



Fact Sheet #1: Agricultural Lands Management

Vermont's Clean Water Initiative

Taking Action to Restore Local Streams and Lake Champlain

Vermonters love Lake Champlain and the streams that flow into it. Clean water and a healthy Lake protect the health, economy and natural beauty of Vermont. Along with a sustainable “farm and forest” working landscape, they are an essential legacy for Vermont’s future generations.

Phosphorus pollution poses the greatest threat to a clean Lake Champlain. It can turn water green and cause algae blooms, which are disruptive to fishing and other recreational uses, cause declines in property values, threaten drinking water supplies, and can sicken animals and people.

The state of Vermont and its partners have worked for decades to reduce runoff and erosion that carry phosphorus pollution into Vermont’s waterways, including Lake Champlain. However, more needs to be done to restore the Lake. The most significant remaining sources include runoff from agricultural lands, developed lands, gravel roads, logging roads, and eroding stream banks.

Vermont’s Clean Water Initiative is a call to action for everyone — farmers, businesses, municipalities and towns, loggers, and landowners — to work together to restore local streams and ultimately Lake Champlain. Many of the actions are simple and cost-effective.

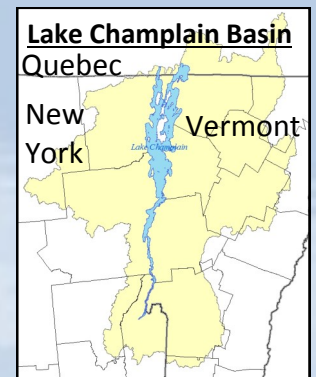
This factsheet summarizes actions to reduce agricultural sources of phosphorus runoff as part of the Clean Water Initiative. See other factsheets that describe actions to reduce phosphorus from other sources.



Corn crop showing bare soil and no buffer, increasing erosion and phosphorus runoff



Hay crop and a buffer reduce erosion and phosphorus delivery to streams



Actions to Reduce Agricultural Sources of Phosphorus Pollution:

- Require a minimum of 25-foot buffers along streams and 10-foot buffers along field and road ditches;
- Prevent gullies from forming and eroding valuable agricultural land;
- Require farmers to develop plans and implement actions to keep manure, fertilizer and top soil from running into waterways;
- Build fences to keep livestock out of streams and rivers;
- Train and certify businesses that apply manure to fields to minimize runoff in nearby waterways;
- Increase support and funding to help farmers undertake water quality improvements on farms;
- Target support and funding to farms in the northern and southern segments of Lake Champlain Basin, where phosphorus pollution from agricultural sources are particularly significant;
- Increase farm inspections to ensure compliance with state agricultural water quality rules;
- Evaluate and employ technical and educational options for tile drain management.