

2019 OVERVIEW VERMONT AGRICULTURAL WATER QUALITY PARTNERSHIP

Cooperation for Conservation - vtagcleanwater.org

LAKE CHAMPLAIN BASIN PROGRAM

UNITED STATES FISH &
WILDLIFE SERVICE

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
EXTENSION

USDA NATURAL RESOURCES
CONSERVATION SERVICE

USDA FARM SERVICE AGENCY

VERMONT AGENCY OF
AGRICULTURE, FOOD &
MARKETS

VERMONT ASSOCIATION OF
CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
CONSERVATION

VERMONT HOUSING AND
CONSERVATION BOARD

Vermont Agricultural
Water Quality Partnership

INVESTMENTS AND IMPACTS

State and Federal Commitment to Water Quality

FEDERAL FY19 AND STATE FY19

- \$29.2 million dollars invested for implementation of agricultural water quality projects
- 15.89 metric tons estimated phosphorus load reduction
- 11.1% of Lake Champlain Basin Total Maximum Daily Load required phosphorus reductions for agriculture
- Agriculture contributed 97% of total reported phosphorus reductions for VT across all sectors

ON FARM IMPLEMENTATION

Best Management Practice Implementation

95,000 ACRES ANNUAL CROPLAND IN VT

- 29,207 acres of cover crops
- 15,846 acres of conservation tillage
- 22 waste storage facilities to properly store agricultural waste
- 38 heavy use area protection practices implemented to prevent runoff from farm production areas
- 18 farm conservation easements with water quality restrictions
- 11.5 miles of permanent 50 foot riparian buffers

VERMONT FARMS

Commitment from Vermont Farms

6,800 TOTAL FARMS AND 704 DAIRY FARMS IN VT

- \$5.5 million estimated in farmer investment in agricultural conservation practice implementation
- 629 individual contracts and grants with Vermont farms

MARQUIS ORGANIC DAIRY



Marquis Organic Dairy is located in the Upper Missisquoi Watershed, part of Vermont's iconic, yet impaired, Lake Champlain Watershed. Owned by Marc and Tiffany Marquis, the couple purchased the farm from Marc's uncle in 2011 and started their small, certified-organic dairy. Faced with the uncertainty of the dairy industry, and learning the ropes of the State of Vermont's Required Agricultural Practices (RAP's), Marc turned to a host of conservation entities for guidance and support. "I knew I could do more," he said.

It takes a village, they say. Or in this case, a dedicated group of conservation partners who Marc says he has developed relationships with, and a level of trust. The USDA-NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) was instrumental in pulling together the various players and program dollars. Marc wrote his own nutrient management plan after participating in an RCPP-funded workshop sponsored by the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts (VACD) and led by staff from University of Vermont Extension. "The workshop enables farmers to take control and really learn the nuts and bolts of nutrient management planning," explained VACD RCPP Conservation Planner Justin Michaud.

RCPP enabled installation of a host of conservation practices through NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) including stream crossings, animal trails and walkways, a manure pit, improved barnyard, a composting facility, and more. The Agency of Agriculture's Best Management Practice (BMP) program provided additional cost share to make all of the practice implementation affordable for the farm.

In order to protect water quality and improve wildlife habitat, land along the streambanks of Missisquoi River tributaries was removed from production and enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) as riparian forest buffers. With assistance through CREP and the US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, 5,698 trees and shrubs were planted to create 14 acres of buffer, all with a minimum width of 50 feet.

Spearheaded by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) and the Vermont Land Trust (VLT), the Marquis' conserved two parcels, their 122-acre home farm parcel and a 124-acre cropland parcel, through the NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP).

The power of partnership is at work at the Marquis farm, where conservation, hard work, and dedication are paving the way for a bright future, and a healthy farm and environment.

