



Fall Newsletter

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PMNRCD WATER QUALITY MONITORING

The Conservation District has collected water quality samples in local streams and rivers since 2003. We have thousands of data points and spend time every fall analyzing the data from the current year’s monitoring program.

Samples are collected from May through September, with efforts to conduct two sample events during periods of high rainfall and runoff. The resulting data is used in conjunction with our agricultural and stormwater programs to focus efforts in areas with poor water quality, and monitor the results of past projects.

Stay tuned for future issues where we will discuss the results.

Rent our farming equipment!

Haybuster 107C No-Till Drill

Since 2015, with funding from the Lookout Foundation, the District has offered a Haybuster 107C no-till drill to farmers. It is in high demand during the spring and fall, so call us to be added to the waiting list.

Q: How much does it cost to rent the drill?

A: There is currently no acreage fee to use our drill. Staff will deliver the equipment and provide technical assistance as needed.

Q: What types of seed can I plant with the drill?

A. Most seeds can be used with the drill. The Haybuster offers three seed boxes. A legume box for the smaller seeds such as timothy, alfalfa or clovers and most small seed blends, and two large boxes for larger seed blends and seeds such as oats, rye, or soybeans. Brome grass can also be planted using the large box but must be mixed with a nurse crop such as oats.

8ft GenTill II Aerator

Since 2010, with funding from the Vermont Legislature, the District has offered a 8-foot GenTill II Aerator for rent. Aerators can be used to reduce surface compaction, aerate the soil, incorporate manure, or as primary tillage.

Q: How much horse power is needed to use the aerator?

A. A good estimate is 10hp per foot of unit. A little less if you have a 4WD tractor, a little more if you have severely compacted soil.

Q: How much does it cost to rent the aerator?

A. The acreage fee for the aerator is **\$6 per acre**. This fee is used for purchasing new tines and bearings as they wear out.

Contact Jennifer for equipment rentals:
(802) 558-6470 or Jennifer@pmnr.cd.org.

Comprehensive Assistance

Increased State Funds to Pay for Farm Practices

Farmers are familiar with the recent changes to agricultural laws and policies. A number of issues such as the decreasing water quality in Lake Champlain, increased flooding and rain events, and controversy related to algal blooms in Lake Carmi, have created a movement across the State to identify local water quality concerns and implement projects to ameliorate the effects of various land uses on local water quality.

As a result of both increased public support for water quality projects and increased regulation on agricultural operations, there are a number of support programs available, some of which have been expanded.

The Poultney Mettowee Conservation District and our partners, including the Rutland Conservation District, the Bennington County Conservation District, Agency of Agriculture, the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, UVM Extension, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, and others, have a variety of programs available. These include a suite of farm-related services that farms should consider utilizing:

- Assistance understanding the programs and funding sources available to you
- Confidential on-farm assessments of regulatory compliance
- Assistance identifying potential water quality issues on the farm
- Planning to address potential issues; both technical and financial
- Technical project oversight, where appropriate
- Loaning conservation tillage equipment
- Comprehensive support for nutrient management plan establishment and updates





Look for these events:

- Cover crop trial in East Wallingford with UVM Extension and a local farm
- Portable Scales available– call to use them!
- NMP Update Classes coming soon...
- One-on-one NMP updates also available
- Farmer workshop on grant availability: CEAP, VHCB, SARE and other grants for farmers

Required Agricultural Practices: Any Questions?

If you would like a confidential and non-regulatory mock inspection of your farm or a one-on-one discussion about any aspect of the RAPs, please contact Jennifer Alexander at 802-558-6470 or Jennifer@pmnrcd.org. She has worked for the District for 13 years and has provided practice inspections since the Accepted Agricultural Practices revisions were adopted in 2006.

AGRICULTURAL SCALES

New this year, the District has 6 GEC portable truck scales available to weigh your manure spreader or harvest wagons. This allows calibration for more accurate Nutrient Management Planning. Staff brings the scales to your farm and assists with the weighing process while taking forage samples for drying to determine dry matter content.

Agency of Agriculture Clean Water Grant

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture has provided three southwest Vermont Conservation Districts partial funding to hire a staff person who will assist local farms with projects focused on agricultural water quality. The employee, Stefano Pinna, will provide outreach and technical assistance and will support the program areas listed on page one. The Poultney-Mettowee, Rutland, and Bennington Conservation Districts are excited to offer more comprehensive agricultural programming and to have additional capacity to work with farmers in Rutland and



INTRODUCING STEFANO PINNA

Stefano, the new Southwest Conservation District Agronomist, hails from a northern Italian town outside of Torino. He has a Master’s degree in Agricultural Sciences and is a certified Agronomist.

He has been farming for the past three years in Panton, VT, with his wife. Stefano and Alessandra raise pigs, sheep, chickens, and select vegetables. They open their farm for tours and monthly brunches and dinners, featuring meats from their farm and produce from neighboring farms in traditional Italian, multi-course meals.

Stefano will be assisting farms with nutrient management planning (including plan updates, so contact the District nearest you, if you need help), grant writing, and farm practice implementation. He has a strong interest in research and exploring innovative practices, so keep him in mind if you’re feeling experimental.

Stefano can be reached at Stefano@pmnrcd.org.

Nutrient Management Plan

Update Classes Fall 2018

While one might think that a nutrient management plan is complete once it is written, it actually needs to be updated every year. Records that are gathered throughout the growing year such as crops planted, harvest yields, and manure and fertilizer applications are entered into the GoCrop plan in preparation for developing the following year’s plan. GoCrop is also a great place to keep scouting records, seed variety information, weather information, and field observations.

If you would like assistance updating your nutrient management plan, the District is hosting three update classes.

- * Tuesday Dec 4 10-4 at the Stonebridge Visitors Center in Poultney
- * Thursday Dec 6 10-4 at the Pawlet Library
- * Wednesday Dec 12 10-4 at the Rutland Free Library
- * 1:1 assistance by appointment

Please RSVP to Jennifer@pmnrcd.org