



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



## NEWS RELEASE



CITY OF CLEVELAND  
Mayor Frank G. Jackson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **USDA, Ohio Department of Agriculture, City of Cleveland, OSU Extension Partner on Urban Agriculture Incubator Pilot Project**

*Project Embodies Gov. Ted Strickland's Ohio Neighborhood Harvest Initiative*

CLEVELAND (Oct. 27, 2010) – Deputy Secretary for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Kathleen Merrigan today joined Ohio Agriculture Director Robert J. Boggs, Tracy A. Nichols, Department of Economic Development director for the city of Cleveland and Dr. Jack Kerrigan, OSU Extension regional director, to announce the Cleveland Urban Agriculture Incubator Pilot Project, which will pool resources from the public partners to fund site preparation and improvements to transform city-owned, vacant land into an urban agriculture business incubator. The event took place at a project site near the park on the corner of Gill Ave. and East 83rd Street.

This \$1.6 million economic development project exemplifies Gov. Ted Strickland's Ohio Neighborhood Harvest Initiative, which was created to improve access to Ohio-grown products, ensure that people in every neighborhood have access to affordable, healthy food and help boost our rural and urban economies.

“The Cleveland Urban Agriculture Incubator Pilot Project embodies Governor Strickland's initiative to bridge food gaps that exist in Ohio's urban areas,” said Boggs. “Today we stand in a vacant lot, but one year from now, we will stand in a garden that will provide fresh, nutritious foods to Cleveland's neighborhoods. This project will not only provide healthy food but will also create jobs and put money back into the local economy.”

The Cleveland Urban Agriculture Incubator Pilot Project, which will be built on six acres of City Land Bank property, aims to create entrepreneurial opportunities for Cleveland residents by transforming vacant lots into productive landscapes that encourage community stewardship. One-half acre will be used by Ohio State University Extension as a demonstration area for educational purposes. The remaining areas will be leased in quarter-acre parcels to each of the 20 farmers enrolled in the incubator project. Representatives from the Burten, Bell, Carr Development, Inc. will reach out to area residents to recruit project participants.

“This project is another example of Cleveland leading in local food production. We are creating the policies, opportunities and programs to support the expansion of our local food industry, and the generous support from our partners will get Cleveland one step closer to a sustainable economy by the year 2019,” said Mayor Frank G. Jackson.

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The Cleveland Urban Agriculture Incubator Pilot Project is cooperatively funded in part by the Ohio Department of Agriculture, which will grant \$100,000; the city of Cleveland, which will grant \$100,000 and will donate land; and the Ohio State University Extension, which will fund \$740,000 through grant money received from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. The Cleveland project is the first urban project in the nation to receive such funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The four-phase pilot project will be in full operation by April 2011.

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