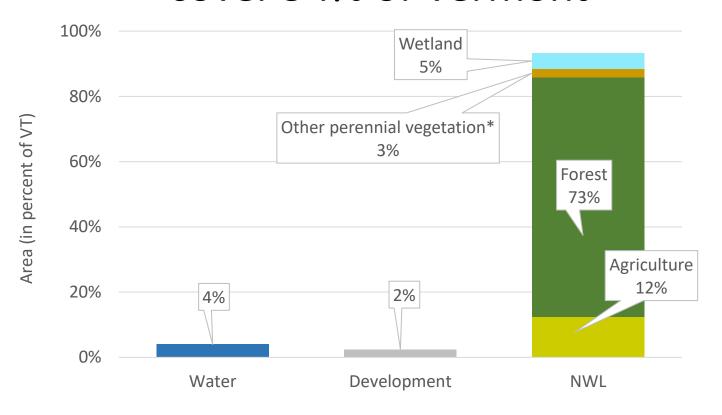
Initial VT Climate Action Plan & Agriculture

Ryan Patch Agriculture Climate and Land Use Policy Manager Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets Presentation to: Senate Committee on Agriculture February 8, 2023





Natural & Working Lands (NWL) cover 94% of Vermont





Data source: 2016 National Land Cover Database; Images courtesy FPR

^{*}Other perennial vegetation includes grasslands, shrub/scrublands, and turf

Ag & Eco Subcommittee Membership & Staff

Co-Chair: Abbie Corse*, The Corse Dairy Farm

Co-Chair: Billy Coster, ANR

Member #1: Lauren Oates*, The Nature Conservancy

Member #2: Anson Tebbetts* (Ryan Patch), VAAFM

Member #3: Iris Hsiang*

Member #4: John Roberts, Champlain Valley Farmers Coalition

Member #5: Judy Dow, Gedakina

Member #6: Alissa White, University of Vermont

Member #7: Jake Claro, VT Sustainable Jobs Fund

Member #8: David Mears, Audubon Vermont

Member #9: Charlie Hancock, Cold Hollow to Canada

Staff: Ali Kosiba, FPR; Marli Rupe, DEC; Bob Popp, VFW; Alex DePillis, VAAFM; Judson Peck, VAAFM

^{*}Vermont Climate Councilor



Published: December 2021

Section 11.4: Agricultural Pathways for Mitigation (19 pages)

Section 13: Pathways for Adaptation and Building Resilience in Natural and Working Lands (38 pages)

Section 14: Pathways for Sequestration and Storing Carbon (13 pages)

INITIAL VERMONT CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Vermont Climate Council
DECEMBER 2021



Vermont is Getting Warmer and Wetter: Climate Change Study

The Green Mountain State has warmed nearly 2°F, with a 21% jump in precipitation

Key findings



Climate change is here – and impacting communities across Vermont.



Vermont is getting warmer. Winters are warming more quickly. Snow season is getting shorter.



Vermont is getting wetter Heavy rain events happe more often, contributing more flooding and water quality problems.



Multiple, complex impacts could lead to surprises.



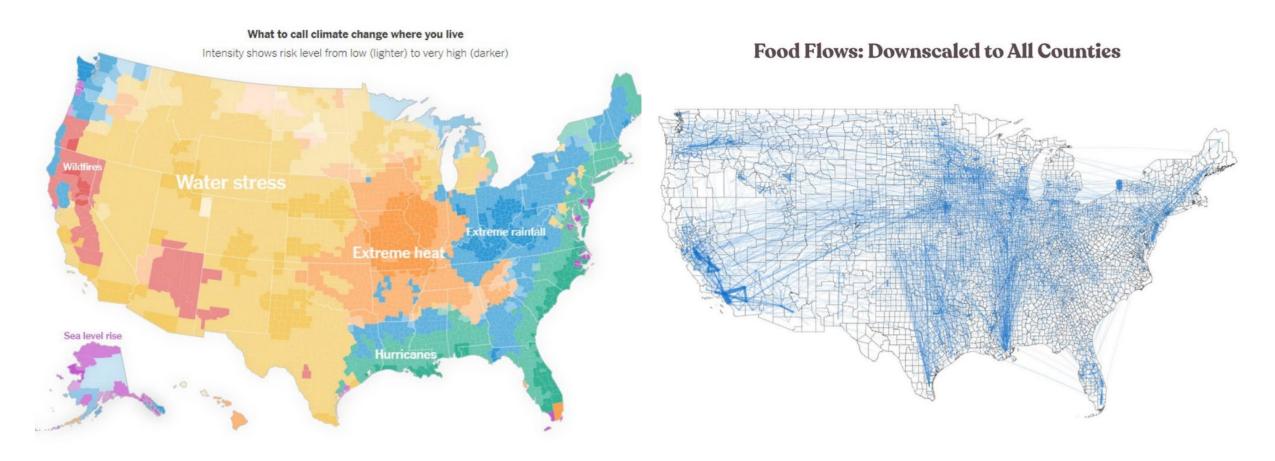
Climate impacts and risks will increase without action.



