

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets Overview

Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets Mission Statement:

Facilitate, support and encourage the growth and viability of agriculture while protecting the working landscape, human health, animal health, plant health, consumers and the environment.

Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets Vision Statement

The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets will help to develop a safe, secure, ecologically responsive, profitable and fair local foods system for Vermont and Vermont customers which will enable Vermont to be a leader and participant in the global food system. The Agency will do this by assuming a leadership position important to the evolving food system, through access to and the application of resources (human, financial, social and environmental) and by supporting the creation of new opportunities.

The Agency has four divisions; Administration, Food Safety/Consumer Protection, Agricultural Development and Agricultural Resource Management. These divisions carry out the mission and vision of the Agency. The Agency currently has 101 full time employees.

Division	Number of Employees	Number located outside of Montpelier-Field, lab	Number in Montpelier
Administration	14	0	14
Food Safety Consumer Protection	38	28	10
Agricultural Development	13	0	13
Ag Resource Management	36	17	19

The Agency of Agriculture is funded through a mix of General, Special and Federal Funds. As with other agencies in State Government, the Agency had a rescission in August 2014.

Post Rescission FY 15 Budget by Division and funding source:

Division	General Funds	Special Funds	Global Commitment	Transfers	Federal Funds	Total
Administration	\$921,465	\$466,399	0	0	\$284,699	\$1,672,563
Food Safety Consumer Protection	\$2,276,613	\$3,374,114	\$34,006	\$6,922	\$831,737	\$6,523,392
Agricultural Development	\$2,162,203	\$915,846	0	\$112,635	\$415,587	\$3,606,271
Ag Resource Management	\$2,358,559	\$2,358,754	\$56,272	\$355,750	\$1,142,879	\$6,272,214
Total	\$7,718,842	\$7,115,113	\$90,278	\$475,307	\$2,674,902	\$18,074,440

Divisions

Administration

The administration Division provides oversight and direction for the entire Agency to include policy development, legal counsel, and enforcement actions. In addition, it conducts agricultural land use planning, develops the biennial report and provides business and research services for the Agency. The Licensing and Registration Unit are administered through this division.

Section/Group	Function	Jobs	Environment	Food Safety & Health
Business Office	All financial functions of Agency – grants, contracts, budget, accounts payable, account receivable, fleet management, etc.			
IT	Computer and Database management for Agency			
Land Use	Act 250, Conservation and Local Zoning Issues	X	X	
Enforcement	Assistant Attorney General and Docket Management		X	X
License and Registration	Administers all licenses and registration programs for Agency	X		

Food Safety Consumer Protection

The Food Safety Consumer Protection Division carries out its mission of protecting the health and welfare of Vermonters and their livestock by advancing a safe and secure food supply within a marketplace that provides fair and equal access to consumers and processors, while enhancing Vermont's working landscape, rural character and local economies. This division has regulatory authority for dairy, meat, animal health and consumer protection, including the State's weights and measures program and the affiliated metrology lab.

Section/Group	Function	Jobs	Environment	Food Safety & Health
Dairy	Regulatory & technical assistance for dairy industry – dairy farm inspection & technical assistance; dairy manufacturing plant inspection & technical assistance including extensive assistance to new start-ups; retail dairy case inspection & raw milk farm inspections & technical assistance. Farmer protection through securing bonds to cover milk purchases from farms. Oversee the Vermont Dairy Promotion Council both	X	X	X

