

A photograph of a brick building with a white column and a flower box with red and yellow flowers.

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More Base Acres, More Protection

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The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), signed into law on July 4, 2025, makes a landmark change to federal farm programs. For the first time since the 2014 Farm Bill, farmers will have the opportunity to expand their base acres under the Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. Beginning with the 2026 crop year, USDA will allocate up to 30 million new base acres nationwide.

This change carries particular significance for Kentucky. Many farms across the state have consistently planted more acres in recent years than their existing base acreage reflects (Gardner, 2024). By tying new base allocations to more recent planting history, the law ensures that additional acres in Kentucky will now be eligible for ARC and PLC benefits, strengthening the state's farm safety net.

Preliminary projections suggest Kentucky could see substantial gains. Depending on USDA's final implementation rules, the state could add between 470,000 and 565,000 corn base acres, 570,000 to 677,000 soybean base acres, and 145,000 to 153,000 wheat base acres. Among these, soybeans are positioned to benefit the most, with Kentucky ranking among the top states nationally for new soybean base acreage (Wongpiyabovorn & Plastina, 2025).

Without a base acre adjustment, many of the proposed farm bill enhancements—including higher reference prices—would provide little or no added benefit in Kentucky (Gardner, Biram, and Loy, 2024). Counties with large planted acres but relatively low base acres would continue to miss out on payments, leaving much of the state's production unprotected. This problem has been especially acute where land has transitioned from pasture into cropland, leaving producers without base acres tied to their actual planting history. By aligning base acres with recent planting records,

the OBBBA ensures that Kentucky farmers—including those on newly converted cropland—can capture the full value of future farm bill improvements.

Updating base acres will be a one-time, voluntary process, and USDA’s Farm Service Agency is expected to publish the rules ahead of the 2026 crop year (Wongpiyabovorn & Plastina, 2025). The update will be based on the five-year average of planted, failed, and prevented acres from 2019 to 2023, along with adjustments for noncovered crops. Because enrollment will not happen automatically, producers will need to work with FSA to verify their records and document their acreage history. This makes the upcoming sign-up a unique opportunity to align base acres with recent planting patterns and strengthen farm program protection in Kentucky.

Figure 1: Additional Corn Base Acres in Kentucky ([Interactive Map Link](#))

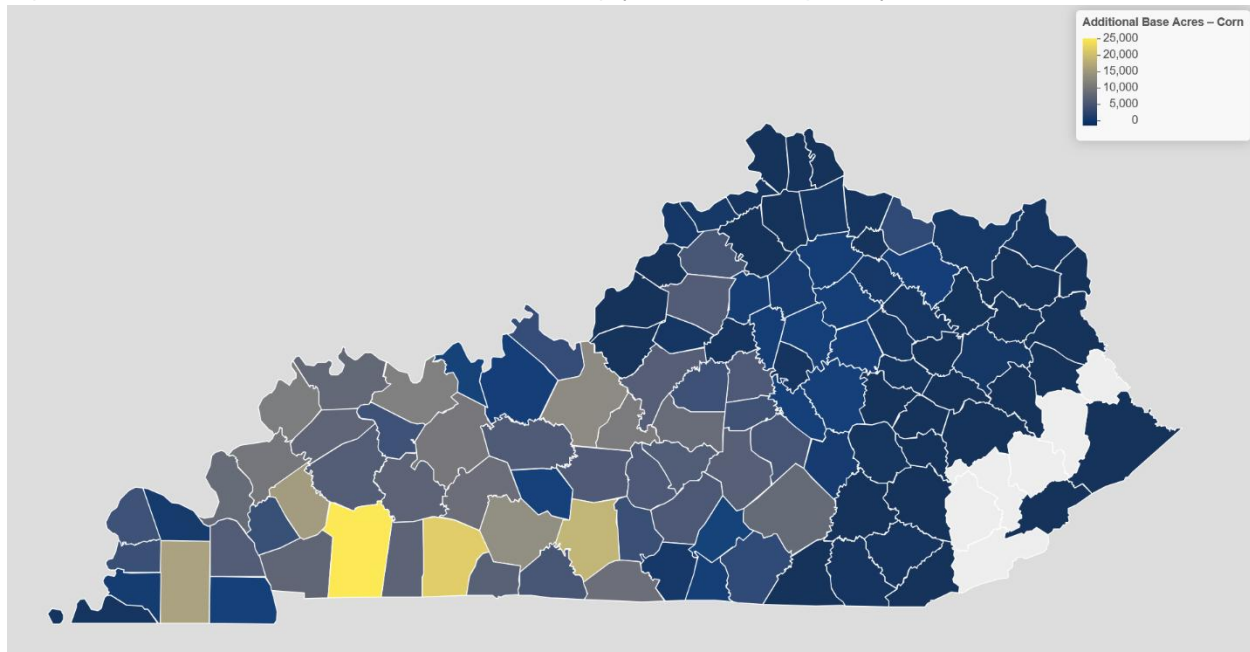


Figure 2: Additional Soybean Base Acres in Kentucky ([Interactive Map Link](#))

