be your role in Kentucky's agricultural sector in the future?

To be the next generation of great leaders in KY agriculture

Become ag teachers in order to spread agricultural knowledge and to increase the number of persons taking ag classes and in FFA

Ag ed

Vet

Large animal vets

Ag engineer

Livestock producer

Biofuel researchers

Seed/chemical representative

What do you believe that Kentucky's rural communities need to have or do to become places where young adults choose to live and work?

Show them that jobs in agriculture are critical to the success of our country

Help lower start-up costs for new farmers

Being able to have resources so that we can produce more

Preserving more land for next generation of farmers

Increased education opportunities

Education

Good schools

More opportunities for students to continue their studies with scholarships

More job security for farmers

More financial security

Increase better job opportunities in all areas of ag and rural communities

Increase the number of job opportunities for ag teachers

Provide information on what's new and new opportunities

Jobs

Continue to have that home town tight knit feeling

Community support for agriculture

Region-wide support for agriculture

Local communities are advocates for agriculture

Have promising efforts to educate children about ag