Ohio | Department of Agriculture

NEWS RELEASE

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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 28, 2010) – 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 203 applications from 37 counties for the ninth round of funding under the Clean Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program.

"Since the program's inception, the department's Office of Farmland Preservation has preserved more than 33,000 acres of farmland across Ohio though the Agricultural Easement Purchase Program," said Ohio Agriculture Director Robert Boggs. "These efforts are instrumental in preserving the future of the state's $98 billion food and agriculture industry."

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 29,000 acres be preserved in the following 37 Ohio counties: Ashland (17), Ashtabula (2), Auglaize (1), Brown (3), Butler (1), Champaign (8), Clark (10), Coshocton (1), Delaware (4), Fairfield (29), Fulton (10), Gallia (3), Geauga (1), Greene (5), Henry (1), Huron (1), Knox (9), Licking (7), Logan (14), Lucas (1), Madison (7), Marion (5), Miami (9), Montgomery (9), Morrow (3), Perry (4), Portage (3), Preble (11), Sandusky (1), Seneca (11), Trumbull (3), Tuscarawas (2), Union (1), Vinton (1), Warren (2), Wayne (2), and Wood (1).

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.

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Since the program's inception in 2002, the department's farmland preservation office has received more than 2,400 applications. Due to limited funding, the department has been able to preserve only 172 of those farms, totaling 33,460.37 acres in 33 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 the Clean Ohio Fund or the Agricultural Easement Purchase Program, visit www.agri.ohio.gov.

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