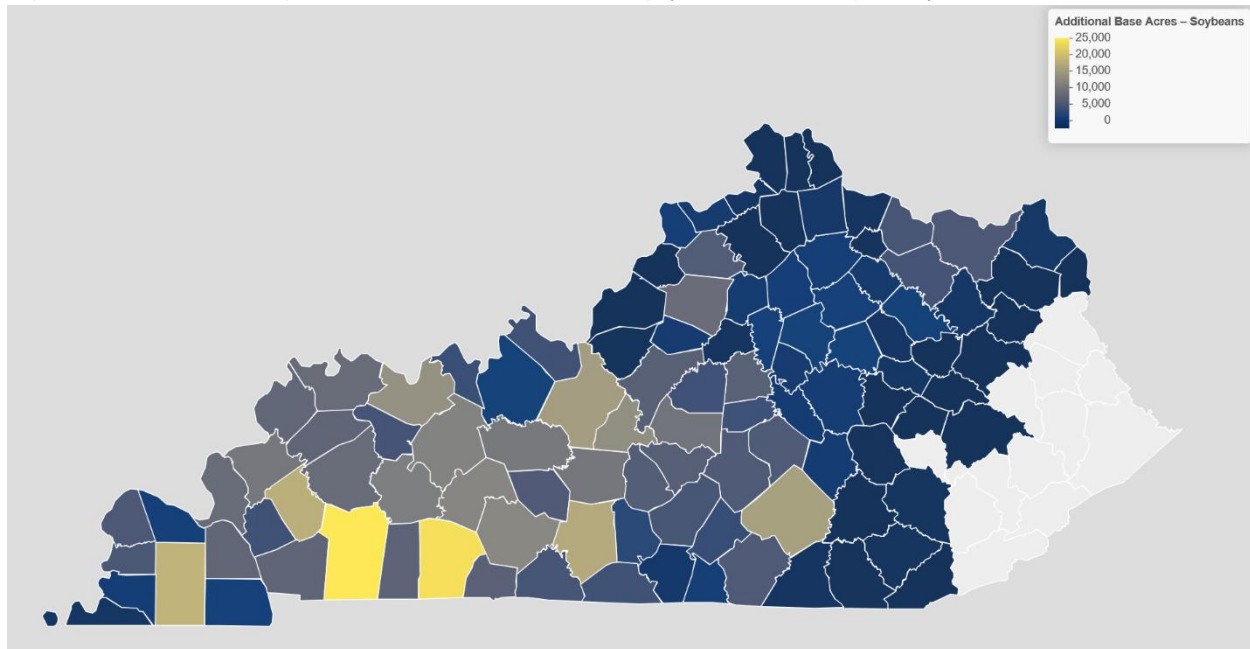


Figure 3: Additional Wheat Base Acres in Kentucky ([Interactive Map Link](#))

