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## **Ohio's First-Ever Food Policy Council Holds Initial Meeting**

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (March 31, 2008) – Ohio Agriculture Director Robert Boggs chaired the first Ohio Food Policy Council meeting today at the department's campus in Reynoldsburg. The council, which was created by Governor Strickland in August 2007, will study the state's agriculture industry and establish policies to strengthen and promote its growth.

“This council is the first step in ensuring the plentiful fruits of our agricultural industry are accessible and affordable for all Ohio families,” Boggs said. “We hope this council will boost the industry by increasing the amount of food grown, processed and consumed in Ohio. At the same time, we will work to create the network necessary to place these products on the dinner table of all Ohioans.”

The council will study the state's \$93 billion food and agriculture industry and will establish collaborative policies. Members will analyze food production, processing and consumption in Ohio to better link producers and consumers in local food systems. This network will help ensure citizens in need have greater access to fresh and nutritious food.

The council also will work to promote the growth of Ohio food products by assisting farmers and businesses in effectively marketing their products inside and out of the state. As part of these efforts, the council will address ways to protect Ohio's valuable farmland and water resources.

Joining Director Boggs on the council is:

- Jim Chakeres, Ohio Poultry Association
- John Coker, AVI Food Service
- Ronald Copeland, Ohio Kaiser Permanente Medical Group
- Jack Fisher, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
- Carol Goland, Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association
- Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, Ohio Association of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Harvest Foodbanks
- Casey Hoy, Ohio State University's Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center
- Randy Hunt, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development
- Tom Jackson, Ohio Grocers Association
- Bret Layman, Layman Dairy
- Amalie Lipstreu, The Farmland Center
- Joe Logan, Ohio Farmers Union
- Richard Mason, Ohio Restaurant Association
- Ellen Mee, Ohio Environmental Council
- Hugo Melgar-Quinonez, Ohio State University Department of Human Nutrition
- Christine Pratt, Catholic Charities Rural Life Office
- Tom Price, Price-Barnes Organic
- Howard Sacks, Rural Life Center at Kenyon College
- Leslie Schaller, AceNet
- Dave Wible, The North Market
- Brian Williams, American Farmland Trust

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