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<div><div><div>LAKE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT</div><div>125 E. Erie St., Painesville, OH 44077</div><div>440/350-2730 FAX 440/350-2601</div><div>Toll-free Numbers:</div><div>428-4348 x 2730 Madison/Perry</div><div>918-2730 Cleveland/Western Lake County</div><div>800/899-LAKE outside Lake County only</div><div>E-mail: soil@lakecountyohio.gov</div><div>Web site: www.lakecountyohio.gov/soil</div><div>Office Hours: Mon.-Fri. 7:30 am-4:00 pm</div></div></div>	<div><div>BOARD OF SUPERVISORS</div><div>Billie Kamis (2006), Willoughby Hills, Chair</div><div>Chris LeGros (2007), Waite Hill, Vice-Chair</div><div>Denise Brewster (2006), Concord, Treasurer</div><div>Bruce Landeg (2007), Mentor, Fiscal Agent</div><div>Richard Baker (2008), North Perry, Secretary</div></div>
	<div><div>LAKE SWCD IS A PROUD MEMBER OF:</div><div>Lake County Farm Bureau</div><div>American Farmland Trust</div><div>Nursery Growers of Lake County Ohio, Inc.</div><div>National Association of Conservation Districts</div><div>Ohio Federation of Soil & Water Conservation Districts</div></div>
<div><div>STAFF</div><div>Maurine Orndorff, Ag Programs Technician</div><div>Paul Bowyer, Stormwater Specialist</div><div>Pam Brown, District Secretary/Treasurer</div><div>Dan Donaldson, District Administrator</div><div>Chad Edgar, Urban Stream Specialist</div><div>Beth Landers, Education/Info Coordinator</div><div>Matthew Scharver, Resource Protection Specialist</div><div>Al Bonnis, District Conservationist, NRCS</div><div>John Niedzialek, WR RC&D Coordinator, NRCS</div><div>Lake County Commissioners</div><div>Robert Aufuldish Ray Sines Dan Troy</div></div>	<div>The Seedling is written and edited by Maurine Orndorff, Lake SWCD Agricultural Programs Technician.</div>
	<div><div>The public is invited to attend Lake SWCD's monthly Board meetings, held the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm at 125 East Erie St., Painesville. Meeting announcements appear under the public agenda in the News-Herald and on the District website. Please call in advance to let us know you will be attending.</div><div>WE ARE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER</div><div>All Lake SWCD and USDA programs and services are available without regard to race, age, gender, national origin, political beliefs, color, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or marital or family status.</div></div>

Spring 2008

The Seedling
Cultivating Agricultural Sustainability

Agricultural Newsletter of the Lake County Soil & Water Conservation District

Volume 4, Issue 2

The Fiscal & Economic Values of Agriculture

The results of the recently completed Cost of Community Services (COCS) Study for Madison Village and Township and the Northeast Ohio Grape & Wine Economic Impact Study were presented on March 20, 2008 at Madison High School to nearly sixty public officials.

According to the COCS study, developing strategies to retain our agricultural and forested lands as a land base for future agriculture is a good long-term investment.

The results of the winery patron survey showed that an estimated 400,000 people visit our local wineries each year who spend an estimated \$16 million on wine, food and gifts at the wineries, plus an estimated additional \$21.9 million on food, lodging and gas from the surrounding communities while they are in Northeast Ohio.

The District contracted with American Farmland Trust to conduct the COCS study. David Marrison, Ohio State University Extension (OSUE) Ashtabula and Donniella Winchell, Ohio Wine Producers Association (OWPA) collaborated with the District on the Wine & Grape Economic Impact study.

The COCS and the Grape and Wine Economic Impact studies were undertaken this past year with the help of a grant from The Cleveland Foundation. Lake County Development Council provided support to Lake Soil & Water Conservation District in obtaining the grant. Both studies are part of a District initiative to gather scientific data that documents the fiscal and economic value of our agricultural land.

