

Lake Champlain Agricultural Work Group

We need your help!

As you may know, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Markets, and Food (VAAF) and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) have been working with the Environmental Mediation Center and the Consensus Building Institute on a stakeholder process to hear input on how to reduce phosphorous pollution while maintaining a viable and sustainable agricultural sector.

In mid-2013, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will be issuing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for phosphorous for the Lake Champlain Basin. The state will need to develop an implementation plan to meet the TMDL. The two agencies have been engaging agriculture stakeholders around the Lake Champlain Basin to help gather ideas, suggestions and concerns to move forward with an Implementation Plan that is as effective as possible.

To carry this engagement forward, VAAF and DEC are seeking to form a Lake Champlain Agricultural Working Group. Secretary Chuck Ross and Commissioner David Mears are asking for your help. They are seeking nominations and self-nominations for membership in this group.

This Group will work over the next 6 to 9 months to help the agencies draft the agricultural parts of the implementation plan as well consider additional efforts such as a certainty program with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The group will meet at varying locations within the Lake Champlain watershed at least once a month, and possibly twice a month on some occasions. Meetings will be arranged to best meet the needs of the members. The Work Group will review the current state of the science on the TMDL, existing and possible actions that the agricultural community might take, and how those actions might fit into an Implementation plan that will also address other sources, such as wastewater treatment plants and municipal stormwater runoff. .

The following are the individual criteria the agencies have developed for considering membership in the Work Group.

They include:

- Active or recently active in agriculture as a producer, supplier, or other participant in the industry;
- Willingness to work in a collaborative and constructive manner;
- Ability to give the time to the process; and
- Knowledge of agricultural practices and actions regarding nutrient loading.

The agencies are also seeking to convene a group that is balanced across a number of factors, including but not limited to the following:

- Size of farm (small, medium, and large)
- Kinds of farms (dairy including grazing and/or crop production, other livestock, vegetable and other kinds of farming)
- Location (The TMDL is for Lake Champlain, however the Implementation Plan may include statewide agricultural policy changes. We encourage farmers from outside the Lake Champlain basin to consider participating in this process.)

If you are interested in nominating yourself or someone else, please either

1) Visit the Environmental Mediation Center’s website (www.emcenter.org) and submit the form electronically; or

2) Fill out the attached form and send it to MarliRupe, Agricultural Water Quality Specialist, ANR/DEC, 1 National Life Drive, Main 2, Montpelier, VT 05620

Please submit the forms no later than **Monday, January 14, 2013.**

Upon receipt of all nominations, the Commissioner and Secretary will review applicants, compare the applicants against the Work Group criteria, and select members. All those who applied will be notified no later than January 31, 2013 and the intent is to hold the first meeting of the Work Group no later than February 15, 2013.

We look forward to your interest. We need agricultural voices to be heard and to work with us.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail address: _____

For Producers, please check as applicable:

Are you an active: or recently active: producer?

Do you have a current Nutrient Management Plan on your farm?

	Yes		No
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What kind of farm, Please check all that apply

Dairy farm:

<input type="checkbox"/>	100 or fewer cows
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<input type="checkbox"/>	101 – 199 cows
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<input type="checkbox"/>	200 – 699 cows
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<input type="checkbox"/>	700 or more cows
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Organic Dairy:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
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<input type="checkbox"/>	No
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Other Livestock:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Beef Cows
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Goats
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Sheep
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Poultry
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Horses
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Vegetable Farm:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
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<input type="checkbox"/>	No
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Number of Acres in Production:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Under 25 acres
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<input type="checkbox"/>	25 – 50 acres
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<input type="checkbox"/>	50 – 100 acres
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<input type="checkbox"/>	101 – 250 acres
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 250 acres
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Maple Producer:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
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<input type="checkbox"/>	No
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Location:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Addison
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Bennington
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Caledonia
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Chittenden
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Essex
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	Franklin
	Grand Isle
	Lamoille
	Orange
	Orleans
	Rutland
	Washington
	Windham
	Windsor

For Agricultural Businesses

Name of business: _____

Type of business: _____

Location of business: _____

For Agricultural Service Providers

Name of organization: _____

What kind of service do you supply: _____

Territory served: _____

Please let us know any additional information about you that is relevant to the purpose of the Agricultural Working Group or why you are interested in participating in the Group.