



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

**Agriculture Department to Hold Agricultural Easement Purchase Program
Information Sessions**

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (Oct. 25, 2010) – Farmland owners have the opportunity to learn how to apply for Clean Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program funds during upcoming information sessions offered by the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

Agricultural easements are voluntary legal agreements restricting non-agricultural development on farmland, with the land itself remaining on the tax rolls and under private ownership and management. Landowners may undertake any agricultural activity permitted under Ohio law, and they can sell their farm or pass it along as a gift to others. However, the easement remains with the land, prohibiting any future non-agricultural development to make certain that it remains used for agricultural purposes.

Meetings will feature a presentation by the department's farmland preservation staff as well as testimony from landowners who have participated in the program. Meeting attendees will also have the opportunity to discuss the program with Ohio Department of Agriculture staff.

Local partners will also be present at each meeting to provide information and direction to landowners. It is important for attendees to connect with these partners who submit applications to the department on behalf of farmland owners.

Information sessions are scheduled for the following dates:

Northeast

Nov. 8, 6 – 8 p.m.
Trumbull County Soil & Water Conservation District
520 W. Main St.
Cortland, Ohio
Local partners: Western Reserve Land Conservancy

Northwest

Nov. 29, 6 – 8 p.m.
WW Knight Nature Preserve, Great Room
29530 White Road
Perrysburg, Ohio
Local partners: Black Swamp Conservancy

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Southeast

Dec. 7, 6 – 8 p.m. (refreshments at 5:30 p.m.)
Kenyon College Athletic Center Theater, Second Floor
221 Duff St.
Gambier, Ohio

Local partners: Philander Chase Corporation and Owl Creek Conservancy
RSVP to Dorothy Michalski at michalskid@kenyon.edu or 740-427-5154

Southwest

Dec. 7, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Warren County Administration Building
406 Justice Drive
Lebanon, Ohio
Local partners: Three Valley Conservation Trust

The next application round for the department's Agricultural Easement Purchase Program is tentatively scheduled to open on Jan. 5, 2011. For more information about the program and the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Office of Farmland Preservation, visit www.agri.ohio.gov.

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