COST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES STUDY

The Cost of Community Services study analyzed revenues and expenditures for the 2006 fiscal year, allocating them to one of three land use categories: residential, commercial/industrial, or farm/forest. Revenues included property tax, income tax, estate tax, liquor and cigarette fees, and motor vehicle registration fees. Expenditures included education and the county general fund (government, judicial, public safety, public works, health & human services and community & economic development). The data was used to determine the net



Madison Township Vineyard

fiscal impact of each land use, which was then expressed as a ratio.

For residential land use in Madison Village, the ratio was \$1.00 : \$1.16, meaning that for every tax dollar of revenue from residential properties, \$1.16 was spent to provide services to that land use. The ratio for commercial/industrial land use was \$1.00 : \$0.32, and it was \$1.00 : \$.37 for farm/forest land use.

The ratios for Madison Township were \$1.00 : \$1.24 for residential, \$1.00 : \$0.33 for commercial and industrial and \$1.00 : \$0.30 for farm and forest land uses.

This COCS study is the first update ever done in the country, and it was undertaken to see if the original outcomes of the COCS study done in 1993 have held true over the years of growth. This provided a unique opportunity for comparison. Overall the results remained in a range consistent with the results from studies done across the country since the 1980's. The 2008 study confirms the importance of agricultural and forest lands to the fiscal balance of a community.

The largest change since 1993 occurred in Madison Village, where the ratio for residential land use went from \$1.00 : \$1.67 in 1993 to \$1.00 : \$1.16 in 2006. Some factors that contributed to the drop include increases in the costs of services, a reduction in services provided to the residents (to enable the Village to balance the budget), a loss of several large industrial companies, an aging population (which has reduced the payroll contribution to the



The Fiscal & Economic Values of Agriculture
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municipal income tax), an increase in residential acreage and a decrease in farmland acreage.

The study shows that while residential development is the backbone of any community and contributes the largest amount of revenue, it does not generate enough income for the services it requires. Industrial and commercial land uses can help offset the economic deficit of residential land uses, but they also tend to drive more residential development, which in turn requires more services. Agricultural lands consistently pay more in taxes than they require in services. Even with a reduced assessed value (with the Current Agricultural Use Value or CAUV program), agricultural land contributes a surplus of revenue to help pay for services provided to residential land uses.

The conclusion? Planning for the growth of Madison Village and Township (or any other community) should include a mix of land uses, including agriculture, to help achieve a fiscal balance.

Copies of "Finding a Balance: A Cost of Community Services Study for Madison Village and Township, Lake County, Ohio, March 2008" may be obtained by calling the District office at 440/350-2730. They may also be downloaded from our website at www.lakecountyohio.gov/soil.

NORTHEAST OHIO GRAPE & WINE ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY

The economic impact study of the grape and wine industry was a joint project between Lake SWCD, OSU Extension Ashtabula (OSUE) and Ohio Wine Producers Association (OWPA). It encompassed the viticultural industry in Lake, Ashtabula and Geauga Counties. Three surveys were developed in the spring of 2007 to determine the contribution of grape growers, wineries and winery patrons to our regional economy.

The winery patron survey is currently the only portion of the study which is ready to be released, and it yields information about wine preferences, travel spending patterns and demographics of visitors to wineries in Ashtabula, Lake and Geauga counties. For example, 88.5% of visitors indicated that the wineries were the primary reason for their visit to Northeast Ohio. 33.6% spent an overnight in the tri-county area, and 72.5% of visitors ate dinner while visiting wineries. Winery patrons spend more than \$30 million in purchases at wineries and in the surrounding communities each year.

The data from the grower and winery surveys is still being analyzed. These two surveys gathered information about future operational issues and concerns, which will help us in our work with the sustainability of the industry.

We anticipate the final report to be completed near the end of May. We will make copies of the full report available on our website at www.lakecountyohio.gov/soil.

It is clear from the preliminary results that the wine and grape industry in Northeast Ohio makes a direct and significant contribution to our regional economy and drives other economic development.