Dig in to learn more...

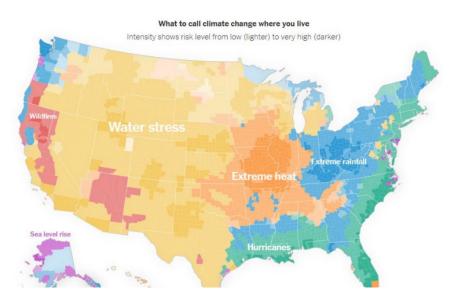
National and Vermont Climate Impacts



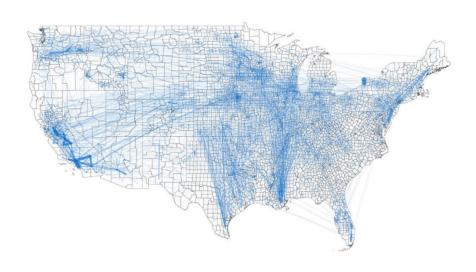


National and Vermont Climate Impacts





Food Flows: Downscaled to All Counties





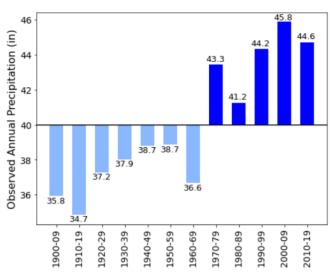


Figure 1-8: Decadal averages of observed annual precipitation in Vermoi t

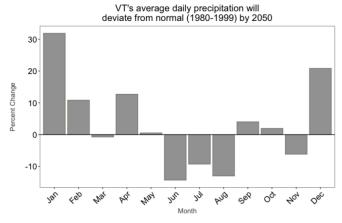


Figure 5-5: Projected daily mean precipitation in 2050 as percent deviation relative to 1980s–1990s shows lower summer growing season precipitation (USGS, 2021a)

Source: The Vermont Climate Assessment 2021. Burlington, Vermont: Gund Institute for Environment at the University of Vermont. On the web: https://vtclimate.org

Importance of Organic Matter & Soil Health



USDA-NRCS SOIL HEALTH INFOGRAPHIC SERIES #002 SECRETS what's underneath healthy soil has amazing water-retention capacity. increase in organic matter results in as much as gal of available soil water per acre. Source: Kansas State Extension Agronomy e-Updates, Number 357, July 6, 2012 Want more soil secrets? Check out www.nrcs.usda.gov



Source: USDA NRCS

Importance of Organic Matter – Mitigation, Adaptation, Resilience







Source: USDA NRCS

Source: North Dakota State University, Soil Health Minute: Rainfall Simulator; https://youtu.be/Y4pwNIPX4AA

Importance of Organic Matter & Soil Health

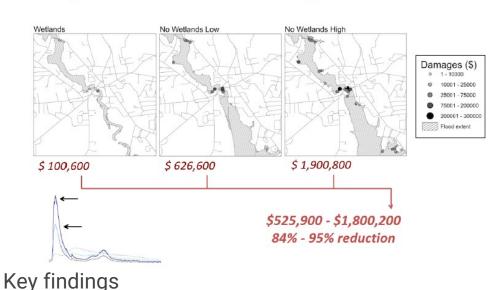
AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

Middlebury - economic damages

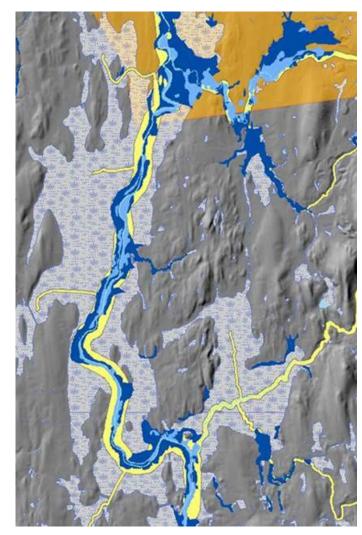




Source: USDA NRCS



- •During Tropical Storm Irene in 2011, floodplains and wetlands diminished damages in Middlebury, VT, by 84 to 95 percent saving potentially as much as \$1.8 million in flood damages.
- •Middlebury saves an annual average of \$126,000 to \$450,000 in damages due to the Otter Creek floodplain, which reduced damages by 54 to 78 percent, on average, across 10 flooding events.



50% of wetlands in the watershed are managed by farms

Source: Keri Bryan Watson , Gund Institute, UVM

UVM Extension: State of Soil Health in Vermont



Table 2. Soil carbon stocks to 30 cm depth in MT carbon per hectare, collected on Vermont farms in 2021 by the State of Soil Health project.