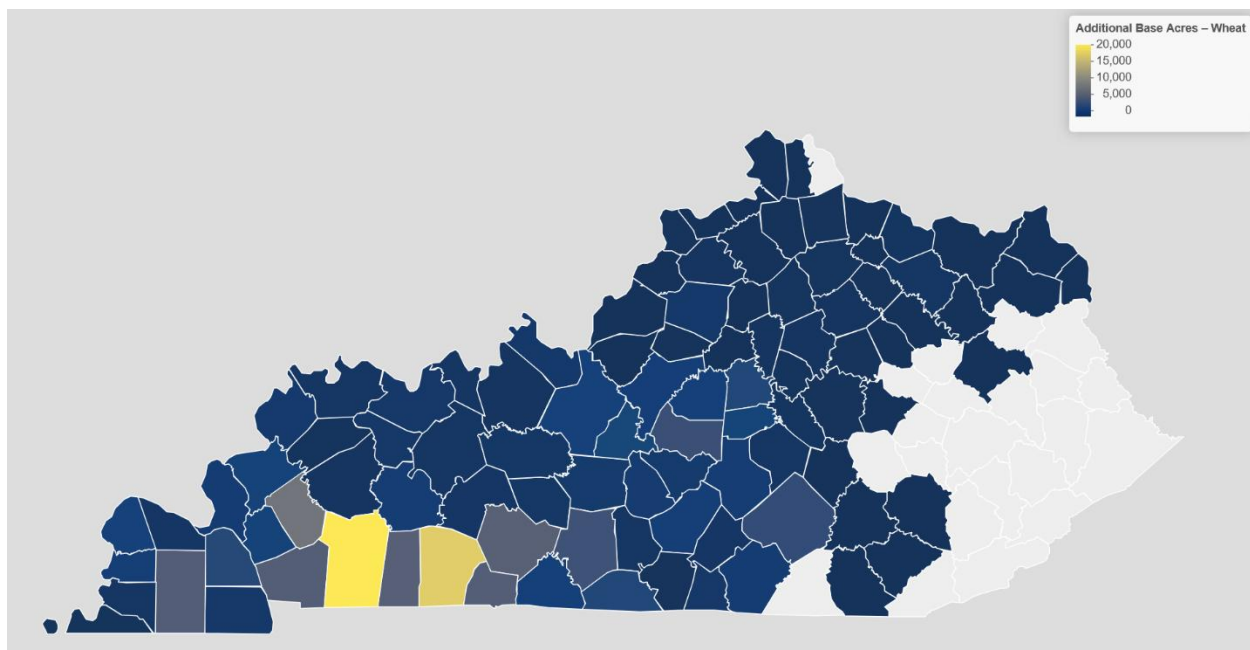


Table 1: Additional Base Acres by County (All Crops)

CORN, SOYBEANS, WHEAT; sorted by Total

Rank	County	FIPS	Corn	Soybeans	Wheat	Total
1	Christian	21047	26,298	27,156	21,562	75,016
2	Logan	21141	23,135	25,941	18,899	67,975
3	Caldwell	21033	16,531	19,768	8,587	44,886
4	Graves	21083	17,307	20,308	5,674	43,289
5	Barren	21009	20,006	19,016	4,069	43,091
6	Warren	21227	14,499	13,918	6,078	34,495
7	Hardin	21093	14,061	17,288	1,948	33,297
8	Pulaski	21199	9,023	17,686	3,467	30,175
9	Larue	21123	11,728	15,046	2,631	29,405
10	Daviess	21059	12,580	15,565	807	28,952
11	Crittenden	21055	10,870	11,532	2,373	24,775
12	Ohio	21183	11,027	13,244	408	24,679
13	Marion	21155	9,337	10,873	3,823	24,032
14	Butler	21031	9,733	13,621	609	23,964
15	Trigg	21221	8,381	8,532	5,776	22,689
16	Todd	21219	7,938	8,325	5,964	22,227
17	Union	21225	11,971	8,843	949	21,763
18	Muhlenberg	21177	7,890	12,421	1,340	21,651
19	Simpson	21213	7,375	7,874	5,725	20,974
20	Livingston	21139	9,051	9,570	1,259	19,880
21	Hart	21099	6,560	11,321	1,060	18,941
22	Henderson	21101	8,794	9,557	409	18,760
23	Grayson	21085	6,449	11,616	690	18,755
24	Marshall	21157	6,927	8,733	2,960	18,619

Rank	County	FIPS	Corn	Soybeans	Wheat	Total
25	Monroe	21171	9,681	5,303	2,812	17,796
26	Shelby	21211	6,912	9,767	832	17,511
27	Webster	21233	8,295	8,492	178	16,964
28	Hopkins	21107	7,041	9,582	323	16,946
29	Mercer	21167	6,299	7,820	2,816	16,936
30	Nelson	21179	7,070	7,709	1,708	16,487
31	Taylor	21217	6,804	7,442	976	15,221
32	Casey	21045	7,224	6,575	1,313	15,113
33	Green	21087	6,329	7,233	1,178	14,739
34	Adair	21001	6,216	6,090	1,460	13,766
35	Allen	21003	5,852	5,826	1,829	13,507
36	Ballard	21007	4,981	6,423	1,965	13,368
37	Henry	21103	5,786	6,990	235	13,011
38	Boyle	21021	5,172	5,093	2,511	12,776
39	Lincoln	21137	5,642	6,656	453	12,752
40	Carlisle	21039	4,655	6,284	1,472	12,412
41	Lyon	21143	4,614	5,351	2,243	12,208
42	Washington	21229	4,893	5,266	1,889	12,048
43	Wayne	21231	4,024	6,711	1,284	12,019
44	McLean	21149	5,000	5,785	797	11,582
45	Mason	21161	4,040	6,088	399	10,527
46	Meade	21163	4,253	5,326	882	10,461
47	Edmonson	21061	2,519	6,840	682	10,042
48	Metcalfe	21169	4,697	3,942	506	9,145
49	Fleming	21069	2,038	5,713	427	8,178
50	Hancock	21091	2,847	4,868	445	8,161
51	Russell	21207	2,675	4,622	621	7,919

