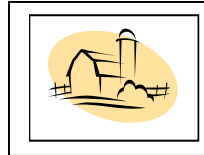


Farmland Preservation Update!



In September of 2003 the Taskforce announced that three North Perry Village farms were selected to receive Federal funding to purchase their development rights. Over the past year and a half the Taskforce has been actively involved in working to complete these easements. In the last few months, the Taskforce has completed most of the requirements needed to acquire the agricultural easements including appraisals, legal surveys and options to purchase. All three of the ease-

ments should be formally completed sometime this March.

When these easements are completed, 98 acres of Ohio most productive agricultural land will be preserved forever. The three North Perry Village farms are all adjoining and once preserved will represent the first permanently protected agricultural land in Lake County. News of these agriculture should make local papers in March when they are completed, so an eye out for the good news!

Surging Food Imports Cause First Monthly AG Trade Deficit Since 1986



Traditionally agriculture has been one of the few big sectors of the economy that could be counted on to produce a trade surplus. However, according to a recent article in the Wall Street Journal by Scott Kilman, in both June and

August of 2004 U.S. agriculture generated trade deficits for the first time since 1986. Kilman address a variety of reasons that have caused the recent changes in AG imports and exports, including NAFTA, increasing foreign AG production and changing U.S. consumer demand to name a few. With U.S. farmers experiencing

competitive pressures and consumers demanding more variety and consistent supply, some government officials are projecting that the first annual AG trade deficit could occur as soon as the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2005. To read the entire text refer to the November 8th 2004 edition of the Wall Street Journal

AEPP continued from page 1

Requirements online at www.ohioagriculture.gov/aepp/ To get more information about the AEPP program or if you would like to submit an application for this years funding cycle, please contact the Lake County Farmland Conservation Taskforce office at (440) 350 5863. The Taskforce is online at <http://www2.lakecountyohio.org/fct/>. Since this years application deadline has been moved up to March 14th, anyone interested in applying should contact our office by mid February.

P A Y D I R T ©

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 Address comments to: LCFCT, 125 E. Erie St. Painesville, OH 44077. Phone: 350-5863

Study Shows Future Sprawl May Cause Problems Cost of Community Services Could Be Staggering



A recent article in the Columbus Dispatch discussed a Bookings Institution study about the future impact of metropolitan growth and the cost of community services. The report was the first national study to estimate the construction cost of metropolitan growth. The price of sprawl would not only be felt by homeowners who may find it difficult to buy homes, but also by local and state governments who may be unable to fund the costs of expanding roads, schools, libraries and emergency services to expanding neighborhoods. The report which specifically addressed the future growth in the Columbus area found that if half of the new homes were built by 2030 were built on 1-acre lots, the tab for utilities and government services could be 17.4 billion. Based on these numbers the study found that for each new home built on a 1-acre lot it would cost the community \$90,000 to serve it with parks, streetlights, water and sewer service and the rest of the services provided to homes. In most cases these new expenses will be paid for by the existing home owners in the form of higher taxes. To help defer some of these costs, some communities like Columbus have considered charging developers for a portion of the expense that the city would incur as a result of the development. The study also suggests that localities take responsibility for land-use plans and lower cost growth.

Future Development Pressure Not Projected to Decline



Residential and commercial development in the next quarter-century is project to eclipse anything seen in previous generation as the nation moves to accommodate rapid population growth, according to a recent USA Today article by Haya El Nasser. In the article El Nasser sites various experts who believe that about half the homes, office buildings, stores and factories that will be needed by 2030 don't exist today. The U.S. population is expected to increase 33% to 376 million by 2030. That's 90 million more people than in 2000. The article states that a population increase of that size would require 60 million new housing units. Though most areas are expected to feel this development pressure, the South and the West where growth has turned deserts and soybean fields into cities, will be hit the hardest. Like many states, Ohio will feel this development pressure in the form of single-family houses built on lager lots where land is cheaper but within commuting distance to jobs. Despite efforts around the country to revitalize older downtown and suburban areas, 60% to 70 % of future development is projected to occur on the outer edges of cities and suburbs.

