Q: How are farms chosen?

A: Farms are selected using a two-tier ranking system in conjunction with regional balance and other factors. The ranking system gives preference to those farms best suited to promote the program’s priorities, made relevant throughout the application’s distribution of points. Farm finalists are recommended by the Farmland Preservation Advisory Board and approved by the director of agriculture.

Points are awarded based on the following criteria:

**TIER I (100 possible points)**
- Valuable soil types (20 points)
- Proximity to protected land (15 points)
- Conservation planning (5 points)
- Development pressure (15 points)
- Local comprehensive planning (16 points)
- Other factors (29 points)

**TIER II (50 possible points)**
Applicant farm narratives scored by the Farmland Preservation Advisory Board focus on the following issues:
- Agricultural infrastructure
- Estate, farm succession, and business management planning
- Promotion of farmland preservation
- Local government support
- Sustainable agriculture
Frequently Asked Questions

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.

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.

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

Q: How is the value of the agricultural easement determined?
A: The agricultural easement’s value is determined in the application using the department’s 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.