

**Clermont County Landowner Donates Development Rights
to State to Preserve Nationally Recognized Historic Farm**

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (June 7, 2007) – Clermont County farmland owner Marie Holscher recently donated a permanent agricultural easement on her family’s 41.85-acre farm in Monroe Township to the Ohio Department of Agriculture to help assure that the farm will never be developed for non-farm purposes. This is the first easement donation from Clermont County, and is the 28 statewide donation of an agricultural easement to the department.

“I commend the Holscher family for their desire to see their beautiful family farm remain in agriculture,” said Ohio Agriculture Director Robert J. Boggs. “I am pleased that our department has been able to help the Holscher family preserve a farm of such agricultural and historic significance.”

In addition to having woodlands and farm fields, the Holscher farm is also home to the 19 century Aaron Fagin House, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its local architectural significance. The Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District will monitor the agricultural easement on behalf of the department to ensure that the land is used for agriculture.

“When my husband and I moved to Clermont County in the late 1940’s, most of the surrounding properties were working farms. While some of these farms remain, many have been lost over the years,” said Holscher. “I hope that this donation will encourage others who want to protect our farms and wildlife to consider agricultural easements for their farms as well.”

Under the department’s Ohio Agricultural Easement Donation Program, landowners can donate a permanent agricultural easement on their farm to the state. Agricultural easements are voluntary legal agreements restricting development on farmland, with the land remaining a tax-paying property 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. The restriction prohibiting non-farm development travels with the land ensuring it would never be developed for non-farm uses.

Landowners can receive federal tax advantages from donating permanent agricultural easements to the department. Donated easements that meet Internal Revenue Code criteria are treated as charitable gifts, and landowners may now be eligible to deduct up to 50 percent of their adjusted gross income in any given year, for a period of up to 16 years. Interested landowners should seek professional advice from an accountant or attorney.

To date, landowners have donated agricultural easements on 28 farms in 16 counties, preserving 3,486 acres statewide. More information on the department’s Ohio Agricultural Easement Donation Program is available by calling 614-728-6210 or by visiting www.ohioagriculture.gov/farmland.