Both the COCS and Northeast Ohio Grape & Wine Economic Impact studies show that developing strategies to retain our agricultural land base is a good long-term investment in our communities. Agricultural lands help to keep our taxes in check and agriculture is a significant industry which brings millions of dollars to our local and regional economy.

We will use this information to encourage communities to consider the value of agriculture as they plan for growth and to give agriculture *a place at the table* of economic development. We will also be convening a task force to develop a long-term agricultural land preservation strategy that will protect our viticultural, nursery and produce industries.

Countryside Goes Online

The Cuyahoga Valley Countryside Conservancy has a new electronic newsletter. To get on the mailing list to receive their new ENewsletter, send an email to info@cvcountryside.org. This resource will make it easier to keep up with the Conservancy's educational offerings, which focus on the sustainability of the farm and the farmer.

Food Policy Council Meets

Ohio's new Food Policy Council held its initial meeting at the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) on March 31, 2008, chaired by ODA Director Robert Boggs. The Council was created by Governor Strickland in August 2007 to study and promote Ohio's \$93 billion food and agriculture industry.

"This Council is the first step in ensuring the plentiful fruits of our agricultural industry are accessible and affordable for all Ohio families," Boggs said. "We hope this council will boost the industry by increasing the amount of food grown, processed and consumed in Ohio. At the same time, we will work to create the network necessary to place these products on the dinner table of all Ohioans."

The council will analyze food production, processing and consumption in Ohio to better link producers and consumers and to ensure that citizens in need have greater access to fresh and nutritious food. It will assist farmers and farm businesses in effective marketing of their products inside and out of the state, and will address ways to protect our farmland and water resources.

Amalie Lipstreu, of The Farmland Center in Northeast Ohio serves on the Food Policy Council, and was instrumental in promoting its formation. Amalie has recently accepted the responsibility of running the Council for the Governor and will be leaving The Farmland Center at the

end of April to take up her new responsibilities in Reynoldsburg. We will miss Amalie's guidance and expertise in this part of the state and wish her well in her new position.

New Ohio Proud Program

Governor Strickland and ODA Director Boggs unveiled the state's new Ohio Proud logo and website at the Statehouse on April 3, 2008. The updated program will make it easier for consumers to find Ohio-made and grown agricultural products.

Recent research by The Ohio State University revealed that consumers did not relate the original Ohio Proud logo (created in 1993) to agriculture or fresh, locally grown products. The study found that people want fresh, healthier products; 90% said that they were willing to pay up to \$0.50 more for an Ohio product over a national brand. Respondents also wanted to make purchases that would help provide jobs and support Ohio's farmers and agribusinesses.

"The state's Ohio Proud program has been a great tool to educate consumers about the importance of buying local," according to Director Boggs. "After much research, planning and collaboration, the new program has been restructured and improved to fit current times and trends."



In addition to providing safe, local foods to consumers, the program will create new opportunities for local growers, producers and processors. Ohio Proud promotes food and

agricultural products that are at least 50% grown, raised or processed in Ohio. If you haven't already done so, visit ohioproud.org to register your fresh, locally grown products.

Restore Wildlife Habitat



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a division of the U.S. Department of the Interior, can help private landowners restore fish and wildlife habitat in Ohio. Kristin Westad, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Biologist in the Ohio Private Lands Office is promoting the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program which helps landowners improve habitat for migratory birds and endangered species on their land.

The Grand River watershed has been designated as a focus area because of the health of the river system and the abundance of wetlands to provide habitat for ducks and other water birds. If you have a low spot on your property that is drained by a tile or ditch, it may be suited to wetland restoration simply by breaking the tile or plugging the ditch in that area.

Ninety percent of Ohio's remaining wildlife habitat occurs on private lands. Only an estimated 10% of Ohio's wetlands remain for migratory waterfowl. You can make a difference in the sustainability of our natural resources by managing your land for wildlife. If your land is eligible, Kristin will work with you to develop a wildlife management plan and oversee its implementation. The program pays 50% of habitat development costs and you would commit to a 10-year agreement. Contact Kristin at 740/258-7686 or kristin_westad@fws.gov for more information.