



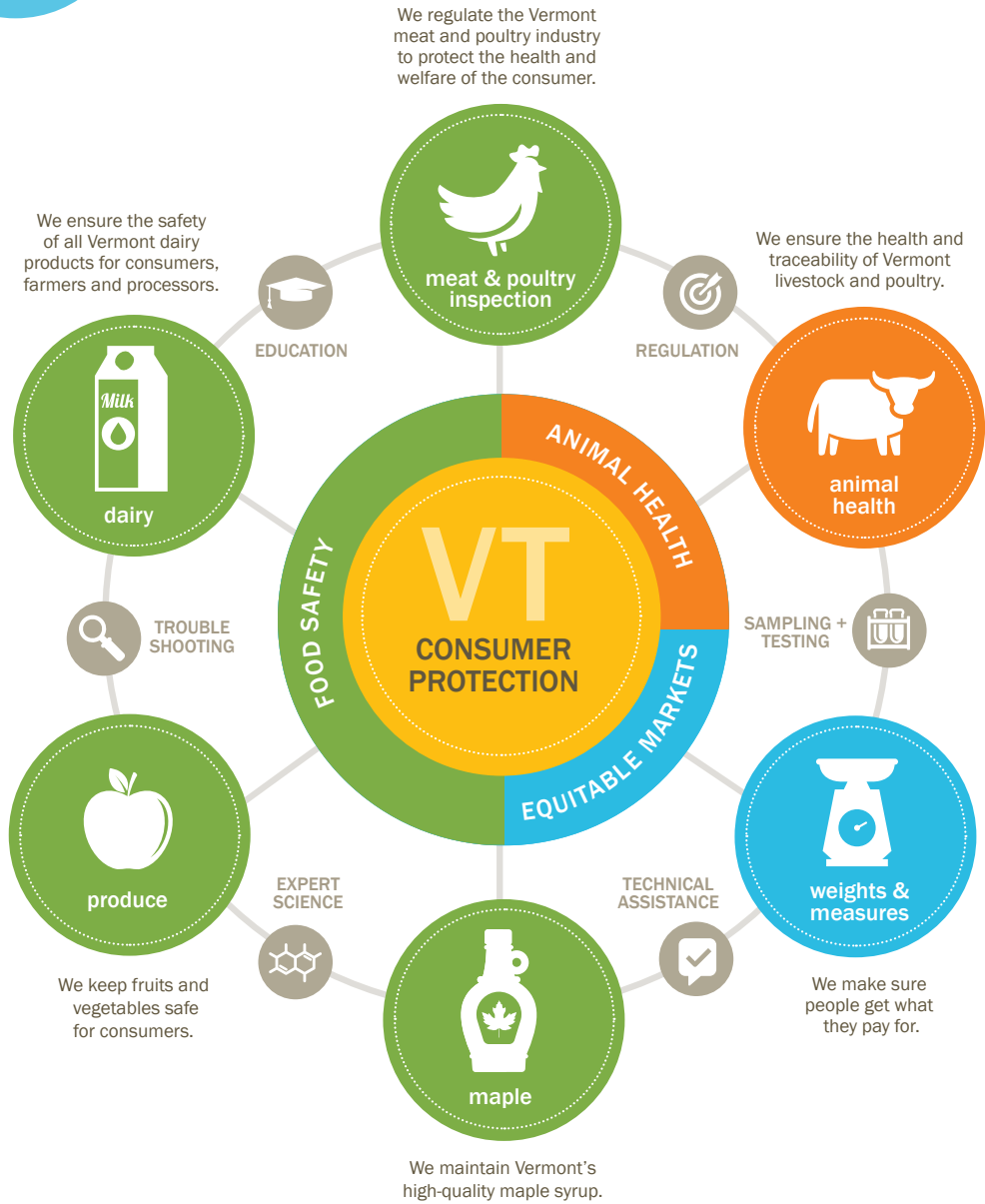
2020-2025

# STRATEGIC PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ensuring safe food and fair markets for all Vermonters

**VERMONT**  
 AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS  
 FOOD SAFETY AND CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION



THE DIVISION DELIVERS EXCELLENCE THROUGH:



INNOVATION



PRECISION



COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

## About the Executive Summary of the Strategic Plan

This is the executive summary of the strategic plan for the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets, Division of Food Safety and Consumer Protection from 2020 to 2025. This executive summary lays out the goals and objectives for the division as a whole and for each of the sections within the division. Since each section within the division has differing federal and state statutory authority, each section has identified key goals and objectives. Additional information, activities and metrics may be viewed in the full plan.

## About the Division of Food Safety and Consumer Protection

The Division of Food Safety and Consumer Protection carries out critical activities to ensure safe foods and fair markets for Vermonters. It is responsible for making sure Vermont-produced milk, meat, fruits and vegetables, and maple products are safe. The division ensures the accuracy of devices used to weigh and measure a host of products, from gas pumps to scanners to scales in retail stores and other outlets. Lastly, the division implements animal disease eradication and traceability programs and completes animal disease surveillance. To efficiently fulfill its mission, the division's work is divided into five sections:

- Weights and Measures
- Agricultural Products
- Dairy
- Meat Inspection
- Animal Health

The division's staff are highly trained and specialized technicians, inspectors, and veterinarians. Staff use a combination of tools, including technical assistance, regulation, testing, inspection, and enforcement, to achieve the division's mission. In many cases, the division works closely with federal counterparts in the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.