		MT C	hectare	
Field Type	Number of fields	Min	Mean	Max
Vegetable	17	31.1	65.1	98.6
Field crops	4	75.7	107.7	148.8
Corn	112	33.4	84.1	144.0
Pasture	21	63.4	95.8	170.4
Hay	37	31.3	94.1	164.1
All fields	191	31.1	86.1	170.4

Table 4. Long term research trial of corn cropping systems at Borderview Farm documents changes in organic carbon content. Treatments with the same letter did not perform significantly different from each other. Bolded treatments were significantly different from continuous corn.

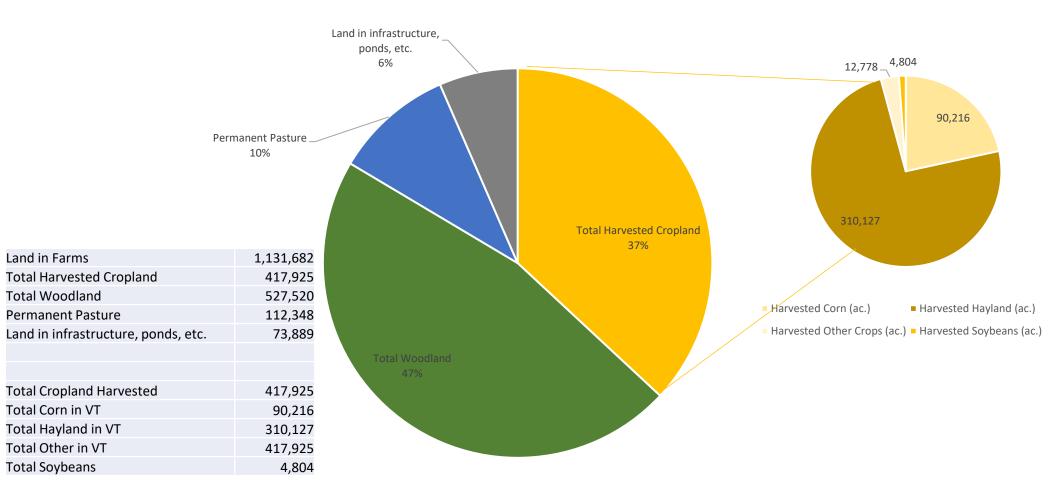
Corn cropping system	Organic matter % in 2021	Additional annualized change in organic matte over 11 years over continuous corn
Continuous corn	3.29% °	~
Corn-hay rotation, year 2	4.25% ^a	0.087% per year
Corn-hay rotation, year 7	3.55% ^b	0.024% per year
No till	3.60% b	0.028% per year
No till and cover crop	3.56% b	0.025% per year
Winter cover crop	3.28% ^c	~

Study generated rough estimates of realistic potential for soil carbon sequestration in the top 30 cm (1 foot) of agricultural soils in Vermont: Investments in soil building raising SOM from 4.3% to 6% over 19 Years.

That would sequester an equivalent of 937,494 MT CO2e annually. Annual soil carbon sequestration at that annual rate is the same as the emissions from 200,000 cars.



Land managed by farms in Vermont, 2017



Source: 2017 USDA NASS Ag Census



Vermont Climate Action Plan & Agriculture

Mitigation

- Reduction of GHG Emissions
- Sequestration and Storage of Carbon in Soils

Resilience

- Farms & Food Production
 - Viability
- Food System
- Watershed & Flood Resilience





Vermont Climate Action Plan & Agriculture

Mitigation

- Reduction of GHG Emissions
- Sequestration and Storage of Carbon in Soils

Resilience

- Food Security & Food Systems
- Farms & Food Production
 - Viability
- Watershed & Flood Resilience





Vermont Climate Action Plan & Agriculture

Mitigation

- Reduction of GHG Emissions
- Sequestration and Storage of Carbon in Soils

- Reduces emissions
- Sequesters Carbon

Resilience

- Food Security & Food Systems
- Farms & Food Production
 - Viability
- Watershed & Flood Resilience

- Improve Drought & Flood Resilience
- Decrease input costs

Adaptation

Agricultural Soils

Cover Crop

Nutrient Management

Conservation Tillage

Conservation Crop Rotation

Residue and Tillage Management, No Till

Pasture and Hay Planting



Precision Agriculture
Prescribed Grazing
Rotational Grazing



Existing State Programs that address Section 11.4: Agricultural Pathways for Mitigation from Initial Vermont Climate Action Plan

Recommendation Reference Number: CAP Section 11.4 & Section 14, Strategy 1, Action (a) - (j)	AAFM Program		
a. Agronomic practice implementation	FAP		
c. Grazing Management	PAI		
b. Expand Capital Equipment Assistance Program	CEAP		
c. Grazing Implementation	PSFW		
e. Edge of Field Practices: CREP	BMP		
h. Methane Capture & Utilization	DIVIP		
d. Agroforestry			
f. Agricultural Environmental Management Program			
g. Nutrient Management Plan Development and Implementation	Ag-CWIP		
i. Research Manure management for climate			
j. Research Climate feed management			
Section 14 Pathway 2: Viability	WLEI		

Section 14, Strategy 2; Action 1



1. Develop a methodology and protocol for quantifying climate mitigation, resilience, and adaptation impacts of existing state and federal water quality implementation programs as reported through the annual Clean Water Initiative Performance Report.

