

- Farm and County's agricultural productivity.
- Higher local match.

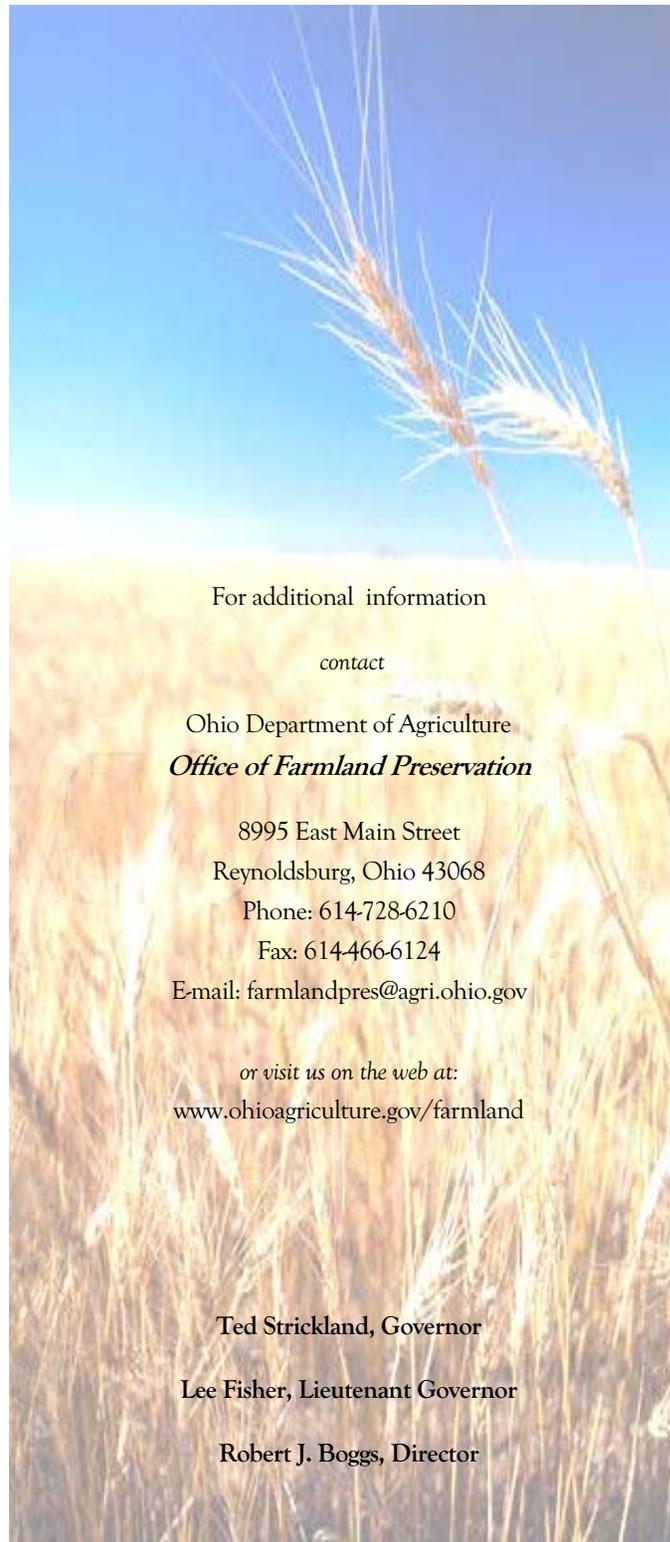
TIER 2
(50 possible points)

- **Agricultural infrastructure**, support services, and facilities specific to the farm's agricultural activities.
- Potential for the farm to be a **good demonstration or showcase project** for the promotion of farmland preservation in Ohio.
- **Public commitments** to farmland preservation taken by the local government.
- **Estate, farm succession, and business management plan** and other long-term investments made on the farm.
- Examples of **sustainable agriculture** on the farm.

Q: Who is eligible?

A: Farmland owners who meet the following criteria are eligible for this program:

- Enrolled in CAUV, an Agricultural District and engaged in any agricultural activity permitted under Ohio law.
- In substantial compliance with state and federal agricultural laws for the past five years.
- Using best management practices.



For additional information

contact

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Department of Agriculture



Office of Farmland Preservation

Seventh Funding Round

2008

Clean Ohio
Agricultural Easement
Purchase Program
(AEPP)

Q: What is the Clean Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (AEPP)?

A: In 2001, the \$400 million Clean Ohio Fund, which was initiated by Governor Bob Taft, was created to preserve farmland and greenspace, develop recreational trails and clean up brownfield sites. The Ohio Department of Agriculture Office of Farmland Preservation implements the \$25 million portion of this fund for farmland preservation. For the 2007 funding round, 3.12 million in Clean Ohio funding will be available. Grants are issued for up to 75 percent of the points-based appraised value of a farm's development rights. A payment cap has been set at \$2,000 per acre, with a maximum of \$500,000 per farm. All easement transactions are permanent, are recorded on the property deed, and transfer with the land to successive owners.

Q: What is an agricultural easement?

A: An agricultural easement is a voluntary, permanent, legally binding restriction placed on a farm that limits the use of the land to predominantly agricultural activity. The land is still under private ownership and management and stays on the tax rolls under current agricultural use valuation (CAUV). It can be sold or passed along as a gift to others at any time, but the restriction prohibiting non-farm development stays with the land.

Q: How does a landowner apply?

A: Landowners must apply for Clean Ohio funds through local governments (counties, townships, and municipalities), Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), or a land trust, which then submits the application to Ohio Department of Agriculture.

Q: What are the program requirements?

A: The following requirements must be met at time of application:

- Landowner has possession of clear title to the property.
- Landowner certifies property contains no hazardous waste.
- The entire farm, including all contiguous parcels and the farmstead must be included in the application.
- The local government, SWCD, or land trust may arrange with the farmland owner to purchase the agricultural easement in either a lump sum payment or under an installment plan.
- Local government, SWCD, or land trust agrees to share the monitoring and enforcement responsibilities with the State.
- Land trusts must be tax exempt and organized for the purpose of farmland preservation.
- Landowner understands that ODA's farmstead policy permits the construction of one new house, if no housing currently exists.
- Landowner understands that regional balance within the state may be considered in the distribution of funding.

Q: How is the value of the agricultural easement determined?

A: The agricultural easement's value is determined in the application using the department's points-based appraisal method. This method uses the county auditor's land valuation to establish a base value modified by the auditor's three-year appraisal and consideration of the farm's specific farmland preservation attributes.

Q: How are farms chosen?

A: A two-tier ranking system is used to select the farms preserved in each funding round. The first tier consists of objective criteria to sort out the most important farms to protect; and a second tier of more subjective and relevant factors. The ranking system gives preference to those farms best suited to promote the program's goals of protecting the best soils and creating permanent, economically viable blocks of farmland that complement a local comprehensive land use plan.

Points are awarded based on the following criteria:

**TIER 1
(100 possible points)**

- **Valuable soil types:** prime, unique, or locally important soils.
- **Adjacency or proximity to permanently protected agricultural land** including two or more farms applying together, or permanently protected land conducive to agriculture.
- **Best management practices** including an implemented conservation plan.
- **Development pressure:** targeted farms will be those facing development pressure, but not so much pressure that farming is no longer viable in that community.
- **Comprehensive plan** of local government and farm's location within it.
- **Other factors** including farms located in Agricultural Security Areas, registered Century Farms, and designated Historic or Archeological sites or structures.