Geauga Farmers Form Group to Promote Local Produce



According to a recent News Herald article by Betsy Scott a group of existing and prospective farmers from Geauga County have come together to form the Geauga Family Farms organization. The group was formed as a reaction to the news last year that Geauga County was one of only four counties in Ohio to experience an increase in the number of farms. Despite the statewide trend of declining farms, Geauga was first in the state with a growth of 15%. In 2002 Geauga had 670 farms, up from 578 in 1970. Currently the group is educating area farmers about products that can be marketable in the area. The groups ultimate goal is the sell Geauga County products under the name Geauga Family Farms directly to consumers and area stores, rather than through wholesale markets.

LCFCT TENTATIVE MONTHLY MEETING CALENDAR FOR 2005

Due to weather and farm-related activities, some meetings may be cancelled
PLEASE! CALL to confirm! 350-5863

February 9 2005 Wednesday 9:00 AM
March 2 2005 Wednesday 7:00 PM
May 4 2005 Wednesday 9:00 AM

LCFCT Meetings are held in the Soil & Water District's conference room at 125 E. Erie Street in Painesville. There's ample parking behind the building off Jackson Street. Lake County Planning Commission meetings are held in the same building, downstairs.

FOR ALL GOVERNMENT MEETINGS: *Check your local newspaper or call for agenda.*

Selected Government Meetings		
Lake County Planning Commission (350-2739)	Last Tues.	7:00 p.m.
Madison Township Trustees (428-5128)	2 nd & 4 th Tues.	7:30 p.m.
Madison Village Council (428-7526)	1 st & 3 rd Mon.	7:00 p.m.
N. Perry Village Council (259-4994)	1 st Thurs.	7:00 p.m.
Perry Village Council (259-2671)	2 nd & 4 th Thurs.	7:00 p.m.
Perry Township Trustees (259-5140)	1 st & 3 rd Tues.	7:00 p.m.



LAKE COUNTY FARMLAND CONSERVATION TASKFORCE
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Winter 2005

Applications for 4th Round of Ohio's Ag Easement Program Due in March

The Ohio Department of Agriculture is currently accepting applications online for the fourth round of the Ohio Agricultural Easements Purchase Program (AEPP). The funding for the AEPP program comes from Governor Taft's Clean Ohio initiative which allocated 25 million for farmland preservation. In the first three years of the AEPP program 12.5 million of the Clean Ohio funds have been used to purchase agricultural easements on 37 farms, with options to purchase on 13 additional farms, totaling 10,007 acres in 19 counties.

New additions for this year's application include online submission and points for an increase in local match, previous submissions, no land conversion, gross sales, and county ag ranking. Despite these changes, the basic requirements for the AEPP program remain the same. Interested landowners must have at least 40 acres and be enrolled in CAUV. The AEPP's maximum payment per acre of \$2,000 remains the same as last year.

Landowners who are interested in the AEPP program can view the rules and

Inside this issue:

Preservation Update 2
AG Trade Deficit 2
New Study on Sprawl 3
Development Pressure 3
Local Produce Group Formed 3
Meetings 4

Agricultural Security Areas

New Tool Designed To Help Protect Farmland From Conversion

Agricultural security areas legislation proposed by Representative Tony Core was passed by the State House and Senate in December. The bill which was signed into law by Governor Taft in January will allow interested landowners comprising of 500 or more acres of contiguous farmland to voluntarily enroll in an Agricultural Security

Area for 10 years. When enrolling agricultural landowners must pledge to refrain from any non-agricultural development for the 10-year period. In addition to the landowners pledge, the county and the local board of trustees must agree not to extend any new services or road improvements into the area for the 10-year period. The

benefit for enrolled landowners is that they may receive a tax abatement of up to 75% (to be determined locally) on any agriculture-related new real property. Early withdraw is permitted, but carries with it a \$500 fine as well as recoupment of any tax abatement dollars.