

*Farmers
Working
Together*



*For a Clean
Lake Champlain
and Thriving
Agriculture*

Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition
Newsletter Update
October 21st, 2015

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Welcome,

The 2015 cropping season is nearing its end. While it has been a hard year for many people, with the second wettest June on record and very dry conditions in spring and late summer, we have all learned a lot about how different cropping systems and tillage practices respond to extreme weather. Of the farms that tried no-till corn, yields were similar if not better than conventional corn. However, some no-till corn failed and farmers painfully learned that if soil moisture is too high to plant conventionally, then it is too wet to plant no-till. Farmers have also experimented with Italian Ryegrass, Forage Sorghum, Annual Ryegrass, and radishes, just to name a few. We have also seen how tile drainage and manure management are important tools for farmers through our various "Crop Patrols".

As we finish this crop year and prepare for next year, we also have to remember to keep water quality and soil health in mind. Farmers need to maintain buffers from streams and ditches when working the land or spreading manure, maintain or not plow grass waterways, and try to keep soil covered throughout the winter through cover crops and mulches. Farmers in the Missisquoi Watershed will need to be especially vigilant, as a proposed settlement between the Conservation Law Foundation and the Agency of Agriculture will lead to on-farm assessments to determine if a farm must implement BMP's beyond the RAP's. However, there are numerous resources available to farmers to get assistance for conservation projects and if done well then these projects can not only improve water quality, but they can also improve farm profitability, and even improve your quality of life.

Upcoming Events

10-27-2015: Cover Crop Field Day at Borderview Research Farm. 1-3:30pm, Alburgh

Join us in viewing cover crop mixtures and trials at UVM Extension's Research Farm. There will be a drone demonstration for viewing and monitoring crops. Call (802)-524-6501 to register.

10-28-2015: Soil Health Workshop and Field Day, 10-3pm, Middlebury American Legion

Hear Ray Archulata, a national advocate for soil health, speak about how to make soils more productive and sustainable. After lunch we will go to the Foster Brothers Farm and look at cover crop trials. Call (802)-388-4969 to register, Farmers free!

10-30-2015: Hybrids for Profitability, 11-3pm, St Albans American Legion

Join the Green America Center for Sustainability Solutions and UVM Extension for an informational session about selecting hybrids best suited for forage and silage in our region.

11-4-2015: Interseeded Cover Crops and Weed Management, 1-3pm, Senesac Farm, Colchester

Join us for a discussion on interseeded cover crops at Senesac Farm, Thibault Farm, and Fitzgerald Farm. Come see the UVM Extension Hagie Highboy high clearance seeder, and there will also be a discussion on Burcucumber weed management.

11-12-2015: CLF Settlement Hearing, 1-3pm, St Albans American Legion

Come listen and have your voice heard regarding a settlement between the Conservation Law Foundation and the Agency of Agriculture. The Settlement has implications beyond the Mississquoi Watershed, so all are encouraged to attend!

Field Walks

Since July, the CVFC has hosted 4 events at member-farms looking at field-based practices that are improving their operations financially and environmentally. We have looked at no-till corn across soil types, tile drainage, manure injection, and aeration tillage, with more coming down the pipe for this fall!

If you have something interesting to look at or talk about, let us know and look out for announcements!



Keep Local Farms funding for CVFC

On October 10, 2015, the Keep Local Farms Fund in Vermont announced its support for funding farmer outreach and education through two agricultural organizations, the Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition and Dairy Vision Vermont. Under the proposal, the CVFC will receive \$45,000 to hire an additional part-time staff member to travel to farms and inform farmers about the Farmer Coalition and the services we can provide. Funding would also include funds for promotion and outreach. To read the entire press release, visit <http://www.vermontbiz.com/news/october/ski-vermont-raises-16k-local-dairy-farmers-fifth-grade-passport-program>



Working Lands Enterprise Board announces availability of \$550,000 in grant funds

WLEB has announced over a half million dollars in grant funding to individuals, businesses, and service providers. These grants will fund projects across forestry and agriculture that enhance our communities, economy and culture. Letters of Intent for Business Grants are due November 6, and December 4 for Service Provider Grants. Links to the requests for proposals and applications can be found online at <http://workinglands.vermont.gov/apply/rfp>.

If you have a project proposal you want to submit and need assistance working through the application process, contact us at (802)-388-4969 ext 348 or info@champlainvalleyfarmercoalition.com

UVM Extension NMP Update Classes

For those of you who have already attended the training class and are currently managing your own nutrient management plans using goCrop, UVM Extension in Middlebury is offering a new service. Instead of waiting until next spring, come to free update sessions this fall / early winter where we will provide the environment conducive to ensuring that your records from this growing season are accurately recorded. Sessions will be held on *Wednesday November 18th, Wednesday December 9th and Wednesday December 16th; from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the UVM Extension office in Middlebury.*

Technology enables CVFC Member to Measure Impacts of Conservation

(The following is an excerpt from a recent article released by the USDA-NRCS)

Stewardship and cutting-edge technology are nothing new to the North Williston Cattle Company, a Vermont dairy farm that uses solar energy and robotic milking machines. The latest advancement on the 800-acre, 224-head operation are edge-of-field water quality monitoring stations, which measure water quality and the benefits of using conservation practices on the dairy farm. Lorenzo Whitcomb, one of the managers of the family-run dairy, worked with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to install the monitoring stations.



This technology is helping farmers better understand their soils and how they behave. Different soils have different degrees of permeability, a characteristic that determines how water flows through the soil, and specifically, the rate at which a measured quantity of water drains away through the soil. Conservation practices can help protect and improve soil health, and in turn, minimize impacts to water quality. Some of these practices include rotating crops, planting cover crops, installing filter strips and field borders, and injecting manure as a fertilizer into the ground. In addition to NRCS, other partners include the University of Vermont Extension, USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and Lake Champlain Basin Program.

Whitcomb learned about the technology during a meeting of the Champlain Valley Farmer's Coalition, a cooperative of Vermont farmers in the Lake Champlain Basin who are concerned about their impact on the lake. "This helps me understand what's going on out in the field, even when I can't be out there," Whitcomb said. "Farms can be looked at as filters." And this edge-of-field monitoring technology provides Whitcomb with a closer look at how his farm impacts natural resources and what he can do to continue protecting and improving natural resources.

Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition Inc.

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