

Best Management Practices (BMP) Cost-Share Policy Document

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets recognizes that water quality projects are being implemented on many farms throughout the State in order to address agricultural pollution reduction goals. The State of Vermont has recognized the need for Best Management Practices and has stated that public assistance in the form of cost-sharing shall be made available to farmers. By statute the Agency cannot exceed 90% cost-share on any agricultural water quality BMP. Beyond that statutory requirement there is a need for additional policy guidance to consistently and equitably provide cost-share on eligible projects.

BMP Program Annual Limit:

State cost-share funding available to farms under the Best Management Practice program shall be limited to a maximum of \$200,000 annually.

BMP Projects associated with Federal Agreements:

1. State cost-share funding grants shall not exceed \$200,000 when practices are associated with a federal agreement.
2. BMP grants shall not exceed the federal contribution amount in the federal agreement. For example: if a project aims to provide an overall 90% cost-share, the federal portion must be at least 45% and the BMP grant would provide up to 45%.
3. Combined state and federal cost-share rates for production area practices aiming to address water quality pollution goals shall not exceed:
 - a. 90% in high priority areas (i.e., areas under Total Maximum Daily Load plans for agricultural pollution, waters designated as Impaired by agricultural sources on the 303d list).
 - b. 85% on all other areas statewide.
4. Combined state and federal cost-share rates for livestock exclusion practices aiming to address water quality pollution goals shall not exceed 90% statewide for fencing, stream crossings, watering facilities, and other directly associated practices with livestock exclusion. This rate does not apply to pasture fencing which is not adjacent to or otherwise excluding livestock access to surface water.
5. Combined state and federal cost-share rates for other non-production area practices, including remote waste storage facilities, aiming to address water quality pollution goals shall not exceed:
 - a. 75% in high priority areas (i.e., areas under Total Maximum Daily Load plans for agricultural pollution, waters designated as Impaired by agricultural sources on the 303d list).
 - b. 50% on all other areas statewide.

State Only BMP Projects:

Where a farm is engaged in an Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets BMP grant and does not have an associated federal cost-share agreement for the same practices, the following limitations apply:

1. State cost-share funding shall not exceed \$75,000 annually. The calendar year (January to December) is the time frame for which the limit cannot be exceeded.
2. Within a 3-year time frame, State-Only BMP grants cannot collectively exceed \$150,000. Three calendar years (January to December) is the time frame for which the limit cannot be exceeded. This limitation does not apply to BMP grants that are in conjunction with federal agreements.
3. Cost-share rates for production area practices aiming to address water quality pollution goals shall not exceed:
 - a. 90% in high priority areas (i.e., areas under Total Maximum Daily Load plans for agricultural pollution, waters designated as Impaired by agricultural sources on the 303d list).
 - b. 85% on all other areas statewide.
4. Cost-share rates for livestock exclusion practices aiming to address water quality pollution goals shall not exceed 90% statewide for fencing, stream-crossings, watering facilities, and other directly associated practices with livestock exclusion. This rate does not apply to pasture fencing which is not adjacent to or otherwise excluding livestock access to surface water.
5. Cost-share rates for other non-production area practices, including remote waste storage facilities, aiming to address water quality pollution goals shall not exceed:
 - a. 75% in high priority areas (areas under Total Maximum Daily Load plans for agricultural pollution, or waters designated as Impaired by agricultural sources on the 303d list).
 - b. 50% on all other areas statewide.

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets hereby agrees to fulfill this policy for the BMP Program.

Secretary
Agriculture, Food & Markets

Date