

# Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

## Water Quality Division

### FY2020 Education, Outreach and Technical Assistance Summary

The Water Quality Division within the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFMM) is responsible for ensuring farms meet the State agricultural water quality non-point source regulations. VAAFMM performs this task through the use of regulatory, technical, and financial assistance programs provided to farmers and partner organizations.

VAAFMM also works to reduce non-point source nutrient pollution from agricultural land through education and outreach programs, as well as grant awards to partners through the Agricultural Clean Water Initiative Program (Ag-CWIP). Ag-CWIP, which is made possible by the Clean Water Fund (CWF), supports partners to provide educational programs, innovative phosphorus reduction strategies, and technical assistance to Vermont farmers.

**FY2020 PROGRAM IMPACT:**

**4,277 ATTENDEES**

REACHED THROUGH EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

**595 HOURS**

OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR VT FARMERS

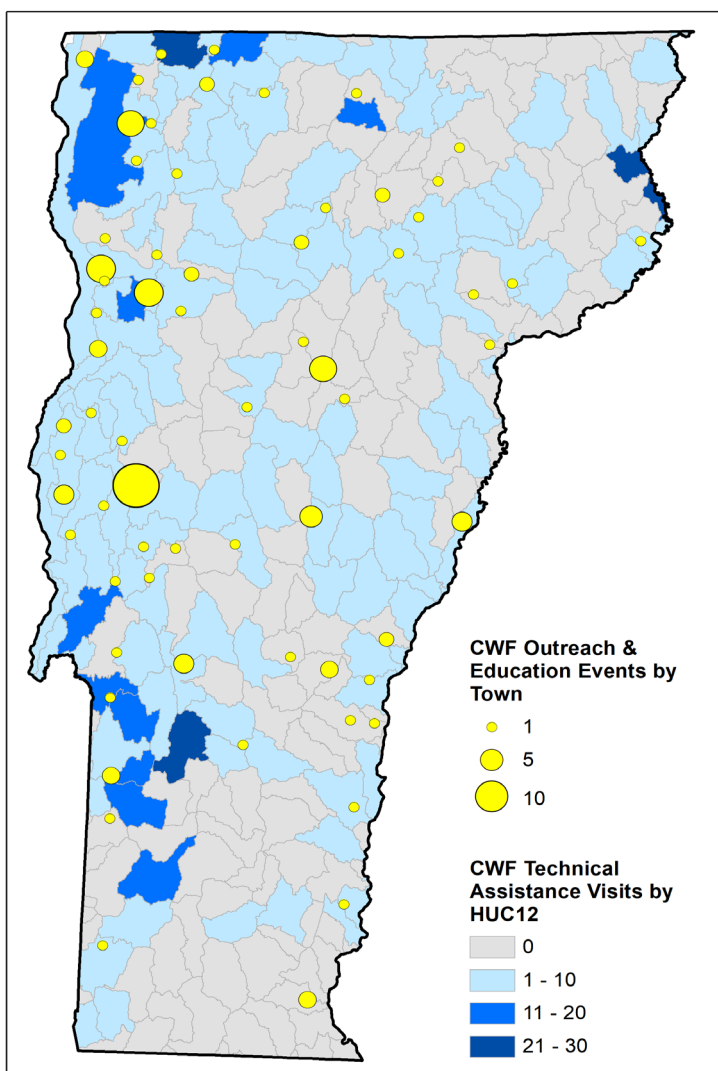
**140 EVENTS**

EDUCATIONAL EVENTS HELD STATEWIDE

**720 TA VISITS**

BY VAAFMM STAFF AND PARTNERS

#### AGRICULTURAL CLEAN WATER INITIATIVE PROGRAM EDUCATIONAL EVENTS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE STATEWIDE



Map of VT showing Technical Assistance visits by HUC12 catchment areas, and the number of outreach and education events by town. Darker blue regions received more TA. Bubbles are proportional to number of events in each town. TA from VAAFMM staff is not included.



Vermont Association of Conservation Districts (VACD) technical assistance staff review a conservation plan with a farm in the Missisquoi River watershed while planning projects under the AAFMM Pasture and Surface Water Fencing Program.



Poultney-Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District assists farmers at an Agricultural Grant Writing Clinic in developing and submitting applications for funding water quality projects.



**AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS**

## AG-CWIP RECIPIENT GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT: UVM EXTENSION

### Northwest Crops and Soils (NWCS) Program

University of Vermont (UVM) Extension is a major player in agricultural water quality education, outreach and technical assistance in Vermont. In 2020, UVM Extension was the recipient of a \$1.2 million Agricultural Clean Water Initiative Program (Ag-CWIP) grant over two years, which was divided between four regionally specialized programs.

The Northwest Crops and Soils Program (NWCS) is one of the UVM programs funded through this program. NWCS aims to develop high-quality educational events and materials to assist farmers with implementing practices and techniques to reduce non-point source pollution.

In a 2019 interview, Heather Darby reflected on the appreciation she held for the flexible structure of Ag-CWIP grants, which she felt allowed her team to be adaptive and to respond to outreach needs as they came up.

When COVID-related concerns in 2020 affected UVM Extension plans, NWCS demonstrated this flexibility by transitioning their outreach to virtual platforms. The team increased their activity on social media and blog pages, and even developed a virtual discussion group and a series of YouTube videos to replace educational events that would have otherwise been held in-person.



Heather Darby presents virtually on the Legume Variety Trial at Borderview Research Farm, via the NWCS YouTube Channel. Watch the full Virtual Field Day Fridays playlist at [www.youtube.com/user/cropssoilsteam/playlists](http://www.youtube.com/user/cropssoilsteam/playlists).

“ [Ag-CWIP] allows UVM to do what we **do best**... to be **adaptive** to farmers’ needs and to **respond** to outreach needs **in real time**. ”

– Heather Darby, NWCS

## SUMMARY OF ACTIVE AG-CWIP RECIPIENT PROJECTS

RECIPIENT	DESCRIPTION
Natural Resources Conservation Council	Education, Outreach and Technical Assistance to farms, Organizational Capacity Development across the state's 14 Natural Resource Conservation Districts
Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition	Education and Outreach to farms, Organizational Capacity Development
Vermont Association of Conservation Districts	Organizational Support for VACD and the Vermont Agricultural Water Quality Partnership (VAWQP), Land Treatment Planning
Farmers Watershed Alliance	Education and Outreach to farms, Organizational Capacity Development
Lewis Creek Association - Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative	Improved Collaboration with Agricultural Landowners and Partners
Vermont Vegetable & Berry Growers Association	Education and Outreach and Organizational Capacity Development through a comprehensive VVBGA website
University of Vermont – Northwest Crops and Soils Program	Development and Launch of Discovery Acres Research Site, Agricultural Conservation Equipment Program and GoCrop Modifications
Scott Magnan's Custom Service	Technical Assistance for Precision Agriculture
Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District	Education, Outreach and Technical Assistance to farms
University of Vermont Extension	Education, Outreach and Technical Assistance to farms from the Agricultural Business Team, Vegetable and Berry Team, Northwest Crops Soils Team and Champlain Valley Crop, Soil and Pasture Team, Organizational Capacity Development for Grazing and Livestock Program.