



Providing Recognition and Support to Farmers Who Strive for Environmental Excellence

Working Lands for a Better Vermont

What is VESP?

The Vermont Environmental Stewardship Program (VESP) is a pilot program that encourages agricultural producers to achieve environmental excellence through responsible land stewardship. Agricultural producers across the state of Vermont are eligible to apply for the five-year certification program.

Why should I apply?

VESP's goal is to support farmers to continue to improve water quality around the state of Vermont. Pursuing VESP certification demonstrates your commitment to regenerative agricultural practices. As part of the application process you'll work with conservation planners and technical service providers to set customized environmental goals for your land, based on the result of on-the-ground evaluations and assessments conducted.

What benefits are there to certification?

Certification is valid for a five-year time period, during which participants are eligible for increased financial and technical assistance to implement conservation practices. VESP-certified participants will also receive an on-farm sign designating the property as an example of excellent environmental stewardship, and other recognition-based incentives.



What happens if my farm doesn't meet the VESP standards?

After certification, farmers will continue to work with VESP technicians to develop and implement plans to meet and exceed current environmental standards, and to help increase overall productivity of the farm. Certified farmers will undergo annual 3rd party verification to ensure continued implementation of practices to meet VESP standards.

What else can I do to help?

All farmers may elect to work with VESP technicians on a conservation plan to implement best-management practices to achieve those standards, and are eligible for additional financial and technical assistance to do so.

How do I apply for VESP?

Applicants will need to, at a minimum, be in compliance with all State and Federal environmental regulations, and be actively farming their land. There is no fee to apply or to receive certification.

To apply, or for more information, go to the Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets website or contact:

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The Vermont Environmental Stewardship Program is a partner effort by the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, and the University of Vermont Extension.