

WATER QUALITY DIVISION OVERVIEW

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PRESENTED BY



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The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFM) Water Quality Division is responsible for administering the Vermont Agricultural Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program.

This includes:

- **Education and Outreach**
- **Inspection and Enforcement**
- **Technical and Financial Assistance**

Learn more on our website: Agriculture.Vermont.gov/WaterQuality

Education and Outreach

Education and outreach initiatives support farmers to ensure their clear understanding of statewide agricultural management rules, the Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs), and best management conservation practices to reduce nutrient runoff through educational events, farmer to farmer networks, and direct outreach to farms across Vermont.



Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation of farms includes size-specific regulatory oversight of Vermont farms subject to regulation under the Required Agricultural Practices (RAP) Rule. This includes Small Farm Operations (SFOs), Certified Small Farm Operations (CSFOs), Medium Farm Operations (MFOs) and Large Farm Operations (LFOs).



Technical and Financial Assistance Programs

Provide various financial and technical assistance opportunities for farms in Vermont to support regulatory compliance, to assess, plan, and implement best management conservation practices, and to reduce nonpoint source agricultural runoff.



Technical and Financial Assistance Programs

Before (left) and after (right) installation of a Best Management Practice (BMP) project on a small farm in Swanton, VT.



Before (left) and after (right) installation of a BMP project on a small farm in Georgia, VT.

Interactive Data Report

- Program Investments
- Conservation Practice Implementation
- Estimated Phosphorus Reductions in the Lake Champlain and Lake Memphremagog Watersheds
- Technical Assistance Visits
- Production Area Inspected
- Production Area Compliance
- Enforcement Actions

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Data Highlights

- Every \$1 in state funding invested leverages an additional \$0.60 in federal and farm match
- VT Farms have contributed \$7.7 million in match for water quality projects since FY16
- Agriculture contributes over 95% total reported phosphorus reductions for VT across all land use sectors
- Cover Crops provide the most phosphorus reductions
- COVID impacted all of our programs primarily in FY2021
- Compliance by farm facility rose to 70% statewide in FY 2022
- Production area violations continue to dominate overall enforcement actions



Waste Importation on Farms

- Non-Sewage Waste Program
 - Regulates generators of solid waste (excluding sewage) that import to farms-authority is only for NMP and waste storage capacity
 - Contract to assess PFAS & Microplastics in digestate, soil, & finished compost being imported to farms
 - Second contract to be released soon to manage data from the largest on farm importation project in Middlebury
- Residuals Management Program
 - Rules drafted to manage on farm solid waste composting exempt from ANR rules for food scraps and food processing wastes



Farm Determinations & Farm Structures

- Significant increase in requests for Farm Determinations due to:
 - Revisions in RAPs about farm size
 - Accessory on Farm Business development
 - Act 250 on existing parcels entering agricultural use
 - Section 248 projects for energy development
 - Stormwater Utilities
 - Use Value Appraisal program
 - Universal Recycling Law
 - Exemptions for “farming” in Statute
- Farm Structures are becoming more complex to define due to the same reasons above and mostly related to farms diversifying



Vermont Pay for Performance Program

- 1 of 10 Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Alternative Funding Awards selected across the nation in 2020
- new and innovative program that uses environmental modeling
- performance-based payments to Vermont farmers for reducing phosphorus (P) losses from their agricultural fields
- field and farm scale results for conservation planning purposes
- \$7 Million Award, \$5 Million available for farms across 4 years

“...provides valuable information about average phosphorus losses on each of our fields so we can better plan on where to focus our conservation and nutrient planning efforts in the future.” – Geoff Sweeney, St. Albans, VT

Please be in touch to learn more!

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