



## REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENT Ohio Proud Program – Five Year Rule Review

The rules in this package have been reviewed pursuant to Chapter 119 of the Revised Code and are being proposed as follows. **The comment period will remain open through January 5, 2018.** Comments may be emailed to [ecomments@agri.ohio.gov](mailto:ecomments@agri.ohio.gov) or mailed to Legal Section, Ohio Department of Agriculture, 8995 E. Main St., Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068.

Created in 1993, the Ohio Proud Program increases sales and consumer awareness of Ohio made and grown agricultural products. Since the program's inception, membership has continued to grow to more than 500 members who make value-added products; raise livestock and grow fresh produce and nursery stock. These rules have been reviewed and amended pursuant to the five year rule review process. The rules and their amendments are as follows:

OAC 901:4-6-01 outlines the definitions as used in the chapter. The rule has been amended to include a definition of the word "Department." Further, the definition of the word "Board" has been removed pursuant to the rescission of rule 901:4-6-06. Other stylistic changes have been made which do not impact the substance of the rule.

OAC 901:4-6-03 sets forth the application and registration process for participating in the Ohio Proud program. The rule has been amended to make a stylistic change which does not impact the substance of the rule.

OAC 901:4-6-04 outlines the product which are eligible for participation in the Ohio Proud program. The rule has been amended to make stylistic changes which should assist in reader comprehension. No substantive changes have been made to the rule.

OAC 901:4-6-05 sets the fee for registration of products. The Department currently charges a \$25 annual licensing fee to agricultural companies which allows them to use the registered Ohio Proud trademark packaging, advertising and social media. These companies are listed on the program's website and can participate in educational and promotional activities throughout the year. The licensing fee is deposited into a dedicated Rotary Fund which is used to administer the program.

With the GRF reduction in previous budget cycles, the Rotary Fund has been the primary funding source to administer the program. In addition to the GRF reduction, the licensing fee was reduced in 2008 from \$100 to \$25. These reductions are depleting the Rotary Fund balance and limiting the department to create programs that will enhance the competitive advantage of Ohio Proud companies. The department is requesting an increase in the annual licensing fee from \$25 to \$50. These additional funds will enable the Department to create opportunities to increase sales and consumer awareness of Ohio Proud companies.



OAC 901:4-6-06 establishes an advisory board to advise the Department on the administration of the Ohio Proud program. The rule has been proposed to be rescinded. This board has been defunct for several years and has not met. Therefore, the Department has determined that the board is unnecessary and should be rescinded.

