

Gauging Support for Farmland Protection: Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program

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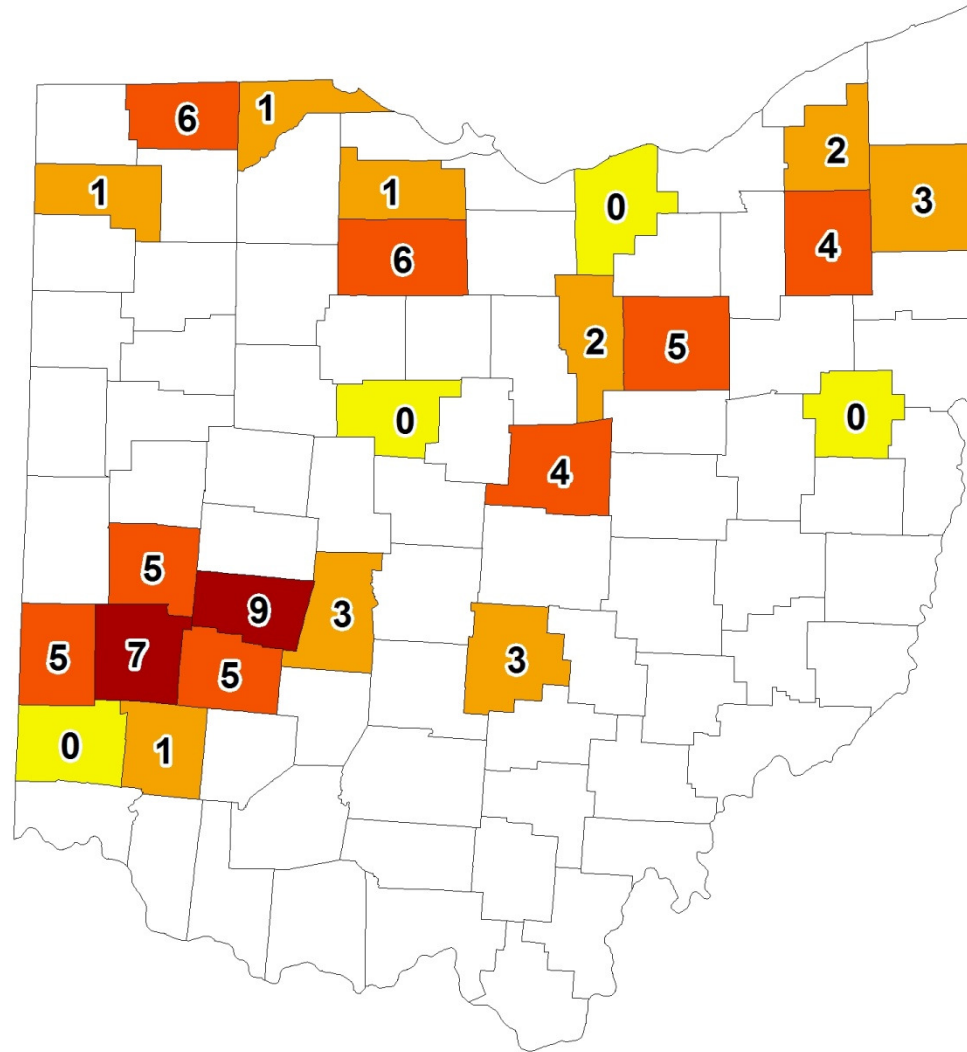
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POLICY INNOVATION

DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS

Today's Agenda

- About the survey
 - Method for conducting the survey
- Who answered the survey?
- Motivation to participate
- Satisfaction with AEPP
- Impact of AEPP
 - Funds
 - Management
- Conclusions and Recommendations

Who answered the survey?



Who are AEPP participants?

- Farms are generally larger than the average Ohio farm
- Farm type is dominated by corn and soybeans
- Farmers are older
- Applicants are making their living from the farm (70.8%)
- Landowners are putting an average of 50% (median of 70%) of their farm in the program
- Most (84%) are sole or family proprietorships

Motivation I

- “I believe that a significant amount of our rural land should not be developed and the AEPP is one of the best ways to protect that land (HH153).”
- “To secure the income and my belief in the program (HH152).”
- “The major part of this farm has been in the family since 1868, the rest was added in 1958. This was a very good way of paying off debt and setting the farm up as one block so it could not be divided and sold as parcel. The possibility of this farm ground to be carried on to the fifth, sixth generation is likely (HH111).”

Motivation II

What does the AEPP mean to you, your family and your farm?

- 36 - Preserve/save our land to stay agricultural
- 10 - Eliminates development/sprawl
- 8 - Financial security
- 7 - Ability to enhance agricultural and conservation practices
- 2 - Educate importance of farming
- 3 - other

(N=53; numbers shown are frequency of response)

Motivation III

- Without AEPP, 73% would continue to farm in the near future.
 - 27% would have sold of pieces of the farm, rented it out, sold the farm to a developer or used the land for other purposes

Satisfaction with AEPP

- Ohio participants are more satisfied than Vermont and California landowners
- Satisfied – 64 (93%)
- Not Satisfied – 2 (3%)
- Neutral – 3 (4%)

Satisfaction, cont.

What changes do participants recommend?

- 6 - Speed up the process
- 6 - Make application less confusing
- 4 - Make AEPP program larger
- 3 - Improve communication
- 3 - Eliminate/change Tier 2
- 2 - Update Income Tax codes
- 2 - Increase money given to land owner
- 7 - other

Impact of AEPP: Use of Funds

\$19,322,799 accounted for in survey

Activity	Percent of Respondents Reporting Activity	Percent of Funds
Debts	63%	36% (6.9 million)
Expenses	19%	4% (0.8 million)
Investments & Savings	76%	52% (10.0 million)
Other	24%	8% (1.6 million)

Impact of AEPP: Use of Funds

DEBTS

- paying off debts
- income tax payment

EXPENSES

- reinvesting in daily farm expenses
- hiring employees

OTHER

- education
- travel/recreation/vacation
- conservation practices
- other

INVESTMENTS & SAVINGS

- trying new management or retail practices
- buying more land
- buying more equipment
- repairing or expanding buildings
- general savings or investment
- retirement funds
- trusts for children
- new farm building

Impact of AEPP: Borrowing \$

Effect of AEPP on Loan Experience	Number Reporting	Percentage
very positive	5	15.6
somewhat positive	8	25.0
no impact	16	50.0
somewhat negative	3	9.4
very negative	0	.0

Impact of AEPP: Farm Management

	Recent Changes	Future Plans
	% Yes	% Yes
Diversified into new crops or different kinds of livestock, or created new products from crops you have already been growing?	18%	28%
Established new conservation practices?	45%	51%
Established new or additional farm business(es)?	22%	20%
Established new farm practices?	18%	34%

Last Words

- “The scoring process does not always preserve the best farms (HH147).”
- “This program is getting a reputation of taking too long to get the money (HH130).”

Last Words, cont.

- “This was a good decision on our behalf. It has changed the way we feel about the long term use of this farm (HH 199).”
- “This program saved our family farm- we were hanging on by our finger nails (HH169). “

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Overall satisfaction is *extremely* high
- Common theme in suggested changes
- Impact of AEPP
 - Investment
 - Conservation practices
- What can be done with these results?
 - Share findings with Administration, Advisory Board, and Technical Committee
 - Re-examine what types of farms are being selected
 - Focus on process issues.
 - Follow-up with respondents.

Thank you.

<http://cffpi.osu.edu>

Web site for project?



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