Rank	County	FIPS	Corn	Soybeans	Wheat	Total
52	Lewis	21135	898	6,422	17	7,337
53	Calloway	21035	2,233	2,502	787	5,521
54	Fayette	21067	2,123	2,975	233	5,331
55	Breckinridge	21027	1,986	2,895	285	5,167
56	Clark	21049	1,980	2,871	59	4,910
57	Clinton	21053	1,909	1,983	794	4,686
58	Bourbon	21017	1,790	2,471	270	4,532
59	Woodford	21239	1,730	2,413	269	4,412
60	Garrard	21079	2,253	1,599	372	4,224
61	McCracken	21145	1,240	2,194	634	4,068
62	Madison	21151	2,262	1,682	75	4,020
63	Harrison	21097	1,765	1,872	192	3,829
64	Hickman	21105	1,504	1,759	465	3,728
65	Scott	21209	1,448	2,024	225	3,697
66	Bath	21011	642	2,698	38	3,378
67	Franklin	21073	1,623	1,568	16	3,208
68	Rockcastle	21203	1,432	1,603	8	3,044
69	Trimble	21223	869	1,870	89	2,828
70	Nicholas	21181	979	1,266	86	2,332
71	Carroll	21041	899	1,417	13	2,329
72	Cumberland	21057	979	1,111	99	2,189
73	Spencer	21215	568	1,486	97	2,151
74	Jessamine	21113	406	1,515	188	2,109
75	Pendleton	21191	501	958	71	1,531
76	Powell	21197	467	855	0	1,321
77	Montgomery	21173	541	742	11	1,293
78	Greenup	21089	340	916	3	1,258

Rank	County	FIPS	Corn	Soybeans	Wheat	Total
79	Fulton	21075	327	659	136	1,122
80	Gallatin	21077	306	755	39	1,100
81	Rowan	21205	166	820	20	1,007
82	Anderson	21005	416	424	15	855
83	Morgan	21175	808	22	6	836
84	Bracken	21023	362	365	17	744
85	Knox	21121	397	242	1	640
86	Whitley	21235	360	119	11	489
87	McCreary	21147	32	346	0	377
88	Jackson	21109	280	86	0	366
89	Clay	21051	9	251	7	267
90	Bullitt	21029	76	166	9	251
91	Robertson	21201	58	159	26	243
92	Kenton	21117	37	31	2	70
93	Estill	21065	19	48	3	70
94	Johnson	21115	44	0	0	44
95	Menifee	21165	10	10	0	20
96	Elliott	21063	0	0	0	1
97	Bell	21013	0	0	0	0
98	Boone	21015	0	0	0	0
99	Boyd	21019	0	0	0	0
100	Breathitt	21025	0	0	0	0
101	Campbell	21037	0	0	0	0
102	Carter	21043	0	0	0	0
103	Grant	21081	0	0	0	0
104	Jefferson	21111	0	0	0	0
105	Laurel	21125	0	0	0	0

Rank	County	FIPS	Corn	Soybeans	Wheat	Total
106	Lawrence	21127	0	0	0	0
107	Lee	21129	0	0	0	0
108	Letcher	21133	0	0	0	0
109	Magoffin	21153	0	0	0	0
110	Oldham	21185	0	0	0	0
111	Owen	21187	0	0	0	0
112	Owsley	21189	0	0	0	0
113	Pike	21195	0	0	0	0
114	Wolfe	21237	0	0	0	0

Citations:

Gardner, Grant; Biram, Hunter D.; Loy, Ryan. “Where Is the Base? Farm Bill Enhancements Could Be Negligible Without a Base Acre Update.” *Economic & Policy Update*, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Kentucky, October 31, 2024.

Wongpiyabovorn, O., & Plastina, A. (2025). *Additional Base Acres for ARC and PLC*. RaFF Policy Brief 2025-7(2), Rural & Farm Finance Policy Analysis Center, University of Missouri.

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