



Governor Ted Strickland
Lieutenant Governor Lee Fisher
Director Robert J. Boggs

Office of Communication
8995 East Main Street, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068
Phone: 614-752-9817 • Fax: 614-466-7754
www.agri.ohio.gov • communications@agri.ohio.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Ohio Departments of Agriculture, Education and Ohio First Lady Celebrate
Ohio Farm to School Initiative**

River View High School Pilots Initiative

WARSAW, Ohio (Oct. 12, 2010) – Ohio Agriculture Director Robert Boggs, First Lady Frances Strickland and Brigitte Hires with the Ohio Department of Education today gathered with River View School District administrators and Ohio food policy advocates at River View High School in Warsaw, Ohio to celebrate the Ohio Farm to School Initiative and highlight the program's recent developments.

The Ohio Department of Agriculture's Farm to School Initiative, facilitated through Gov. Ted Strickland's Ohio Food Policy Advisory Council, works to connect schools with local farms to provide healthy and nutritious meals to school children using Ohio-grown foods. The initiative combines collaborative efforts between the Ohio Departments of Agriculture and Education, and is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture through a Specialty Crop Block Grant.

"The Ohio Farm to School Initiative is a comprehensive effort to increase access to healthy food options for Ohio's students and create new markets and opportunities for Ohio's farmers," said Boggs. "Ohioans spend about \$43 billion every year on food, but only 3 percent of that spending goes to products from Ohio farms. If Ohio schools purchased just 25 percent of their fruits and vegetables from local farmers for school lunches it would contribute more than \$13 million to our local economy."

Boggs announced the expansion of the Farm to School Initiative program with an additional \$10,000 in grant funding for schools interested in developing a farm to school curriculum. In addition, an Ohio Student Farm to School Advisory Council will be created with high school students representing a variety of backgrounds to provide input and guidance to help advance the Ohio Farm to School Initiative. Boggs also announced an Ohio Farm to School healthy student recipe and cooking contest sponsored by the department's Ohio Proud marketing program and the Ohio Department of Education. Selected winners will have their recipes published in the Ohio Proud Heartland Cuisine cookbook and will be invited to demonstrate their recipes in the Ohio Proud kitchen at the 2011 Ohio State Fair where they will compete against other school districts for prizes totaling \$2,500.

River View Local School District is one of five pilot school districts in Ohio selected to be a part of the Farm to School Initiative program. For more information about the Ohio Farm to School Initiative, visit www.agri.ohio.gov/farmtoschool/.

-30-

Media Contact: Kaleigh Frazier, Public Information Officer, 614-728-6211

