

SUBSURFACE TILE DRAINS: Required Agricultural Practices (RAP) Amendment



The Vermont Clean Water Act of 2015 laid out requirements for the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFM) to amend by rule the Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) in order to include requirements for reducing nutrient contribution to waters of the State from subsurface tile drainage.



The RAP Rule Amendment became effective on November 23, 2018.

New Definitions:

Subsurface Tile Drainage means a conduit installed in cropland beneath the ground surface to collect and/or convey water to an outlet.

Who does this Rule apply to?

This rule applies to all Vermont agricultural operations identified as a farm under the RAPs. These 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:

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



For more information call (802) 828-2431 or visit agriculture.vermont.gov/rap.



Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) for Tile Drains:

Field Stacking of Manure:

On non-NRCS approved manure stacking sites, manure or ag waste cannot be stacked within 100 feet of subsurface tile drainage without a variance from the Secretary of Agriculture.

Nutrient Management Planning:

All LFO, MFO, and CSFO farms which have cropland with soil analyses demonstrating greater than 20 parts per million (ppm) phosphorus must apply nutrients at less than UVM phosphorus crop removal rates on those fields with 'pattern tile drainage' (*applicable only to operations required to obtain a 590 Nutrient Management Plan: CSFO, MFO, and LFO*).



Barnyards:

Concentrated feeding areas of unimproved barnyards and unimproved feedlots shall not be sited over subsurface tile drainage unless other site-specific standards are approved by the Secretary.



Vegetated Treatment Areas:

New vegetative treatment areas for agricultural wastes shall not be installed within 200 feet upslope of a subsurface tile drain and new subsurface drainage shall not be installed within 200 feet downslope from an existing vegetative treatment area.

Rodent Guards:

Subsurface tile drainage installed or modified after January 1, 2019 shall have a rodent guard installed at the outlet of the subsurface tile drainage system.



Surface Inlets:

For all farming operations subject to this Rule, no new installations of surface inlets shall be located within or adjacent to cropland. For the purposes of this section, surface inlets do not include drainage controls such as diversion structures or grade stabilization practices approved by the Secretary.