

HEMP PRODUCERS AND WATER QUALITY



Vermont hemp growers who meet the thresholds to qualify as farms under the Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) must take measures to protect water quality in the state and are subject to regulation and/or certification by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFAM). Vermont farms are also eligible for technical and financial assistance through VAAFAM. For more information visit agriculture.vermont.gov.

Required Agricultural Practice (RAP) Minimum Thresholds

RAPs apply to all farm operations which meet any of the following thresholds:

- farm 4.0 contiguous acres or more;
- have an annual gross income of over \$2,000 from the sale of agricultural products; or
- have filed a 1040(F) in the past 2 years

What are the RAPs?

The Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) are required practices for agricultural operations that aim to reduce non-point source pollution from agriculture to surface waters of Vermont. The RAPs include restrictions on agricultural activities that might impact state waters, including manure spreading, buffers from surface water and ditches, and the zoning of farm structures.

Do the RAPs apply to me?

The RAPs apply to all farms in VT, including hemp operations, that meet the minimum thresholds. These rules are separate from and additional to regulations and registrations for hemp growers and processors through the Hemp Program. On the next page you can find some of the RAPs that are particularly relevant to hemp producers, but note that additional RAPs may apply.





Additional Requirements:

Farms with more than 50 acres of annual cropland, including hemp, are required to certify annually as Certified Small Farm Operations (CSFOs) and have additional requirements under the RAPs. Yet larger farms are subject to further regulations. To learn more visit agriculture.vermont.gov/rap.

What RAPs should I be aware of?

1. Construction of Farm Structures

The construction of farm structures is regulated by VAAFM. Local permits are not necessary, but farms must notify the municipality of construction and comply with local setbacks and Flood Hazard Area & River Corridor development restrictions. Contact VAAFM or your town to learn more.

2. Perennial Buffers

Farms must maintain a buffer of perennial vegetation between their croplands and the top of the bank of adjoining surface waters and ditches.

Required Buffers:

Cropland must have buffers of **10 ft** from ditches and **25 ft** from surface waters and open drains.

3. Soil Health, Nutrients and Cover Crops

Croplands must be cultivated to promote soil health and minimize erosion. Annual croplands subject to frequent flooding are required to plant cover crops every fall. Apply nutrients only as necessary and record nutrient applications. Farms which apply fertilizer mechanically must take soil samples of fields at least once every five years.

4. Management of Agricultural Waste

Responsible composting is an acceptable form of management of residual stalks from the cultivation of hemp. Agricultural waste may not be stacked in floodplains, on bedrock, 200ft from surface water or water supplies, or 100ft from property lines, ditches, or subsurface tile drains.

NOTE: These selected RAPs are included due to their relevance to hemp operations of any size. For the full list of RAPs, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/rap.