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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ohio Department of Agriculture Launches Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program

Local Sponsor Application Period Now Open

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (Jan. 31, 2013) – The Ohio Department of Agriculture’s Office of Farmland Preservation will accept applications from local sponsors for the Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program February 1 through March 15. From selected applicants, the department will certify land trusts, local governments and soil and water conservation districts to partner with the department to manage a local program to preserve farmland. This will provide local communities with more input regarding farmland preservation in their area by allowing them to manage landowner application grant processes.

The application is available at www.agri.ohio.gov/divs/FarmLand/FarmLand.aspx. Organizations will be selected based on their experience in managing easement programs and local support for food and agriculture, Ohio’s top industry.

Once local sponsors have been certified, landowners interested in preserving their farmland in perpetuity may apply directly to certified organizations which have been granted funding from the state. Landowner applications will be accepted beginning in late April or early May, with \$2.7 million available this year to fund agricultural easement purchases.

Funding for the program is derived from the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund, approved by voters in 2008, and used to purchase agricultural easements from willing sellers through a competitive process. Historically, 2,399 applications have been received covering 370,000 acres with 13 percent of the applications receiving funding with the \$43.7 million available to date.

For more information on the new, local program contact the state Office of Farmland Preservation at 614-728-6210.

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