

FARM DEFINITION:

Construction of Farm Structures under the RAPs

Vermont farms that meet the thresholds set in the Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) are required to comply with applicable regulations for agricultural practices, including the construction and maintenance of farm structures. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFAM) serves as the regulatory agency for agricultural non-point source pollution in Vermont and has jurisdiction over the construction of farm structures.

RAP Definition of “Farming”

- (a) the cultivation or other use of land for growing food, fiber, Christmas trees, maple sap, or horticultural, viticultural, and orchard crops; or
- (b) the raising, feeding, or management of livestock, poultry, fish, or bees; or
- (c) the operation of greenhouses; or
- (d) the production of maple syrup; or
- (e) the on-site storage, preparation, and sale of agricultural products principally produced on the farm; or
- (f) the on-site storage, preparation, production, and sale of fuel or power from agricultural products or wastes principally produced on the farm; or
- (g) the raising, feeding, or management of four or more equines owned or boarded by the farmer, including training, showing, and providing instruction and lessons in riding, training, and the management of equines.

Am I a farm?

Vermont agricultural operations identified as a farm under the RAPs include all Small, Certified Small, Medium, and Large Farm Operations (SFOs, CSFOs, MFOs, and LFOs), including persons engaged in farming whose operation meets any of the following thresholds:

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





RAP Definition

“**Farm Structure**” means a structure used by a person for ANY type of farming as defined on the previous page. This includes barnyards, waste management systems, and necessary supporting fill, but excludes multi-use structures and dwellings for human habitation.

What is the process for building a Farm Structure?

Since farm structures are regulated by VAAFM, farm operators regulated by the RAPs must comply with the following requirements:

1. Confirm that you are a farm regulated under the RAPs and that the proposed structure is a farm structure.
2. Ensure that your proposed farm structure is **at least 50ft from adjoining surface waters**. NOTE: Waste storage facilities have additional setbacks. See RAP Section 9(a)(6) for additional details.
3. Ensure that your proposal complies with municipal setbacks: farm structures are not required to conform to local zoning requirements or obtain local building permits but are required to conform to local setbacks.

NOTE: if your farm structure cannot conform to the town or state setbacks, you can apply to VAAFM for approval of alternative reasonable setbacks for that structure. Call VAAFM Water Quality Division at (802) 828-2431 to learn more.

4. Write to notify the zoning administrator or town clerk of the town in which the farm structure is proposed. Include a sketch of the structure, including setbacks from adjoining road rights-of-way, property lines, and surface water.
5. If your proposed farm structure will be constructed in a Flood Hazard Area and/or River Corridor or will disturb one or more acres of land, then you must obtain a corresponding permit from the Agency of Natural Resources prior to construction. Contact your [regional Floodplain Manager](#) to learn more and to apply for permits.
6. Construct your farm structure!