

## First Ag Conservation Easement in Boone County

Boone County Soil & Water Conservation District has accepted its first Agricultural Conservation Easement on a 260-acre Centennial Farm in Manchester Township it was announced today by Jackie Falkenstein, District Manager. The farm, located on Blaine Road is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Stennerson, and has been in their family for more than 150 years.

“The Stennerson’s are committed to keeping the land for farming, just as three generations before them did. The agricultural easement will assure that the land is shielded from development for future farmers to use, allows the owners to sell the property or pass it on to their children, and preserves private property rights,” Falkenstein explained. “They also are entitled to income tax benefits for the donation of the agricultural easement to the district.”

The easement donation came about after the Boone County Board established a farmland protection commission in 2007 and the group put together a cooperative program to hold and enforce agricultural conservation easements with the help of the Boone County State’s Attorney. The land is protected in perpetuity with the soil and water district having the responsibility to enforce the terms of the easement.

“Working farms are a valuable asset to Boone County, and protecting them from development is a goal of the county’s 2010 land use plan,” said Richard Gadke, Chairman of Boone County’s Agricultural Conservation Easement and Farmland Protection Commission, who farms 400 acres of land in LeRoy Township. “A group of Flora Grange members got together several years ago to promote farmland protection in the county. Donation of the first agricultural conservation easement is the result of their vision and hard work, and a testament to the commitment that many farmers have to protecting farmland in this county,” he said.

Landowners interested in learning more about protecting their farm with an agricultural conservation easement should contact the Soil and Water Conservation District office at 815-544-2677 or by e-mail at [bcswcd@sltac.com](mailto:bcswcd@sltac.com). All inquiries are confidential.