



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

Office of Communication
8995 East Main Street, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068
Phone: 614-752-9817 • Fax: 614-466-7754
www.ohioagriculture.gov • communications@agri.ohio.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ohio Proud Signs 300th Partner

Reynoldsburg, Ohio (Oct. 6, 2008) – The Ohio Department of Agriculture’s (ODA) Ohio Proud program recently approved its 300th partner, making Ohio-made and grown products easier to identify in participating establishments across the state. The program, originally created in 1993, has nearly doubled its number of partners since February 2007.

Ohio Proud is the department’s signature marketing program that promotes food and agricultural products made in Ohio or grown in Ohio. It provides consumers a quick, reliable way to identify more than 1,500 local food products located at wineries and farm market stands, store shelves, and pick-your-own fields. Products range from fresh meats, fruits and vegetables, to dairy products, wine and snack food.

“In a time when food safety is at the forefront of consumers’ minds, the Ohio Proud program allows Ohioans to easily locate locally-produced, wholesome products,” said ODA Director Robert Boggs. “We are happy that the program has grown to more than 300 partners that employ more than 50,000 Ohioans across 75 counties.”

The program was relaunched in 2008 to meet changing consumer trends after research conducted by The Ohio State University revealed the importance of local food to consumers. Of participants polled, 90 percent said they were willing to spend up to 50 cents more for an Ohio product than a national brand, and 98 percent of those surveyed said they would rather purchase Ohio products than 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.

Ohio Proud partners have the chance to participate in domestic marketing opportunities such as in-store and restaurant promotions as well as product demonstrations. Additionally, all partners are listed in the Online Ohio Proud Directory, a guide to help consumers purchase Ohio products. Partners may also take advantage of the Ohio Proud network by participating in seminars and workshops that educate about sales, marketing and strategic planning for agribusinesses. Communication with fellow partners is also encouraged, to share successful ideas and develop business relationships.

For more information about the Ohio Proud program, visit www.ohioproud.org, or call the Ohio Proud office at 614-466-8798.

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Media Contact: Kaleigh Frazier, Public Information Officer, 614-728-6211

