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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Ohio Agriculture Director Extends Emergency Order Restricting Movement of Disease-Susceptible Fish**

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (May 7, 2009) – Ohio Agriculture Director Robert Boggs this week issued an extension on the existing emergency proclamation that prohibits the intrastate transportation, sale or distribution of 28 fish species susceptible to Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) out of the affected region in northern Ohio. The proclamation, originally issued in May, 2008, has been revised to specifically include the ban of interstate distribution of bait fish, living or dead, along with living fish and eggs.

“Aquaculture in Ohio is a growing segment of the state’s agriculture industry, bringing in \$3.1 million in sales,” Boggs said. “The Ohio Department of Agriculture is responsible for protecting all animals, including fish, from devastating diseases such as VHS.”

VHS is a fish disease, which must be reported to the department under state law. VHS was introduced into the wild fish population by an invasive species. It is not harmful to humans or other animals.

Testing to date performed by the department’s Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory has revealed that VHS is not present inland in Ohio. The department will continue to test and monitor for the disease.

Ohio’s ban prohibits intrastate distribution of VHS-susceptible fish or egg or bait fish (either living or dead) out of the area in Ohio north of U.S. Highway 6 from the Indiana border to the intersection of U.S. Highway 6 and Interstate 90 near Fremont, continuing on I-90 to the Pennsylvania border. This also includes the Sandusky River south of U.S. Highway 6 to the Ballville Dam.

VHS-susceptible fish include: Black crappie, bluegill, bluntnose minnow, brown bullhead, brown trout, burbot, channel catfish, Chinook salmon, emerald shiner, freshwater drum, gizzard shad, lake whitefish, largemouth bass, muskellunge, shorthead redhorse, northern pike, pumpkinseed, rainbow trout, rock bass, round goby, silver redhorse, smallmouth bass, spottail shiner, trout-perch, walleye, white bass, white perch, and yellow perch.

The prohibition is in effect in Ohio until the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s division of Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service releases its embargo and prohibition of the movement of live VHS susceptible fish. The prohibition does not apply to live fish or eggs removed directly from production facilities that have tested negative for VHS. It also excludes live fish or eggs that are being transported for use by research scientists in closed research facilities with diagnostic laboratories.

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