

A SUMMARY OF: THE REQUIRED AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES (RAPs) FOR SMALL FARM OPERATIONS (SFOs)

Effective December 5, 2016

These standards are intended to improve the quality of Vermont's waters by reducing and eliminating cropland erosion, sediment losses, and nutrient losses through improved farm management techniques, technical and compliance assistance, and where appropriate, enforcement. The RAPs establish nutrient, manure, and waste storage standards, make recommendations for soil health, and establish requirements for vegetated buffer zones and livestock exclusion from surface water. Any farms that meet the definition of an SFO (see below) must comply with the RAPs but are not required to submit an Annual Certification or apply for a permit.

SMALL FARM OPERATION (SFO)



Operate 4 or more acres for farming; OR

Have filed a 1040(F) Tax Form once in the last 2 years; OR



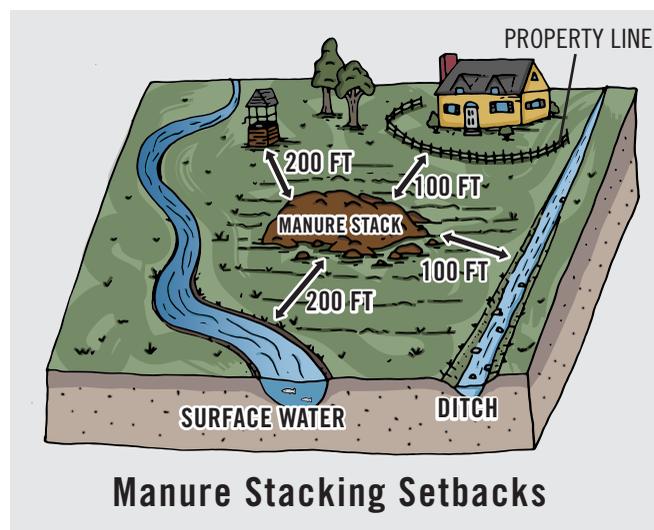
Earn an annual gross income of more than \$2,000 from the sale of agricultural products.

Nutrient Management, Manure Storage and Application

All sources of nutrients should be considered when deciding nutrient application rates. All fields receiving mechanical application of manure, agricultural wastes, or fertilizer need to be soil sampled every five years.

For all farms, records of soil analysis and nutrient application need to be kept for five years and contain:

- o Date of application
- o Field location
- o Application rate
- o Source of nutrients applied
- o Weather and field conditions at the time of application



Waste storage facilities must be maintained to protect structural integrity, prevent leaks, and provide adequate volume to prevent overflows. Field stacking is an appropriate management strategy, provided it meets the setbacks included in the diagram above.

Any waste storage facility constructed (or modified) after July 1, 2006 must be designed and constructed per United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS) standards or other equivalent standards certified by a licensed engineer.

Manure and other agricultural wastes cannot be applied between December 15 and April 1.

Manure and other agricultural wastes cannot be applied to areas of land with frequently flooded soils, (USDA Soil Survey Flooding Frequency Class), between October 16 and April 14.

Manure cannot be spread within 100 feet of a private water supply, or 200 feet of a public water supply.

§ 1

§ 3

§ 6.03

§ 6.02

§ 6.05

Discharges

Farms are not allowed to have a discharge of agricultural wastes from a farm to surface waters of the State through a discrete conveyance such as but not limited to a pipe, ditch, or conduit without a permit from ANR.

§ 6.01

Soil Health and Preventing Soil Erosion

Cultivate fields to retain soil in the field and to minimize visible soil erosion. Prevent fieldborne gully erosion with grassed waterways, filter strips, or crop rotations.

Frequently flooded soils, (USDA Soil Survey Flooding Frequency Class) must be cover-cropped for the winter by October 1 if broadcast seeded, or October 15 if drilled or incorporated, or maintain 30% vegetative cover by other means.

§ 6.04

Vegetated Buffers

Buffers can be grazed or harvested, but they cannot be tilled or have compost or fertilizer applied, except for establishment or maintenance.

Buffers must be perennially vegetated (e.g. grass) and manure cannot be applied in a buffer zone.

§ 6.07

Mortalities

Animal mortalities must be managed within 48 hours in a way that doesn't impact water quality or create a nuisance to neighboring properties.

Specific siting setbacks apply for composting and burial of mortalities, please see full RAPs for details.

§ 6.08

Excluding Livestock from Surface Water

Maintain adequate vegetation on surface water banks. Livestock may need to be excluded from surface water if adequate vegetation cannot be sustained.

Livestock must be excluded from surface water that exists within the production area of a farm (the heavy-use, feedlot, barnyard areas) apart from defined watering areas or stream crossings.

§ 7

Farm Structures

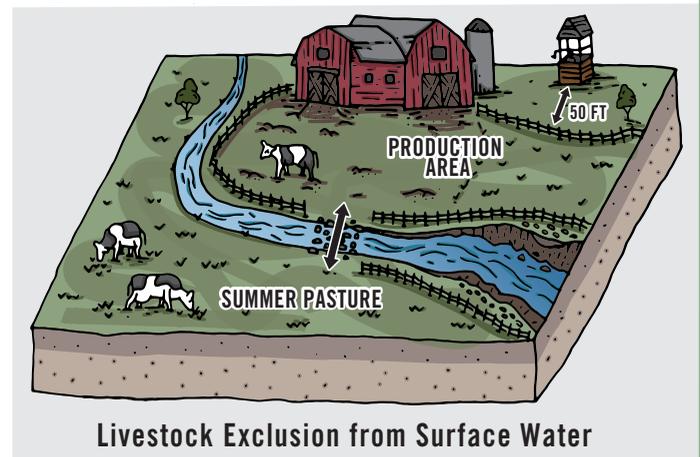
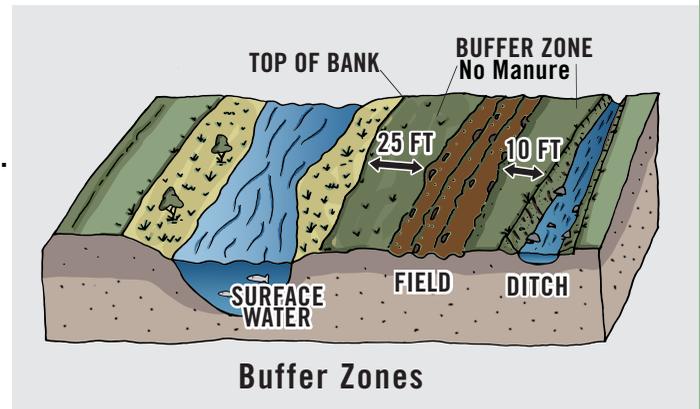
Prior to construction, the farmer must notify the town in writing of the proposed activity. There are specific siting requirements for farm structures within new or existing production areas; the Vermont Agency of Agriculture is the statewide authority for farm structures.

§ 9

Site-Specific Conservation Practices

If a farm operation is following the RAPs but management of field conditions pose a potential circumstance where agricultural wastes may enter the waters of the State, the Secretary of Agriculture shall require the person to implement additional, site-specific, on-farm conservation practices designed to prevent agricultural wastes from entering the waters of the State.

§ 10



This summary is meant to inform farmers about the RAPs, but the full Rule should be referenced for further information regarding site specific concerns, variances, exemptions, and complete management practices required by the RAPs.

Email the Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets at AGR.WaterQuality@Vermont.gov or call (802) 828-2431 for financial or technical assistance.

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