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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State Preserves First Farm in Ashtabula County, Landowners Donate Development Rights

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (Feb. 22, 2008) – The Ohio Department of Agriculture recently accepted its first permanent agricultural easement donation in Ashtabula County from landowners Henry and Louise Del Mul. The farm, which totals more than 169 acres in Cherry Valley Township, will remain forever in agricultural use thanks to the easement donation.

“As a native of Ashtabula County, I fully appreciate the importance of agriculture to the local community,” said Ohio Agriculture Director Robert Boggs. “I commend Mr. and Mrs. Del Mul for this generous donation, as they are both assuring the future of a strong agricultural economy and heritage, and setting a clear and powerful example for other Ohioans.”

Currently, the Del Mul farm produces corn, wheat, and soybeans. The Ashtabula Soil and Water Conservation District has agreed to annually monitor the property to ensure the land continues to be used for agricultural purposes and to assure the terms of the agricultural easement are followed.

Under the department’s Ohio Agricultural Easement Donation Program, landowners can donate a permanent agricultural easement on their farm to the state. Agricultural easements are voluntary legal agreements restricting non-agricultural development on farmland, with the land itself remaining on the tax rolls and under private ownership and management. Landowners may undertake any agricultural activity permitted under Ohio law, and they can sell their farm or pass it along as a gift to others. However, the easement remains with the land, prohibiting any future non-farm development to ensure it remains in agricultural use.

Landowners can receive federal tax advantages from donating permanent agricultural easements to the department. Donated easements that meet Internal Revenue Code criteria are treated as charitable gifts, and interested landowners should seek professional advice from an accountant or attorney.

To date, Ohio landowners have donated agricultural easements on 35 farms totaling more than 4,300 acres statewide. For more information on the department’s Agricultural Easement Donation Program, call 614-728-6210 or visit www.ohioagriculture.gov/farmland.

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