



Flash

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The Easiest Way to a CNMP????

- Kathy Hakey

We've always said that the plans we develop belong to the farmer and we wished they would take ownership of their plans....well we found some success in this statement last winter.

Heather Darby, Nutrient Management Specialist with UVM Extension had been working on us (and wearing us down, just kidding, Heather) for a couple of years on ways to get more Nutrient Management Plans written. She secured a grant through the VT Agency of Agriculture to help pay for the class and we (NRCS) agreed to involvement in the experiment. Success would help us get more of our (program funded) plans written as well, and the rest is history.

Heather, with assistance from Roger Rainville (Grand Isle District supervisor, farmer, FSA State Committee member, etc.) carefully interviewed farmers on their interest and willingness to set time aside from all their other tasks to commit to the class. Farmers who wanted to take the class had to have soil and manure samples taken by a specific deadline. Heather and Natasha Rainville assisted farmers (but farmers took most of the samples themselves) in getting this done.

Joanne Yousten & Amanda Gervais assisted Heather with the worksheet development.

Existing NRCS worksheets were used and abused (thanks resource staff, esp. Sandra and Bob Sylvester), mostly modified to make them understandable from a farmer perspective. Heather followed an existing University of Wisconsin nutrient management curriculum outline which stepped out the plan development process quite well. Joanne, Jason Fleury, Sarah Larose and Amanda gathered maps (most were already in Toolkit) and developed LTP plans (many already done as well) for the landowners in the class. Kathy Hakey helped with the manure and wastewater volume calculations.

We held five day long classes. Much homework was also doled out that needed to be completed prior to the next class. It was amazing to watch the folks build camaraderie among them and help the ones who needed help. They would actually come in to the NRCS and UVM offices for more help if needed.

Some farmers were more computer savvy than others in the room, including most of us teaching the class.



Heather Darby assisting Andre Quintin (small plaid) and Jason Burt (large plaid) with calculating manure nitrogen quantity and how to best distribute this on needed fields.

We helped them write 10 Nutrient Management Plans 2 in Grand Isle Co, 7 in Franklin and 1 in Addison (Keith, did you get this one in PRS?) ALL the plans were certified by NRCS as well as the VT Agency of Agriculture.

Congrats to farmers Andre Quintin, Jason Burt, Dan Gorton, Dan Gallagher, Travis Longway, Steve Fleury, Jake Gosliga, Jeff Sanders, Scott Bessette and Newton Reynolds. Job well done.



*Always a good idea to have food on hand.
Have you ever seen so many quiet farmers in one place?*

We learned that it takes much effort and coordination to put a class such as this together but all felt it was well worth the effort.

Thanks for class success go to:

NRCS FO staff (Joanne, Amanda, Sarah, Kathy) NRCS Resource staff (Jim, Bob, Sandra, etc.) who developed worksheets and assisted with class presentation, Heather, Elaine and the St. Albans UVM Extension staff, VT Agency staff (Ben Gabos, Matt Kittredge, Dave Weber, Rob Achilles), Grand Isle & Franklin NRCDs (Jason Fleury, Roger Rainville), Sid Boyle (UVM Ext), Fred Magdoff (UVM) and last but not least Natasha Rainville for being there to do pretty much anything.

Much of the table discussion centered on how a farm group could take the lead in accountability for what the farm community's responsibilities are. The group saw a need for a trustworthy source for information to other farmers. This roundtable discussion facilitated the development of the Franklin/Grand Isle Farmer's Watershed Alliance group.

Since we had such success with the class last winter we plan to do it again this winter with even more participation, 12 to 14 farmers. Our initial meeting is on December 5th. And luckily we also found a bigger room to use for the class.



Alternative Energy

As NRCS grapples with various methods to produce on-farm energy with on-farm resources, you've got to wonder what the non farm community is doing in regards to conserving resources. Coldwater Creek, a women's clothing chain based out of Sandpoint, Idaho sent a little postcard in my last order. On it there was a picture of windmills with the caption "We're Powering the Future with wind". According to Coldwater Creek, they began using renewable energy to power 100% of their U.S. operations. "With this action, coldwater Creek has become the largest purchaser of renewable energy in the apparel industry and 6th largest in the entire retail sector. We take this leadership role seriously and hope we can help stimulate a shift in the way all of us view our world and the precious environment in which

we live and work".