							(Sorted by	Acreage)
Practice Code	Practice Name			TOTAL				
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total	Average
340	Cover Crop	28,381	23,408	29,615	24,114	36,885	142,404	28,481
590	Nutrient Management	12,992	10,012	9,792	8,051	14,545	55,393	11,079
345	Conservation Tillage	8,940	9,506	10,703	12,143	8,142	49,434	9,887
328	Conservation Crop Rotation	10,516	11,709	13,156	4,632	2,181	42,194	8,439
329	Residue and Tillage Management, No Till	2,963	2,900	3,098	6,322	3,275	18,559	3,712
512	Pasture and Hay Planting	2,080	1,713	2,450	1,455	1,917	9,613	1,923
913VTAg	Precision Agriculture	0	0	0	4,041	4,297	8,338	1,668
528	Prescribed Grazing	1,808	1,224	1,472	1,826	1,074	7,404	1,481
901VTAg	Manure Injection	0	0	0	2,247	3,787	6,034	1,207
911VTAg	Rotational Grazing	0	0	0	2,889	2,563	5,452	1,090
902VTAg	Aeration	433	475	2,023	572	1,797	5,300	1,060
314	Brush Management	708	782	1,058	1,219	1,450	5,217	1,043
633	Waste Recycling	2,220	1,181	548	0	92	4,041	808
PAC	Production Area Compliance	0	792	540	1,185	1,385	3,902	780



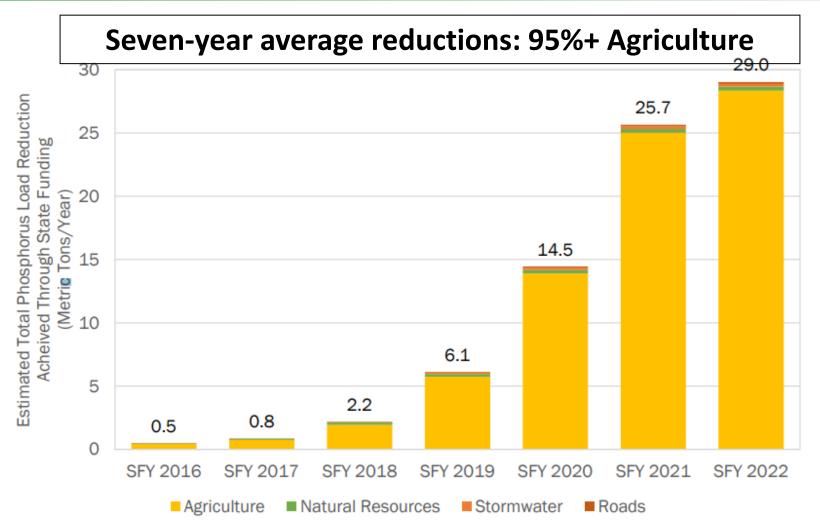


Figure 21. Annual estimated total phosphorus load reductions (metric tons per year) associated with statefunded clean water projects in the Lake Champlain and Lake Memphremagog basins by land use sector, SFY 2016–2022.³²

Source: https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/Vermont-Clean-Water-Initiative-2022-Performance-Report.pdf (page 36)



Agriculture = Most cost effective

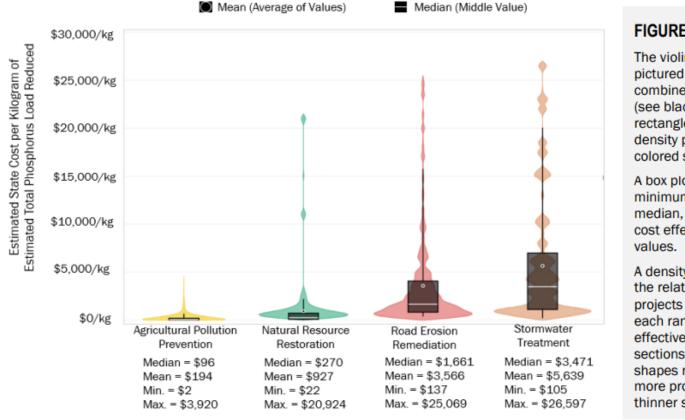


FIGURE GUIDE

The violin plots, pictured below, combine a box plot (see black rectangles/lines) and a density plot (see colored shapes).

A box plot shows the minimum, maximum, median, and average cost effectiveness values.

