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## **Local Farms Receive Clean Ohio Funds to Preserve Farmland**

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (Dec. 19, 2008) – Two farms in the Dayton area were awarded permanent agricultural easements from the Clean Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (AEPP), administered by the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Clark County landowner William Runyan received an agricultural easement on his 52.43 acre farm in Pleasant Township. Greene County brothers Michael and Richard Hartman of Sunny Lane Farms also received an easement on their 270.63 acre farm in Ross Township. They are two of 20 farms chosen to be preserved in the sixth round of Clean Ohio funding. More than 230 applications were received by the department.

“Since the Clean Ohio Fund’s inception, the department has received overwhelming response from farmers vying for extremely limited preservation funds,” said Ohio Department of Agriculture Director Robert Boggs. “Through careful planning, we will work with our preservation partners to spread those funds across Ohio, preserve precious farmland, and continue Ohio’s strong agricultural base.”

Runyan’s farm marks the 16th farm permanently protected by the department in Clark County. Tecumseh Land Trust will monitor the property on an annual basis. The farm uses tilling, installs grass waterways and develops springs for watering.

Sunny Lane Farms is the seventh preserved farm in Greene County, and it also will be monitored by Tecumseh Land Trust. The brothers are second-generation owners who are involved with organizations and boards focused on community values of education, agriculture, and land use.

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 make certain that it remains used for agricultural purposes.

Under the Clean Ohio AEPP, landowners apply to permanently preserve farmland to the state, and they are required to donate a minimum of 25 percent value of the program’s points-based appraisal value.

The Clean Ohio Fund has preserved agricultural easements on 102 farms totaling more than 21,800 acres statewide. For more information on the department’s Clean Ohio AEPP, call 614-728-6210 or visit <http://clean.ohio.gov>.

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