

1 Sec. X. 10 V.S.A. § 1354 is added to read:

2 § 1354. CONCENTRATED ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATION PERMIT

3 PROGRAM WORKING GROUP

4 (a) Creation. The Secretary of Natural Resources, in coordination with the
5 Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets, shall convene a working group of
6 interested parties to provide advice and recommendations on the
7 implementation of and transition to the Concentrated Animal Feeding
8 Operation (CAFO) permit required under section 1353 of this title.

9 (b) Membership. The stakeholder group shall be composed of:

10 (1) Five livestock farmers that are in good standing appointed by the
11 Speaker of the House as follows:

12 (A) One representative of the Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition;

13 (B) One representative of the Franklin County Farmer Coalition;

14 (C) One representative of the Connecticut River Valley Farmer
15 Coalition;

16 (D) One representative of the Vermont Dairy Producers Alliance; and

17 (E) One representative of farmers from the Northeast Kingdom.

18 (2) Three agricultural technical service providers appointed by the
19 Governor;

20 (3) Three representatives from the environmental advocate community
21 appointed by the Committee on Committees;

1 (4) The executive director, or designee, from the Vermont Association
2 of Conservation Districts.

3 (c) Assistance. The Agency of Natural Resources and the Agency of
4 Agriculture, Food and Markets shall participate in the Working Group on an
5 advisory and administrative capacity but shall not have appointed members on
6 the Working Group and shall not be required to submit reports to the General
7 Assembly. The Working Group shall have the administrative, technical, and
8 legal assistance of the Agency of Natural Resources.

9 (d) Meetings.

10 (1) The Secretary of Natural Resources shall call the first meeting of the
11 Working Group to occur on or before November 1, 2026.

12 (2) The Working Group shall select co-chairs from among its members
13 at the first meeting. One of the co-chairs shall represent livestock farmers and
14 one co-chair shall represent the environmental advocate community.

15 (3) A majority of the membership of the Working Group shall constitute
16 a quorum.

17 (4) The Working Group shall meet at least quarterly, or more frequently
18 at the request of the co-chairs or at the request of the Secretary of Natural
19 Resources.

20 (5) The Working Group's meetings shall be open to the public in
21 accordance with 1 V.S.A.; chapter 5, subchapter 2. Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A.

1 § 313, the Working Group may go into executive session in order to discuss a
2 circumstance or an event regarding a specific farm or regarding a possible
3 CAFO permit violation by a specific farm.

4 (e) Report. The Working Group annually shall report to the House
5 Committees on Agriculture, Food Resiliency and Forestry and on Environment
6 and the Senate Committees on Agriculture and on Natural Resources and
7 Energy. The report may take the form of testimony to committees from
8 members of the Working Group.

9 (f) Definition. As used in this section, “good standing” means a farmer
10 subject to the requirement of this subchapter or to the requirements of 6 V.S.A.
11 chapter 215:

12 (1) does not have an active enforcement violation that has reached a
13 final order with the Secretary of Natural Resources or the Secretary of
14 Agriculture, Food and Markets; and

15 (2) is in compliance with the terms of any current grant agreement or
16 contract with the Agency of Natural Resources or the Agency of Agriculture,
17 Food and Markets.

18 Sec. Y. CONCENTRATED ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATION; TRAINING
19 ON INSPECTION

20 (a)(1) On or before December 1, 2026, the Secretary of Natural Resources
21 shall contract with a third-party consultant to:

1 (A) assist the Secretary in the development of standards and
2 procedure to be used by the Agency of Natural Resources and the Agency of
3 Agriculture, Food and Markets when inspecting Concentrated Animal Feeding
4 Operations (CAFOs) as required by 10 V.S.A. chapter 47, subchapter 3A; and

5 (B) provide training to the Agency of Natural Resources and Agency
6 of Agriculture, Food and Markets staff on implementation of inspection of
7 CAFOs. Farmers that qualify for a CAFO permit may voluntarily attend
8 training sessions.

9 (2) When the Secretary of Natural Resources and the Secretary of
10 Agriculture, Food and Markets commence inspections of CAFOs under 10
11 V.S.A. chapter 47, subchapter 3A, the third-party consultant shall accompany
12 the Agency of Natural Resources' inspectors on 10 inspections to ensure
13 compliance with the inspection standards developed under subdivision (1) of
14 this subsection.

15 (b) In addition to other funds appropriated to the Agency of Natural
16 Resources in fiscal year 2027, the sum of \$300,000.00 is appropriated to the
17 Agency from the General Fund in fiscal year 2027 for the purpose of
18 contracting with a consultant to provide the services required under subsection
19 (a) of this section.

20 Sec. Z. EFFECTIVE DATE

21 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.