A density plot shows the relative number of projects falling into each range of cost effectiveness. Wider sections of the colored shapes represent more projects than thinner sections.

Figure 22. State investment per estimated kilogram of total phosphorus load reduced over the design life of each project type, based on clean water projects funded through State of Vermont agencies completed SFY 2016–2022 (excludes local and federal leveraged funds).³⁵



§ 578. Greenhouse gas reduction requirements

- (a) Greenhouse gas reduction requirements. Vermont shall reduce emissions of greenhouse gases from within the geographical boundaries of the State and those emissions outside the boundaries of the State that are caused by the use of energy in Vermont, as measured and inventoried pursuant to section 582 of this title, by:
- (1) not less than 26 percent from 2005 greenhouse gas emissions by January 1, 2025 pursuant to the State's membership in the United States Climate Alliance and commitment to implement policies to achieve the objectives of the 2016 Paris Agreement;
- (2) not less than 40 percent from 1990 greenhouse gas emissions by January 1, 2030 pursuant to the State's 2016 Comprehensive Energy Plan; and
- (3) not less than 80 percent from 1990 greenhouse gas emissions by January 1, 2050 pursuant to the State's 2016 Comprehensive Energy Plan.



Vermont's Current Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Profile

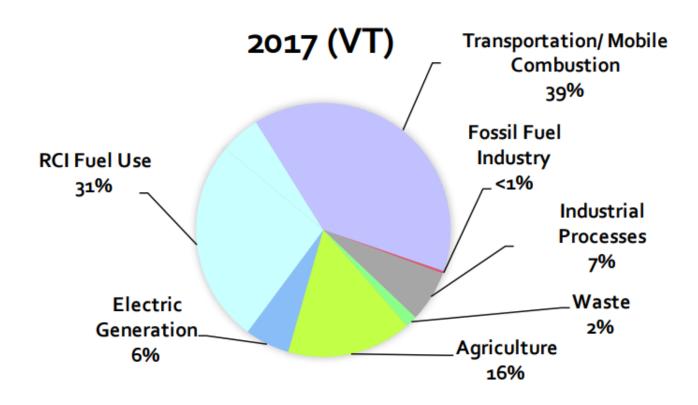
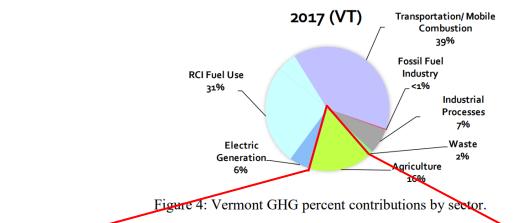
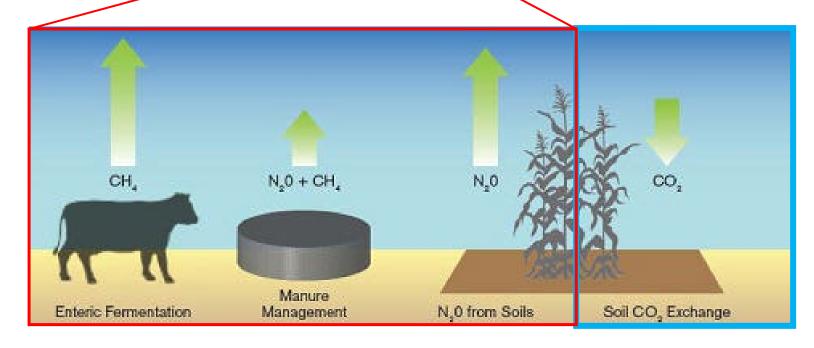


Figure 4: Vermont GHG percent contributions by sector.





GHG Emissions & Sequestration

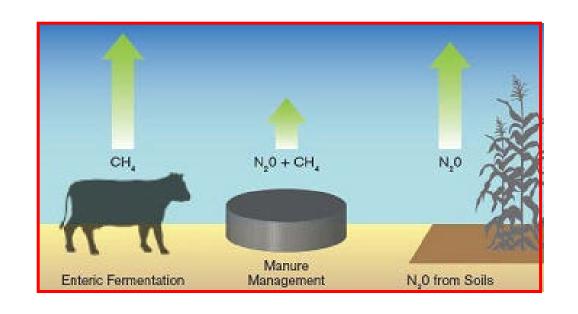


Source: https://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/agriculture-and-the-environment/agricultural-practices/climate-change-and-agriculture/greenhouse-gases-and-agriculture/?id=1329321969842
Source: https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/aqc/climate-change/documents/ Vermont Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Update 1990-2017 Final.pdf



Vermont's Current Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Profile: Agriculture

Agriculture	
	Enteric Fermentation
	Manure Management
	Agricultural Soils
	Liming and Urea Fertilization