	collection of assessments & grant oversight on council activities. Export assistance through providing certificates of good manufacture & free sale.			
Animal Health	<p>Provides technical assistance for livestock & poultry industries. Enforces disease testing & livestock interstate movement regulations. Implements animal disease control & eradication programs.</p> <p>Implements & maintain compliance with federally promulgated rules. Regulates livestock dealers, livestock transporters, livestock packers, pet shops, animal shelters, & rescue organizations.</p> <p>Performs regulatory disease testing of livestock & poultry.</p> <p>Investigates reports of foreign animal diseases. Conducts tissues residue investigations on dairy farms.</p> <p>Maintains & exercises emergency response plans for animal disease outbreaks & natural disasters. Regulates & inspects captive cervid facilities.</p> <p>Coordinates with the Fish & Wildlife Depart. & Depart. of Health on overlapping animal & human health issues.</p> <p>Maintains a presence & performs regulatory duties at all ag events, including fairs, bird swaps, farmers markets & trade shows to promote an understanding of VT's animal related laws & regulations</p>	X		X
Consumer Protection	<p>Regulatory for consumer protection – scales, scanners, gas pumps, LP gas meters, fuel heating oil meters, cord of wood, maple industry certification & hydrometers, other food commodity inspection, COOL program inspections, Good Agricultural Practice inspections (GAP), apiary work, export support with Free Sale Certificates for maple.</p> <p>Weights & measures lab calibrates scales, hydrometers & others meters for in-state and regional level.</p>	X		X
Meat Inspection	<p>Regulatory & technical assistance for the meat & poultry industry.</p> <p>Regulatory oversight for slaughter, processing, handling & sale of all meat & poultry products within VT.</p> <p>State level program that is required to be</p>	X	X	X

	<p>maintained at a level that is “equal to” the federal meat inspection program.</p> <p>Technical assistance for new & expanding businesses, coordination with other state agencies for proper waste/wastewater disposal in commercial & on-farm operations, technical assistance with food safety plans/HACCP; Inspection/licensure of slaughter & processing facilities, custom slaughter/processors, retail vendors, brokers, renderers, public warehouse operators, animal food manufactures, 4D operations, , & on-farm slaughter.</p> <p>Review of humane handling plans.</p>			
State Veterinarian	<p>Responsible for protecting public health & food safety.</p> <p>Protects & promotes the economic viability of VT’s animal agriculture industries through successful education, technical assistance, & prudent regulation & enforcement.</p> <p>Provides expertise to local, state, & federal emergency management colleagues during disasters that affect animals.</p> <p>Coordinates federal rule implementation with other New England State Veterinarians.</p> <p>Participates in animal disease issues on a national level through policy setting & memorandums of understanding.</p> <p>Limits spread of diseases of livestock & poultry through the issuance of quarantines to farms/other premises to stop the movement of live animals & animal products.</p>	X		X

Agricultural Development

The Agricultural Development Division supports and develops Vermont's agricultural industry by providing leadership, technical and business expertise, and coordination of multiple partners and funding sources.

Group/Section	Function	Jobs	Environment	Food Safety & Health
Business Development	<p>Manage the Working Lands Program, International and Domestic Export Program, and provide technical assistance to emerging ag businesses by identifying markets and grant funding.</p> <p>Oversight and management of</p>	X		X

	Eastern States Exhibition VT Building			
Renewable Energy for Farms	Coordinate with partners to educate, provide technical assistance and manage and direct funding to farmers for renewable energy activities on farms. Wood heat for greenhouses, manure digestion for electricity and heat, determination of best practice for farms.	X	X	
On-Farm Education	Farm Safety, HR Training, Farm First Program and Farm Labor Issues.	X		X
Farm to School and Institution	Interact with partners and farmers to increase local food procurement for schools and intuitions in Vermont. Developing programs to meet Food Safety Modernization Act requirements. Performs promotional and development work with farmers markets and food hubs.	X		X

Agriculture Resource Management

The Agricultural Resource Management Division has several key objectives and strategies to manage Agricultural water quality and the TMDL requirements, granting programs for water quality, pesticide regulation, fertilizer, seed and feed regulation, plant industry, mosquito control and the agency's laboratory.

Group/Section	Function	Jobs	Environment	Food Safety & Health
Water Quality	Implement and manage the LFO, MFO and AAP programs. Manage grant programs to assist farms with BMP, Engineering technical assistance to farms.	X	X	
Pesticide Programs	License pesticide applicators, regulate pesticide sales and use, develop policy locally and nationally, license and register pesticides.	X	X	X
Plant Industry	Regulatory for nursery, ginseng, invasive species and plant disease. Mosquito control – surveys, larvacide and adulticide. Hemp registration.	X	X	X

Enforcement & Compliance	Manage enforcement action by division.		X	X
Laboratory	Analytical services to support regulatory and technical assistance programs for ARM division and FSCP division. Testing for pesticides, fertilizer content, grain content, milk quality, milk components, water for use in food production, and special projects (compost, pesticide emergencies)		X	X