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Horse Farms Forever Honored with the 2020 Robert N. Clay Conservation Award

Lexington, KY.- September 28, 2020- Equine Land Conservation Resource (ELCR) is pleased to announce that Horse Farms Forever (HFF) of Marion County, Florida, was recognized as the recipient of the 2020 Robert N. Clay Conservation Award during the Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association (TOBA) 35th Annual Virtual Awards on September 26th.

The award, established in 2014 as a partnership between TOBA and ELCR to help increase awareness of the importance of land conservation to the Thoroughbred industry and to serve as an inspiration to others within the industry, is presented annually at the TOBA National Awards dinner.

The non-profit Horse Farms Forever was founded in 2018 to preserve the character and culture that horses, horse farms and the Farmland Preservation Area (FPA) bring to Marion County, Florida. The catalyst was the Florida Department of Transportation's threat to put a toll road through the heart of the county's most pristine horse farms and the FPA area.

The organization is focused on raising awareness about protecting horse farms and advocating for the protection of the FPA from the threat of unplanned growth. Since 2018, HFF has helped to strengthen the FPA's boundaries and prevented development and roadway threats from encroaching into the FPA.

HFF is also working with community leaders and landowners to establish a Rural Land Management Plan as part of the county's comprehensive plan to help protect the nearly 1,200 horse farms in Marion County. In addition to protecting the land for farms, these new policies will help protect the horse industry, which contributes over \$2.6 billion to the county's economy and employs more than 20,000 people.

"We are pleased to work with and support the efforts of Horse Farms Forever and others to protect Marion County's unique equine heritage and industry," said ELCR President, Ken Haddad. "Local advocacy groups, like Horse Farms Forever, are not only key to protecting local horse lands but they can also serve as successful models for other communities working to protect equine access to land. We applaud the commitment of Horse Farms Forever to help preserve the unique character and culture of the Horse Capital of the World® for the benefit of this and future generations."

Horse Farms Forever is dedicated to preserving the open spaces and beautiful places that make Ocala/Marion County the Horse Capital of the World®. www.horsefarmsforever.com

About the Equine Land Conservation Resource (ELCR): ELCR builds awareness of the loss of lands available for horse-related activities and facilitates the protection and preservation of those lands. We work to ensure America's equine heritage lives on and the emotional, physical and economic benefits of the horse-human relationship remains accessible. ELCR serves as an information resource and clearinghouse on conserving horse properties, land use planning, land stewardship/best management practices, trails, liability and equine economic development. For more information about the ELCR visit www.elcr.org or call (859) 455-8383

About the Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association (TOBA): TOBA, based in Lexington, Ky., was formed in 1961 and is a national trade organization of leading Thoroughbred breeders and owners. TOBA's mission is to improve the economics, integrity and pleasure of the sport on behalf of Thoroughbred owners and breeders. Projects managed by TOBA include the American Graded Stakes Committee, Claiming Crown, Ownership Seminars, Ownerview.com and the Sales Integrity Program. TOBA provides international representation for U.S. owners and breeders on the International Grading and Race Planning Advisory Committee, International Cataloguing Standards Committee and International Breeders Federation. Thoroughbred Charities of America (TCA) is the charitable arm of TOBA. TOBA is the owner of The Blood-Horse Inc., and is represented as a founding member on the board of directors of the National Thoroughbred Racing Association and the Racing Medication and Testing Consortium.