Agriculture	1.23	1.19	1.30	1.32	1.30	1.32	1.29	1.29	1.28	1.38	1.29	1.29	1.26	1.28	1.25	1.29	1.31	1.35	1.38	1.37
Enteric Fermentation	0.70	0.67	0.69	0.68	0.67	0.66	0.65	0.63	0.63	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.62	0.63	0.62	0.64	0.64	0.63	0.64	0.64
Manure Management	0.18	0.19	0.26	0.29	0.30	0.32	0.31	0.33	0.32	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.34	0.36	0.35
Agricultural Soils	0.35	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.30	0.32	0.31	0.31	0.30	0.32	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33
Liming and Urea Fertilization	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.05

Source: https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/aqc/climate-change/documents/ Vermont Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Update 1990-2017 Final.pdf

Source: https://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/agriculture-and-the-environment/agricultural-practices/climate-change-and-agriculture/greenhouse-gases-and-agriculture/?id=1329321969842



Vermont's Current Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Profile

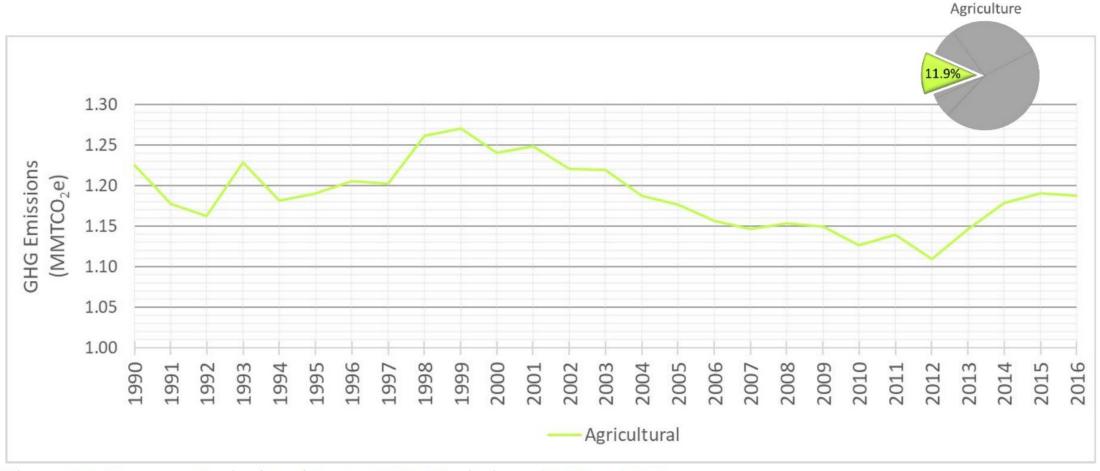
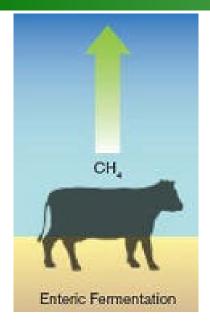


Figure 13: Vermont Agricultural Sector GHG Emissions (1990 – 2016).

Mitigation Summary

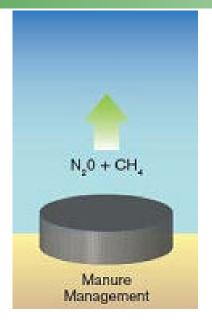




Example Mitigation Strategies:

- Dietary adjustments
- 2. Improved genetics
- 3. Improving reproductive performance

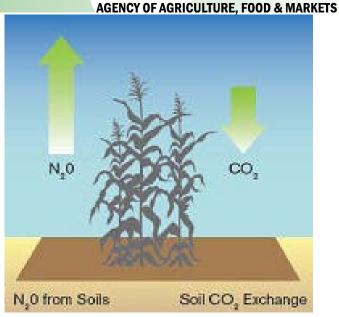




Example Mitigation Strategies:

- Waste Storage Digestion / Energy Production
- 2. Covering Waste Storage Facilities





Example Mitigation Strategies:

- 1. Reduced Tillage
- 2. Cover Crop
- 3. Crop Rotation





Methods for Growing Crops have different environmental outcomes



Management:

Full width tillage No Nutrient Management No Field specific conservation practices

Management:

Cover crop Reduced and No-Till Riparian Buffers Crop Rotation **DEC P Reductions**

30% P Efficency 50% P Efficency

40% P Efficency

25% P Efficency

USDA COMET ERCs:

