



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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OHIO FARMERS DONATE MORE THAN 750,000 EGGS TO OHIO FOODBANKS

Ohio egg farmers give back, partner with foodbanks in fight against hunger during National Egg Month

COLUMBUS – To help in the fight against hunger in Ohio, egg farmers across the state will be donating approximately 766,800 eggs to hunger relief organizations over the next couple weeks to celebrate National Egg Month in May. The announcement was made today during a breakfast reception hosted by the Ohio Poultry Association at the Ohio Statehouse.

Eight Ohio egg farmers have committed the eggs to be provided to local hunger charities through the Ohio Association of Foodbanks' network of 12 regional Feeding America foodbanks. The contribution has an estimated retail value of \$100,000. This donation marks the sixth year that the Ohio Poultry Association (OPA) and Ohio's foodbanks have joined forces to provide wholesome, nutritious food to Ohioans in need.

"Ohio eggs are a critical item for Ohio's hunger relief providers, because they are a versatile, high-protein item that is a staple among Ohio's needy families," said Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, Ohio Association of Foodbanks executive director. "This generous contribution from Ohio's egg farmers is an extraordinary opportunity for our foodbanks and pantries to make a difference when many of our clients are struggling to keep food on their tables."

The nation's struggling economy continues to have an impact on families in Ohio, including higher cost for housing, utilities, transportation and health care; wage stagnation; more part-time jobs; increasing poverty; and decreasing household incomes. As a result, these impacts have led to significant increases in demand for emergency food assistance as Ohio families struggle to put food on their plates.

In 2012, Ohio's emergency food assistance network served more than one in five Ohioans (2.32 million), an increase of 46 percent in the last three years. One-third of households had at least one working adult. Additionally, one-third of the households served had a member in poor health and, of those, 20 percent were suffering from a diet-related disease, like diabetes, hypertension, nerve disease, blindness, limb amputations or renal failure.

Because of its long-standing partnership with OPA and Ohio's egg farmers, Ohio's foodbanks can provide fresh, Ohio-produced eggs that mean hungry Ohio families can have nutritious, wholesome meals.

"Ohio's egg farmers always have been champions in the fight against hunger," said Jim Chakeres, OPA executive vice president. "Ohio's egg farmers are committed to supporting our local communities and that means helping out when needed, in addition to producing safe affordable food for consumers and

caring for our flocks and the environment.” Chakeres said Ohio ranks second in the nation for egg production, and produces 7.6 billion eggs each year with a value of more than \$490 million.

Ohio farms participating in this year’s donation include: Trillium Farms of Croton; Ft. Recovery Equity of Fort Recovery; Hemmelgarn & Sons, Inc. of Coldwater; Stoller Farms of Van Wert; Hertzfeld Poultry Farms of Grand Rapids; Weaver Brothers, Inc. of Versailles; Rindler Poultry of St. Henry; and Ross-Medford Farms of New Weston.

Additionally, Hamler-Fugitt said that the Ohio Association of Foodbanks has partnered with OPA through the Ohio Agricultural Clearance Program for more than 15 years. This program is a statewide effort to direct Ohio’s surplus of agricultural products through the network of foodbanks in the state to ensure that Ohio families have a source of nutritious, Ohio-grown, raised and produced food products. The program works with Ohio farmers and commodity groups to provide foodbanks with surplus and unmarketable agricultural products at production cost. To date, Ohio egg farmers have contributed more than 7 million eggs for hungry Ohioans through the Ohio Agricultural Clearance Program and individual donations.

Ohio’s 12 Feeding America foodbanks provide hunger relief in all 88 Ohio counties. In 2012, the Ohio Association of Foodbanks distributed more than 164 million pounds of food and grocery items to 3,300 member charities, food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters and other food assistance organizations.

For more information regarding the Ohio Association of Foodbanks, visit www.ohiofoodbanks.org. For more information about OPA, visit www.ohioeggs.com.

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*** PHOTO AND INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE WHEN EGGS ARE DELIVERED TO LOCAL
FOODBANKS**