



Farms still making it in Boone

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Eve Vaske says she was born and raised on a farm so in Boone County that's been all of her life.

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Vaske, owner of Vaske Produce in Walton, said the farm has fresh eggs, produce, tobacco, cattle, hogs, hay, straw and firewood. The farm was purchased in 1972.

She said being in the farming business today in Boone County is "probably somewhat more challenging but it's still good."

Vaske was staffing a booth for her farm during a workshop Sept. 1 when the Boone County Farm Initiative released a report titled "Rural Treasure - The State of Boone County

Agriculture." The event was at the Boone County Public Library's Main Library in Burlington.

"It's kind of scary though if you're going down the highway and you're seeing a lot of these farms used up into a lot of homes and it's no longer farm land," she said.

Despite the county becoming more suburban, the report said 47 percent of the county's land is in farms. It said the county is home to a larger number of farms compared with Campbell and Kenton counties.

Among the report's other findings:

- * The number of principal operators who say farming is their primary occupation decreased to 276 in 2007 from 363 in 2002.
- * Farmland acreage decreased by 0.2 percent in 2007 compared to 2002
- * The number of farms fell by 8.2 percent from 2007 to 2002.

Mary Kathryn Dickerson, district coordinator for the Boone, Campbell and Kenton county conservation districts, said she was surprised that Boone County had more women agricultural farm operators (14 percent of all principal operators in the county) than in Campbell and Kenton counties.

She said the county is still a farming community "depending where you go and who you talk to."

"I think that the farming community has kind of been overshadowed by other things that are happening and going on in the county and other needs," she said.

Bob Maurer, president of the Boone County Farm Bureau and a Boone County Farm Initiative



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Cherokee Bronk, Josie Bronk and Eve Vaske attended the Boone County Farm Initiative's release of a study about agriculture in Boone County Sept. 1 at the Boone County Public Library's Main Library in Burlington. Vaske owns Vaske Produce in Walton.

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member, said he doesn't believe the county is a farming community. Maurer, who raises sheep and grows hay, said if he wants to sell sheep he has to either go to Lexington or Owenton. He said his farm is still profitable.

"But you could make more money easier doing something else," he said.

Dickerson said the farming community is important not just for the economic contribution but for the environmental benefits of the farm land.

"We just can't overlook it any more," she said.

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