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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**OHIO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE DIRECTOR HONORS TOP OHIO WINES**

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (June 15, 2011) – Ohio Agriculture Director James Zehringer honored four Ohio Quality Wines as Director’s Choice recipients at an event held at the Statehouse for retailers, distributors, restaurateurs and winery owners.

More than 25 wines were evaluated by a panel of judges, on behalf of Director Zehringer, for the highly coveted award. The 2011 award recipients are:

- **White Wine (tie):** 2010 Signature Series Golden Bunches Dry Riesling  
Ferrante Winery of Geneva, Ohio  
Reflections of Lake Erie  
Old Firehouse Winery of Geneva, Ohio
- **Red Wine:** 2010 Cabernet Franc  
Valley Vineyards of Morrow, Ohio
- **Specialty Wine:** Sweet Genevieve Ice Wine  
Laurello Vineyards of Geneva, Ohio

All of the Director’s Choice award recipients have already received the Ohio Quality Wine award designation. It was created in 2007 by the Ohio Grape Industries Committee and is assigned to wines made from at least 90 percent Ohio-grown grapes. These wines must also achieve at least 15 of 20 points on a sensory evaluation and pass a chemical analysis before receiving the quality seal. European vinifera and French American hybrid grapes may be used to make all wine styles, and Labrusca (native grapes) may be used to make fortified wines.

By focusing on wines made from Ohio grapes, the Ohio Quality Wine program will spur the expansion and renovation of Ohio’s vineyards to meet the needs of Ohio winemakers. The program provides four judgments per year to include all possible wine releases. Chemical analysis also sets this quality program apart from others by identifying flaws that can be missed when only sensory testing is used.

The Ohio Grape Industries Committee is housed at the Ohio Department of Agriculture and provides wineries a means to market their top-quality wines against well-known California and European wines. To learn more about the program or for a complete list of Ohio Quality Wines, visit [www.tasteohiowines.com](http://www.tasteohiowines.com).

Ohio’s grape and wine production is an integral component of Ohio’s agriculture industry. It contributes nearly a half billion dollars to Ohio’s economy and accounts for more than 4,100 full-time jobs.

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