



ECONOMIC OUTLOOK: AGRICULTURE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kneehill County is a rural community that embraces its agricultural lifestyle and an economically diverse future. One of Council’s goals from the 2022 Kneehill County Strategic Plan is to build a robust and adaptable economy. This includes economic diversification, zoning, and support for agriculture.

Adapting Agriculture to meet future changes is one of the most urgent challenges of our time. If we can understand the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead and adapt to them, we can ensure our successful resilience and sustainability.

The purpose of these Economic Outlook series is to identify and discuss economic opportunities and challenges our region will face and to prepare for them with optimum effort.

The first of these series will focus on Agriculture. The industry is adapting and modernizing, with higher rates of technology adoption, renewable energy production, use of direct marketing solutions, and sustainable farming practices. As technologies and consumer consumption changes, its imperative that we help determine what we do, how we do it sustainably and why.



PROJECT PLAN

Economic Outlook Agriculture 2024 will be split into two phases and two working groups, focusing on the following topics:

Phase 1 - Fall 2024

- Environmental Factors
- Equipment (season based)
- Industry Regulations
- Succession Planning

Phase 2 - Spring 2025

- Livestock
- Equipment (season based)
- KC Exports & Main Buyers

A working group will be formed for each phase, with their mission to better understand issues the industry currently faces and to establish actions required to address all types of future economic opportunities and challenges. The working group will be engaged following the structure of International Association of Public Participation (IAP2).

Their objectives will be designed to consider new avenues of economic development to grow the industry and enhance the region. Working and consulting with business leaders during this process will be key in considering a long-term regional prosperity plan.

Industry Experts will be consulted with throughout the phased working groups, promoting conversation of the topics at hand and providing guidance on industry trends and stats.





WORKING GROUPS

Working Groups

- 2 members of council
- 3 or 4 members at large – Working group members must apply to be a part of the initiative. Interested members must apply and submit their interest of why they want to be involved and which areas of expertise they can bring to the table.

Phase 1 Working Group will meet after the start of seeding 2024 (May 2024) and then after on an as needed basis, wrapping up their gatherings after Harvest (October – November 2024).

Phase 2 Working Group will meet initially before the start of calving (November – December 2024) and then after on an as needed basis, wrapping up their gatherings end of summer (July – August 2025).

Working Group Objectives

1. Identify issues the agriculture industry and regions in Kneehill County faces.
2. Identify the circumstances that may affect these issues.
3. Identify the long-term corporate involvement of Kneehill County.
4. Identify industry expertise, techniques, and infrastructure that may prove for a valuable output for the region.

Questions for initial consideration

1. What will agriculture look like in 5 years? 10 years? 20 years?
2. What are the steps to be economically resilient?
3. What are the opportunities for being adaptable?
4. What are the challenges? (technological advancements, staff retention, market trends, industry regulations, weather)
5. What do we want our community to look like in the future?
6. Where should Kneehill County go?

Phase 1 Industry Reps: TBD

Phase 2 Industry Reps: TBD

END GOALS

Both Working Groups findings will be reported in written form to Council at the end of their phases. Their report will outline:

- The current state of Agriculture in Kneehill County
- Industry and trend findings
- Opportunities and investment strategies to enhance the industry and the local economy with the recommendations made
- Key focus areas recommended to grow the sector
- Identify ways Kneehill County can support the Ag Industry
- Summarization of the working groups thoughts