0.15 tons CO₂e/ac/yr

0.19 tons CO₂e/ac/yr

0.74 tons CO₂e/ac/yr

0.22 tons CO₂e/ac/yr

Source: https://comet-planner.com

Agricultural conservation practice tracking



COMET-Planner Emission Reduction Coefficients (ERC)	Units:	tons CO2e/a	ac/yr	CO2 Equivo	lents	Addison Co	unty	Vermont		Negative =	Emissions			http://comet-p	lanner.com/
NRCS Conservation Practices	Soil Carbon	Biomass Carbon	Fossil CO2	Biomass Burning CO2	Biomass Burning N2O	Biomass Burning CH4	Liming	Total CO2	Direct Soil N2O	Indirect Soil N2O	Total N2O	Soil CH4	Total Emission Reductions	Minimum Total Emission Reductions*	Maximum Total Emission Reductions*
Crop Land															
Cover Crop (CPS 340) - Add Non-Legume Seasonal Cover Crop (with 25% Fertilizer N Reduction) to Non-Irrigated Cropland	0.16							0.16	-0.01		-0.01	0	0.15	-0.09	0.54
Cover Crop (CPS 340) - Add Legume Seasonal Cover Crop (with 50% Fertilizer N Reduction) to Non-Irrigated Cropland	0.39			0		0		0.39	-0.19	-0.04	-0.23	0	0.16	-0.15	0.84
Conservation Crop Rotation (CPS 328) - Decrease Fallow Frequency or Add Perennial Crops to Rotations	0.21							0.21	0.01		0.01	0	0.22	N.E.**	N.E.**
Residue and Tillage Management - Reduced Till (CPS 345) - Intensive Till to Reduced Till on Non-Irrigated Cropland	0.17					0		0.17	0.01		0.01	0	0.19	0.05	0.34
Residue and Tillage Management - No-Till (CPS 329) - Intensive Till to No Till or Strip Till on Non-Irrigated Cropland	0.5							0.5	0.04	0.01	0.05	0	0.56	0.29	0.77
Residue and Tillage Management - No-Till (CPS 329) - Reduced Till to No Till or Strip Till on Non-Irrigated Cropland	0.4					0		0.4	0.03	0.01	0.04	0	0.44	0.22	0.61
Nutrient Management (CPS 590) - Improved N Fertilizer Management on Non-Irrigated Croplands - Reduce Fertilizer Application Rate by 15%	-0.02							-0.02	0			0	-0.01	-0.17	0.13
Nutrient Management (CPS 590) - Replace Synthetic N Fertilizer with Compost (CN ratio 10) on Non-Irrigated Croplands	0.2			0	0	0		0.2	-0.15	-0.04	-0.19	0	0.01	-0.27	0.23
Nutrient Management (CPS 590) - Replace Synthetic N Fertilizer with Compost (CN ratio 25) on Non-Irrigated Croplands	0.49			0	0	0		0.49	-0.1	-0.02	-0.12	0	0.37	0.11	0.6
Nutrient Management (CPS 590) - Replace Synthetic N Fertilizer with Dairy Manure on Non-Irrigated Croplands	0.22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.22	-0.13	-0.03	-0.16	0	0.06	-0.18	0.27

^{*}Minimum and maximum emission reductions represent the minimum and maximum total emissions over a range of soil, climate and management conditions within multi-county regions. Min/Max emissions are not estimated for all practices, due to limitations in quantification methods

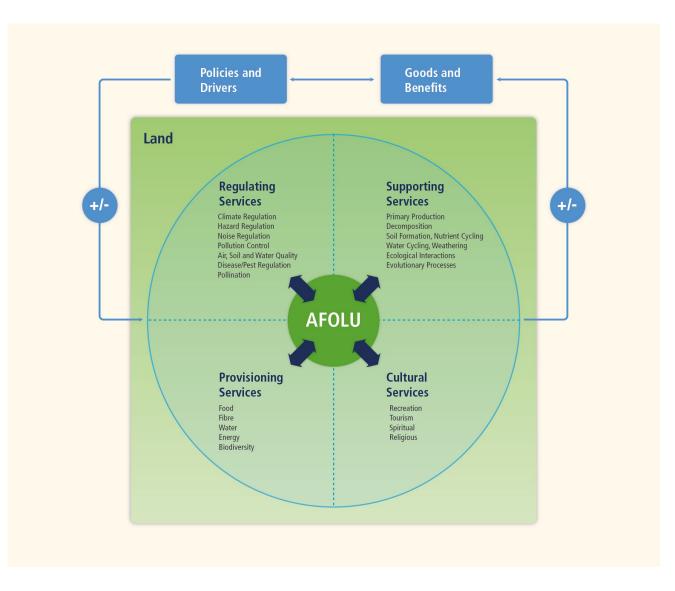
^{**}Values were not estimated due to limited data on reductions of greenhouse gas emissions from this practice



Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU)

Executive Summary

Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU) is unique among the sectors considered in this volume, since the mitigation potential is derived from both an enhancement of removals of greenhouse gases (GHG), as well as reduction of emissions through management of land and livestock (robust evidence; high agreement). The land provides food that feeds the Earth's human population of ca. 7 billion, fibre for a variety of purposes, livelihoods for billions of people worldwide, and is a critical resource for sustainable development in many regions. Agriculture is frequently central to the livelihoods of many social groups, especially in developing countries where it often accounts for a significant share of production. In addition to food and fibre, the land provides a multitude of ecosystem services; climate change mitigation is just one of many that are vital to human well-being (robust evidence; high agreement). Mitigation options in the AFOLU sector, therefore, need to be assessed, as far as possible, for their potential impact on all other services provided by land. [Section 11.1]



