



Governor Ted Strickland
Lieutenant Governor Lee Fisher
Director Robert J. Boggs

Communications Office
8995 East Main Street • Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068
Phone: 614-752-9817 • Fax 614-466-7754
ODA home page: www.ohioagriculture.gov • e-mail: agri@agri.ohio.gov

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Governor Strickland Unveils New Ohio Proud Logo and Web Site *Finding Ohio-Grown Food Products Now Easier than Ever*

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (April 2, 2008) – Governor Ted Strickland, along with Ohio Department of Agriculture Director Robert Boggs, today revealed an easier way for consumers to find Ohio-made and grown agricultural products during the state’s new Ohio Proud logo and Web site unveiling at the Statehouse.

“Ohio is a diverse supplier of more than 200 agricultural crops and is a producer of many more specialty food products, giving our state the potential to provide fresh, locally-produced food,” said Strickland. “The improved Ohio Proud program falls right in line with our goal to provide safe, local foods to consumers, and to create new opportunities for local growers, producers, and processors.”

The re-launch of the program, which was originally created in 1993, came after research conducted by The Ohio State University revealed the importance of the program to consumers, and that the original marketing program was not on target with changing consumer trends. Of those polled, 90 percent said they were willing to spend up to \$0.50 more for an Ohio product over a national brand, and 98 percent of those surveyed said they would rather purchase Ohio products over another brand. The study also revealed that people want fresh, healthier products and to know that their purchases help provide jobs and support Ohio’s farmers and agribusinesses. However, results also showed that consumers did not relate the former Ohio Proud logo to agriculture and fresh, locally-grown products.

“The state’s Ohio Proud program has been a great tool to educate consumers about the importance of buying local,” said Boggs. “After much research, planning and collaboration, the new program has been restructured and improved to fit current times and trends.”

The new Ohio Proud program features:

- A new logo design and tagline “Made in Ohio, Grown in Ohio” to better connect the program back to Ohio agriculture.
- A new, interactive Web site to make it easier for partners to join the program and to create a better way for consumers to find Ohio products (www.ohioproud.org).
- A reduced fee structure to make it more accessible to smaller businesses, especially farm markets and farmers’ markets.
- An overall more inclusive program through expanding membership to retailers, wholesalers, and associations.

When consumers buy Ohio food and agricultural products they are supporting the state’s farmers and food processors. Food and agriculture is the state’s top industry, contributing more than \$93 billion to the state’s economy and employing one in seven Ohioans.

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Media Contact: Cindy Brown, ODA Communications, 614-752-4505

Note to Editor: A high-resolution photo is available at www.ohioagriculture.gov/MediaPhotos.