

## Areas of Agricultural Significance

Henry County is largely agricultural with 91% of its land used for agricultural purposes with 241,000 acres of land in farms. In 2003, Henry County accounted for over \$79 million in cash receipts from marketing of farm commodities. Henry County ranked fifth of Ohio's counties in wheat production, 11<sup>th</sup> in corn production and 14<sup>th</sup> in soybean production.

With agriculture such a large part of Henry County life, it is important to determine areas within the county where agricultural use should remain a priority. The Areas of Agricultural Significance Map (see **Map: Areas of Agricultural Significance**) was developed to show Agricultural Priority Zones within Henry County.

To evaluate the areas within Henry County and determine the Agricultural Priority Zones, the following methodology, established by the Henry County Planning Commission, was used.

The main factor for determining the Agricultural Priority Zones was soil productivity. Soil productivity is based on such limitations as slope, erosion, wetness, and droughtiness. The evaluation continued by looking at the existing land use of the parcels. All parcels that were not listed as an agricultural use by the Henry County Auditor's Office as well as those properties within corporation limits were excluded from the Agricultural Priority Zones. The final item considered was the zoning district. Since all thirteen of the townships have a zoning resolution, areas that the local governing body have indicated as industrial, commercial or suburban/multi-family residential zoning districts were shaded to indicate that district.

The Agricultural Priority Zones are broken down into three categories ranging from high priority to low priority. The areas indicated as a high priority are those areas where agricultural uses should continue and other types of uses should be avoided as much as possible. However, the zoning district should also be considered. The zoning districts were added to this map as a reference to show that regardless of the Agricultural Priority Zone, the local governing body has decided to allow non-agricultural uses.

While this is not a farmland preservation program, this information can be useful for any preservation program that may be implemented.