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

A: The agricultural easement’s value is determined in the application using a 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 takes into consideration the farm’s specific farmland preservation attributes.

Keith Waris (AEPP 2009 and 2010) reinvested easement purchase funds in his farm operations, including the purchase of new equipment.
Q: What are the program requirements?
A: The following requirements must be met by the farmland and owner at the time of application submission:

- The farm must be enrolled in CAUV and the Agricultural District Program through the county auditor’s office.
- The farm must be a minimum of 40 acres unless the farm is adjacent to a preserved farm, then it must be a minimum of 25 acres.
- The farmland owner must certify that the property does not contain hazardous substances.
- The farmland owner must have been in compliance with state and federal agricultural laws for the past five years.
- The farmland owner must have possession of the clear title to the applicant property.
- The local sponsor must agree to share monitoring and enforcement responsibilities.
- A minimum of 25 percent of the points-based appraised value of the agricultural easement must be provided either in cash match by the local sponsor, donation by the landowner, or a combination of donation and cash match.

For further requirements, refer to the application “Guidelines and Policies” available at www.agri.ohio.gov/farmland. Click on “Clean Ohio AEPP.”

Q: What is an agricultural easement?
A: An agricultural easement is a voluntary and legally-binding restriction placed on a farm. The easement limits the use of the land to predominantly agricultural activity. The land remains under private ownership and management and stays on the tax rolls under Current Agricultural Use Valuation (CAUV). The farmland can be sold or passed along as a gift to others at any time, but the restriction prohibiting non-agricultural development stays with the land.

Q: How does a landowner apply?
A: Landowners must apply for Clean Ohio funds through local governments (such as counties, townships, and municipalities), Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), or a charitable organization. These entities are referred to as “local sponsors,” and they have the ability to submit applications on a landowner’s behalf to the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) for consideration. Application opportunities are open for a maximum of 90 days. Interested landowners are encouraged to contact a potential local sponsor.