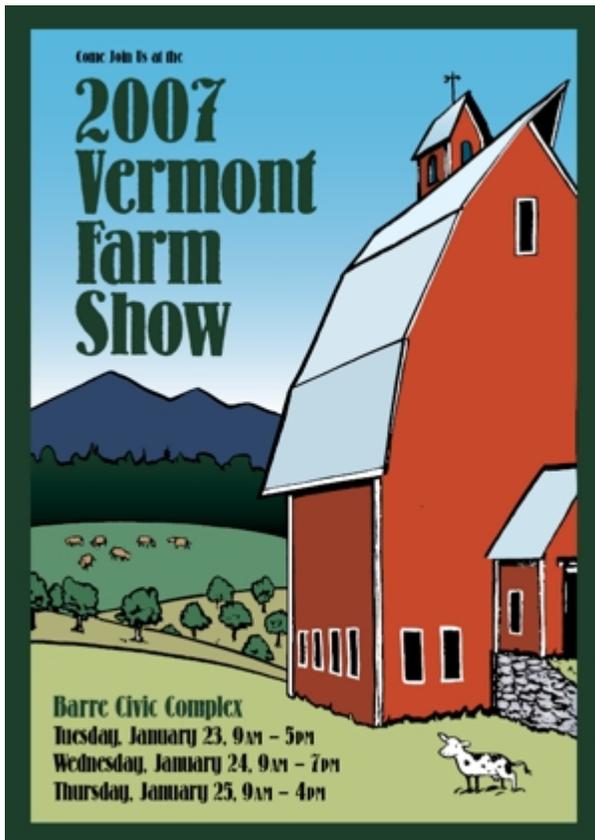
Small Farms Initiative

The ENTSC developed a package of resource tools and reference materials as aides to the states in serving limited resource and other small scale farmers. The material provides planers with references and general information on low-cost, technically sound conservation activities. The templates illustrate how “appropriate technology” less expensive options, changes in management or variations of existing conservation practices cans till meet NRCS conservation practice standards.

Go to ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ENTSC/Outgoing/Small_Farm/

When you access the site you will see 3 zip files. There is the notebook which was originally released last spring. There is a file called new Small Farm Info Sheets. This material was added since the original release.

The primary product of all of this is the Information Sheets. These sheets are meant to provide a basic level of information on conservation practices relevant to small scale farmers. These are not job sheets. They need to be reviewed at the state or local level to make sure they meet your state conservation practice standards. There are places in each sheet where you can fill in the county name if you wish.



The Vermont Farm Show runs from Tuesday, January 23 through Thursday, January 25.

Good Retirement Calculators

Walter Updegrave a senior editor at Money Magazine says "A good calculator will not only include that lag in its projections; it will also allow you to test whether you're better off postponing Social Security benefits until you're older when the payments will be larger.... What could go wrong? Ideally, you would also want a calculator that will help you determine how much income you'll actually need to meet your retirement expenses instead of relying on rules of thumb like 70 percent of pre-retirement income as your target."

<http://www.retirementcalulatorservices.com/?gclid=CLvW-bLAXIkCFSM8gQodsAG5OQ>

Farm Viability Enhancement Program

We're enrolling farmers throughout Vermont in our business planning program at the moment, and doing some outreach to inform farmers who don't already know about the program. Early winter is our busy enrollment time. - Ela Chapin, VHCB

The Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program provides farmers with business planning and technical assistance. Developed in collaboration with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, the Farm Viability Program is designed to strengthen the economic position of Vermont agriculture and to complement existing programs in farmland conservation.

The Program uses consultants to provide technical assistance tailored to a farmer's needs to fulfill specific business goals. Examples include consultations on keeping better production or financial records, financial benchmark analysis, meetings with crop or animal health specialists, new farm enterprise analysis, estate and farm transfer planning, labor management, and value-added processing.

The business planning process involves the farmer in an assessment of the farm operation's strengths and weaknesses and in an exploration of possible management changes that could increase profitability. On-farm consultations result in the preparation of a written business plan.

Monday January 15, we celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.