## Mission Statement

*The goal of the mission statement is to provide an encompassing, specific, brief statement about the purpose and intent of the division. This statement is helpful in informing employees, customers, and the general public about the division's purpose and activities. It also serves as a filter to help determine if new ideas or tasks brought to the division fit within, or fall outside of, the mission.*

**Maintain and advance an equitable and safe marketplace through fair enforcement of Vermont's laws and rules and technical assistance for the regulated community to foster their success.**

## Tagline

*A short, memorable phrase that captures the division's purpose. The tagline serves as a "brand" for the division on websites, in presentations, at the bottom of emails, and on other products or outputs.*

**Ensuring safe foods and fair markets for all Vermonters**

## Values

*The beliefs and principles that underlie and guide how division staff execute their work, informing how staff interact with one another as well as how they interact with regulated stakeholders and the general public. The following are the values that agency staff members seek to uphold and embody in all their work.*

- **INTEGRITY** We deal honestly and fairly with the public and one another.
- **COMMUNICATION** We build trusting relationships with the regulated community through on-the-ground direct interaction and open communication.
- **DEDICATION** We care for those we serve, which is evident through our teamwork, kindness, and professionalism.
- **EXCELLENCE** We strive continually to learn and improve our practices so that we may achieve the highest ideals of public service.
- **EXPERTISE** We employ our technical competency to enable constituents to achieve compliance with regulations and have success in their businesses.
- **CONSISTENCY** We ensure equity between buyer and seller through clear education, consistent rules, and strong enforcement.
- **ADAPTABILITY** We keep our goals in mind while staying nimble and responding to changing marketplace needs with autonomy and independent decision-making.
- **TEAMWORK** We enjoy collaborating with our innovative and humble colleagues who exhibit a good sense of humor.

## DIVISION-WIDE GOALS

The following is a summary of division-wide goals and objectives.

Goal	Objectives
Create a workplace of learning and appreciation	1. Onboard new employees effectively
	2. Provide ongoing training opportunities
	3. Recognize work well done
Prioritize effective and compelling communication within and outside the division	1. Utilize section chiefs as the conduit of communication, from the field to division leadership
	2. Contribute to robust communication within the agency overall
	3. Sustain one-on-one relationships with the regulated community
	4. Develop and implement a division-wide strategic communications plan
Transition the division's skills, deep knowledge, and relevance across generations by developing and implementing best practices for employee onboarding and succession planning	1. Use mentoring to help foster new staff success and satisfaction
	2. Develop SOPs to meet APA requirements
	3. Develop SOPs for internal use, including for succession planning
	4. Plan and provide for overlap of retiring staff and new staff, to ensure effective training
Leverage technology to increase efficiency and effectiveness	1. Utilize state-wide information technology staff
	2. Enhance division use of databases
Modernize the division's record-keeping practices	1. Develop and implement a comprehensive records retention policy
	2. Transition from use of paper forms and systems to electronic records systems, where feasible

## SECTION GOALS

The following are goals developed by each section for its work.

Section	Goal
Weights and Measures (W&M)	1. Maintain and expand the regulatory and metrology program in the W & M Section
	2. Increase formalized training of W & M staff in W&M subject matter
	3. Review safety issues within the W & M Section
	4. Improve and streamline the database in the W & M Section WinWam inspection software
Agricultural Products	1. Complete the final stages of program implementation to establish a robust inspection and compliance program for produce safety
	2. Conduct regulatory inspections and compliance activities for the maple program, update written procedures and forms, continue to expand maple regulatory knowledge, and develop strategies for program improvement
Dairy	1. Improve database systems in order to have an efficient, clear, and effective means to access, download, analyze, and synthesize data
	2. Through training and shared learning, increase staff's capacity to deal with advancing and increasingly complex technologies
	3. Effectively prepare for retirement of staff through training, development of SOPs, and mentoring by senior staff
	4. Continue consistently performing our work to protect consumers and maintain Vermont milk standards so that milk is eligible to be sold out of state
Meat Inspection	1. Advance use of information technology for better interconnection, efficiency, and record keeping
	2. Improve the supervisory and management structure to ensure more efficient communication, training, and succession
	3. Better align state rules with federal regulations
	4. Establish a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) program that allows Meat Inspection to collect 60 percent reimbursement and allows processors to ship nationwide
	5. Increase Meat Inspection's technical assistance for small-scale producers to ensure food safety regardless of scale
Animal Health	1. Implement an electronic identification (EID) program
	2. Prepare staff position transition plans
	3. Expand technical assistance to address state-wide gaps due to lack of extension agents
	4. Utilize Animal Health Pathology Lab
	5. Advance staff expertise and capacity through professional development, formalized training, and use of information technology



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