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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**More than 200 Apply for Farmland Preservation Funds**  
*Ohio Department of Agriculture Begins Application Review Process*

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (May 27, 2009) – Ohio farm families and local communities recently submitted applications asking the Ohio Department of Agriculture to purchase an easement on their farmland, which would guarantee their land will forever be preserved for agricultural use. The department received 205 applications from 40 counties, up from 30 counties in 2008, for the eighth round of funding under the Clean Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program.

“Farmland preservation efforts ensure that agriculture remains a viable industry in our state,” said Ohio Agriculture Director Robert Boggs. “Farmland is the foundation of Ohio’s \$98 billion food and agriculture industry, and Clean Ohio funds allow us to be proactive in protecting Ohio’s agricultural future.”

An agricultural easement is a voluntary and legally-binding restriction placed on a farm. The easement limits the use of the land to predominantly agricultural activity. The land remains under private ownership and management and stays on the tax rolls under Current Agricultural Use Valuation (CAUV). The farmland can be sold or passed along as a gift to others at any time, but the restriction prohibiting non-agricultural development stays with the land.

The department received applications from families requesting more than 32,000 acres be preserved in the following 40 Ohio counties: Ashland (30), Ashtabula (2), Auglaize (1), Butler (9), Champaign (9), Clark (8), Clinton (2), Defiance (2), Delaware (1), Fairfield (25), Fulton (12), Gallia (2), Geauga (1), Greene (5), Henry (2), Highland (1), Holmes (1), Huron (1), Knox (11), Lake (1), Licking (5), Logan (7), Lucas (1), Madison (5), Marion (5), Miami (3), Montgomery (2), Morrow (1), Perry (1), Pickaway (1), Portage (5), Preble (15), Sandusky (4), Seneca (10), Trumbull (1), Tuscarawas (1), Union (2), Warren (2), Wayne (4), and Wood (4).

The applications are currently undergoing the first of a two-step scoring process. The first step uses a formula that takes into account various measurable characteristics of the land. The second step includes a review by the Ohio Agriculture Director’s 13-member Farmland Preservation Advisory Board. The advisory board evaluates a set of questions designed to provide further insight into the farm and local farmland protection efforts. Scores from both rounds are combined, and the advisory board presents its recommendations to Director Boggs. Recipients are expected to be announced in mid-July, with \$6.25 million in Clean Ohio funds to be distributed.

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Since the program's inception in 2002, the department's farmland preservation office has received more than 2,000 applications. Due to limited funding, the department has been able to preserve only 135 of those farms, totaling 26,813.88 acres in 29 counties. In November 2008, voters overwhelmingly approved a \$400-million bond renewal for the Clean Ohio Fund. The Clean Ohio Fund not only helps preserve farmland, but also preserves greenspace, develops recreational trails, and cleans up brownfield sites.

For more information on Clean Ohio or the Agricultural Easement Purchase Program, visit the department's Web site at [www.agri.ohio.gov](http://www.agri.ohio.gov) or contact the Office of Farmland Preservation at 614-728-6210.

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