Source: https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/ipcc_wg3_ar5_chapter11.pdf Image Source: https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/ipcc_wg3_ar5_chapter11.pdf

USA NDC: 04/22/2021 (Rejoining the Paris Agreement)





The United States of America Nationally Determined Contribution

Reducing Greenhouse Gases in the United States: A 2030 Emissions Target After a careful process involving analysis and consultation across the United States federal government and with leaders in state, local, and tribal governments, the United States is setting an economy-wide target of reducing its net greenhouse gas emissions by 50-52 percent below 2005 levels in 2030. The National Climate Advisor developed this NDC in consultation with the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, and it was approved by President Joseph R. Biden Jr..

Beyond the energy sector, the United States will also reduce emissions from forests and agriculture and enhance carbon sinks through a range of programs and measures for ecosystems ranging from our forests and agricultural soils to our rivers and coasts. Actions to be pursued include, for example:

• Agriculture and lands: America's vast lands provide opportunities to both reduce emissions, and sequester more carbon dioxide. The United States will support scaling of climate smart agricultural practices (including, for example, cover crops), reforestation, rotational grazing, and nutrient management practices. In addition, federal and state governments will invest in forest protection and forest management, and engage in intensive efforts to reduce the scope and intensity of catastrophic wildfires, and to restore fire-damaged forest lands. Alongside these efforts, the United States will support nature-based coastal resilience projects including pre-disaster planning as well as efforts to increase sequestration in waterways and oceans by pursuing "blue carbon."

Ag Emission Reccomendations in CAP



- 1. Develop a methodology and protocol for quantifying climate mitigation, resilience, and adaptation impacts of existing state and federal water quality implementation programs as reported through the annual Clean Water Initiative Performance Report.
- 2. The Vermont Climate Council has recommended developing and issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) that will review and analyze methodological gaps of emission inventory tools currently used by the State of Vermont to quantify greenhouse gas emissions for evaluating changes in the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector and the tools' alignment with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and peer state methodologies and approaches. The specific recommendations for this RFP can be found in the Carbon Budget Report memo found in Appendix 10.
- 3. Based on the findings of the technical RFP mentioned in action step (b) of this strategy, the VCC should consider recommending that the State of Vermont GHG emissions inventory protocol established in 10 V.S.A. § 582 be amended to include an inventory of GHG emissions that align with the intent and standards of the 2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories that will include a net GHG emission accounting for the agriculture, forestry and other land use (AFOLU) sector

Ag Emission Inventory Research Project



1. United States Climate Alliance Funded Technical Research Project:



Review of Agricultural Sector Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sequestration in Vermont

Release Date: September 26, 2022

Proposals Due: October 21, 2022

Contact for Proposals: Jane Lazorchak, Director of the Global Warming Solutions Act, Agency of Natural

Resources | jane.lazorchak@vermont.gov; (802) 505-0561



EPA SIT & National Inventory Currently Two Chapters

SIT Chapter 5

EPA SIT	Category	GHG	VT	DEC
	Agriculture (emissions)			
2	Enteric Fermentation	CH4	Yes	Yes
3	Manure Management	CH4, N2O	Yes	Yes
4	Agriculture Soils	N2O		
4a	Plant Residues & Legumes	N2O	Yes	Yes
	Histosols (conversion)	N2O	Yes	No
4b	Plant Fertilizers	N2O	Yes	Yes
4c	Animal Calculation Values	N2O	Yes	Yes
5	Rice Cultivation	CH4	No	No
6	Liming of Soils	CO2	Yes	Yes
7	Urea Fertilization	CO2	Yes	Yes
8	Ag Residue Burning	CH4, N2O	No	No

SIT Chapter 6

EPA SIT		GHG	VT T	DEC
	Land Use, Land-Use Change, and	Forestry (seq	uestration)	
7	Ag Soil Carbon Flux (Cropland and	Grassland)	Yes	No
	Cropland Remaining Cropland			
	Land Converted to Cropland			
	Grassland Remaining Grassland			
	Land Converted to Grassland			
2	Forest Carbon Flux	flux	Yes	No
2a	Forest Remaining Forest			
	Land Converted to Forest			
	Forest Converted to Land			
3	C Storage in Urban Trees	storage	Yes	Yes
4	Settlement Soils (developed land	N2O	Unknown	No
5	Forest Fires	CH4, N2O	No	No
6	Food Scraps & Yard Trimmings (la	flux	Unknown	No

Contact



Ryan Patch VAAFM Ryan.Patch@vermont.gov 802-272-0323