



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 19, 2011

For More Information Contact:
Jennifer Morrill, 202-378-1255

Sale of Family Farm Will Protect Farms in Michigan
*—American Farmland Trust Announces
Availability of New Farmland Protection Fund*

Washington, D.C.—“When Owen and Ellen Love bequeathed their farm to American Farmland Trust, they had a very specific idea of helping protect agricultural lands in Michigan,” says Bob Wagner, Senior Policy and Program Advisor for American Farmland Trust (AFT). “After many years of renting the farm, AFT sold the farm subject to a conservation easement in 2010 to two young brothers who will continue to operate the farm for grain production.”

In accordance with their wishes, the proceeds from the sale of the farm have been set aside in the Owen and Ellen Love Family Farmland Protection Fund at AFT to be used to assist in the permanent protection of other farmland in the state of Michigan. “Not only will the original farm stay in agriculture, the proceeds will help protect numerous other farms in Michigan. That’s a double-gift with lasting impact,” says Wagner.

“We are proud our parents chose to preserve the Love family farm for agricultural use, and also to provide the means for others to save agricultural land,” say Bob Love and Edith Pestrue, the Loves’ children. “The Owen and Ellen Love Family Farmland Protection Fund will play an essential role in supporting projects that protect the productive use of agricultural land in the state of Michigan.”

Rich Harlow, Program Manager, Farmland Preservation, Michigan Department of Agriculture adds, “The state of Michigan is pleased that Owen and Ellen Love had the foresight to establish this fund in conjunction with American Farmland Trust. The fund will help bridge the gap in local farmland preservation efforts in the state and will significantly enhance those efforts.”

AFT will now make the Owen and Ellen Love Family Farmland Protection Fund available on a revolving loan basis to local units of government and land trusts in Michigan.

The primary objective of The Love Family Farmland Protection Fund is to support projects that protect the viability and productive use of agricultural land; and is intended to bridge a time gap between an opportunity to protect farmland and the availability of other public or private funding to purchase land in fee, or an agricultural conservation easement. Thus, the fund is limited to projects that will permanently protect farmland that is both currently in active agricultural use and intended to remain in active agricultural use. Other natural resource and public values of the project will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Download the full set of [requirements for eligible funding entities and eligible projects \[DOC\]](#) and the [loan application \[PDF\]](#).

AFT will accept loan proposals throughout the year using the application form. Direct all inquiries or questions on the use of the Love Family Farmland Protection Fund to Robert Wagner, Herrick Mill, 1 Short Street, Northampton, MA 01060; 413-586-9330, Ext. 12; or via e-mail at bwagner@farmland.org.

Wagner explains that when a farmer places a conservation easement on their farmland (either through a sale of the development rights, or a donation of those rights), it places a permanent restriction on the farmland so that it cannot be developed other than for agricultural purposes. The Loves' 660-acre farm is located in Climax, Michigan. For more information on farmland protection tools such as conservation easements, visit AFT's Farmland Information Center at www.farmlandinfo.org, or call 800-370-4879.

-30-

American Farmland Trust is the nation's leading conservation organization dedicated to saving America's farm and ranch land, promoting environmentally sound farming practices and supporting a sustainable future for farms. Since its founding in 1980 by a group of farmers and citizens concerned about the rapid loss of farmland to development, AFT has helped save millions of acres of farmland from development and led the way for the adoption of conservation practices on millions more.

AFT's national office is located in Washington, DC. Phone: 202-331-7300.

For more information, visit www.farmland.org.