



Governor Ted Strickland
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Ohio Grape Producers Can Now Apply for their Share of Funding Through
Vineyard Expansion Assistance Program**

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (Jan. 8, 2010) – Ohio Agriculture Director Robert Boggs today encouraged Ohio’s wine grape growers to apply to receive Vineyard Expansion Assistance Program funds, made available by monies secured by the Ohio Grape Industries Committee through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

“Ohio’s grape and wine industry is growing every day,” said Boggs. “Our wineries produced more than one million gallons of wine in the past year, and this program presents a new opportunity for growers who plan on making a long-term commitment to wine grape production in the state.”

The pilot program offers reimbursement to encourage growers to establish new wine grape vineyards or expand existing vineyards in Ohio. Growers may apply for up to \$3,000 per acre for a maximum of three acres.

Applicants must meet the following guidelines to be eligible for reimbursement:

- Vineyards must be located in Ohio.
- Applicant must provide a written plan outlining short and long-term goals as well as a clear route for the grapes to be put into the production chain.
- The vineyard site must be in a location that is conducive to growing wine grapes, and the site must be evaluated by OSU viticulture staff in conjunction with the grower.
- Applicants are encouraged to use the recommended list of winegrape varieties and consult with OSU viticulture staff.
- At least one acre of vines must be planted to be eligible for reimbursement.
- The grower must agree to vineyard assessment by an OSU viticulture staff member during the growing season. Reimbursement may be requested at this point.
- Applications must be complete and postmarked by Jan. 15, 2010.

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The Vineyard Expansion Assistance Program will allow for a more stable source of high-quality, high-value wine grapes for Ohio's wineries. It will also enable more Ohio wines to qualify for the Ohio Quality Wine program, which identifies the best wines in Ohio made using 90 percent or more Ohio-grown grapes.

The Ohio Grape Industries Committee, created in 1982 and operated in-part through the Ohio Department of Agriculture, provides marketing and research opportunities to Ohio's wineries and vineyards. The committee helps increase consumer awareness of Ohio's modern, high-quality wine industry.

For a complete list of eligibility guidelines or for an application, visit www.tasteohiowines.com or contact the Ohio Grape Industries Committee at 614-728-6438 or ceckstein@agri.ohio.gov.

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