



Kentucky Department of Agriculture 2026 Regular Session Legislative Priorities

1. Biennial Budget

- a. The Department submitted additional budget requests for three new budget priorities
 - i. Staff recruitment and retention funds
 - ii. Agricultural economic development investment
 - iii. Electric Vehicle staffing positions (new)
- b. The Department also encourages the legislature to consider requiring the Department of Employee Insurance within the Department of Insurance to offer CSA boxes as a state employee health plan benefit

2. Kentucky Department of Agriculture program tweaks

- a. Omnibus bill that will propose minor efficiency changes to programs within the Office of Consumer and Environmental Protection and other producer-friendly changes
 - i. Amusement Rides
 1. Clarifying that rides must be inspected once annually and that an inspection is valid for one year from date of inspection. This creates “inspection tags” and separates them from “permits.” The “inspection tags” will be valid for 1 year from issuance whereas permits are valid until December 31 each year.
 2. Limits the itinerary that must be provided 14 days in advance to only locations that are open to the general public
 - ii. Grain
 1. Clarifies that civil penalties and license suspension can occur via the KRS Ch. 13B process instead of requiring actions in circuit court to assess fines.
 - iii. Eggs
 1. Changing date of license renewal to shorten window between when assessment fees are due and when licenses are renewed, and we are exploring whether to waive assessment fees under a certain threshold.
 2. The change will also assign the responsibility to pay assessment fees to packers and wholesalers instead of letting the parties decide among themselves who pays the fees. This will also clarify that small producers who are exempt from licensing will not have to pay assessments.
 - iv. Milk hauling limits
 1. Includes a provision to increase hauling capacity to be co-extensive with federal law
- b. Repealing tobacco boards of trade and egg marketing board because neither meet anymore

3. Food is Medicine





- a. The KDA and KHA FIM approach integrates healthcare and agriculture to make Kentucky healthier by addressing poor diet, food insecurity, and agriculture production barriers as well as insurance provisions, basic nutrition needs and chronic disease management.
- b. Kentucky Hospitals, through the KHA and its members, are leading in FIM by creating and implementing programs into clinical settings and employee care. Nearly 50 hospitals have incorporated FIM initiatives into their facilities and care models. These initiatives include:
 - i. Chronic Disease Management
 - ii. Post-Patient Care
 - iii. Onsite Farmers' Markets and Voucher Programs
 - iv. Local Food Purchases
 - v. Community Outreach / Education
 - vi. Employee Wellness
- c. FIM policy needs moving forward:
 - i. A mandate to explore long-term solutions such as Medicaid waivers and reimbursements.
 - ii. Require Kentucky's MCOs to participate in FIM programs, primarily by including these requirements in their managed care contracts.
 - iii. Work with private insurers to incorporate FIM initiatives into offered health care benefits.
 - iv. Ensure medical appropriateness through clinical criteria and tracking on health care outcomes.
 - v. Use SNAP waivers to incentivize healthy food purchases.
 - vi. Align healthcare delivery with local food systems by leveraging existing infrastructure, and expanding access to nutrition, interventions, and education in clinical and community settings

4. School Nutrition

- a. Recommends policy changes that spur rural prosperity by adopting a Local First nutrition focus.
 - i. Encouraging or mandating local sourcing of produce and proteins by school nutrition authorities first before turning to other sources
 - ii. Including changes to noncompetitive negotiation for local public agencies as it relates to purchases of local food; to small purchasing and micropurchasing requirements for local public agencies
- b. Recommends collaborative engagement with the Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Finance and Administration Cabinet to 1) build out a forward contracting model for school nutrition purchases, and 2) include all federally required procurement clauses to state master agreements and group buying organization contracts

