

Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition Inc.

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PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Contact us at info@champlainvalleyfarmercoalition.com or (802) 989-6712

www.champlainvalleyfarmercoalition.com

Farmer Practice Surveys

The field practices that you implement on your farms, whether it is cover-cropping, no-till planting, manure injection, crop rotations, livestock exclusion from surface water, rotational grazing, grassed waterways or buffers are all important. What you do under NRCS or Agency of Ag funding is recorded, but many of you do so much more, well beyond the funding you receive. Those extra acres need to be accounted for because they help reinforce the narrative of caring about water quality and doing something about it. We have a chance to enter this data into the Vermont Partner Database, where phosphorus runoff reductions can be acknowledged. So be ready to help us to help you tell an accurate and positive water quality story. John will be assisting Kirsten Workman, Joshua Faulkner, and Kristin Williams to help collect this information. We will attempt to do it in a positive and efficient way to account for your successes and not take up too much of your time.

This information is not viewable by the public or regulators in a way that can be attributed to you or your farm, the only time the Agency 'downloads' this data is in aggregate at the watershed level. However UVM Extension, non-regulatory Ag Agency staff, and Conservation District staff may both enter and/or view the information—but only in hopes of being more efficient about collecting this data and not burdening you with multiple requests for the same information.

Find out more about the Partner Database here:

<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/agricultural-clean-water-initiative-program/partner-database>



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Photos:

(above) no-till alfalfa ready for harvest in Orwell, Vt.

(below) A new covered barnyard at Dorset Peak Jerseys in Danby, Vt.

CVFC has support from
UVM Extension Champlain Valley Crop,
Soil & Pasture Team
And the Vermont Agency of
Agriculture's Clean Water Fund

Summer 2020

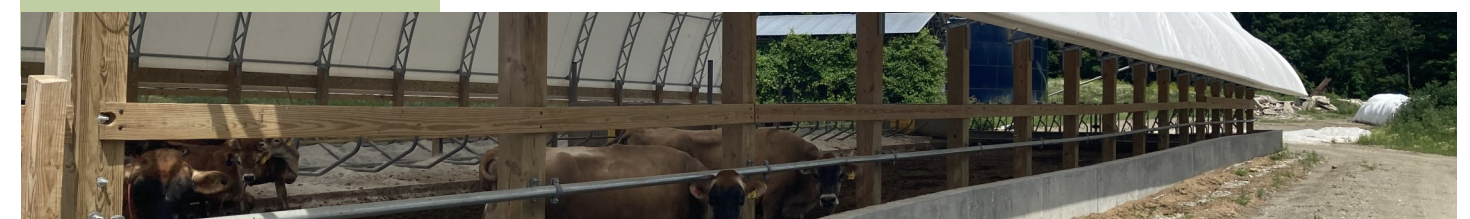
A Message from Your Executive Director

It has been a while since we last sent out a newsletter and a lot has happened in that time. This is my first newsletter as your Executive Director, and it is very nice to be back in a position where I can advocate for farmers, whether you're livestock, grain, vegetable or otherwise, for whom I have a lot of respect. In addition, for those of you who process what you raise and direct market it.

I don't need to go on about the hardships you are all enduring, and have done for some time, but I certainly hope that all of you have been able to apply for and receive any State and Federal financial aid, to which you are entitled. As you may all know the State of Vermont released its \$25 Million relief grants package, with online applications being accepted after July 17th, 2020. As a first step you must file a W-9 form with the Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets. ***If you need assistance reach out and I'll help you find it.***

The Board of Directors is in the process of reviewing and selecting a consultant to assist CVFC with improving its communication and media strategies. This will make it possible to achieve the Coalition's long-term goals. Most importantly of which will be to tell the story of water quality improvement by our members in the most effective way. This will help us achieve the goals we set forth last year in our Strategic Plan and be a better collective voice for our farmer members.

As Executive Director I hope you will not hesitate to reach out to me with questions and suggestions. My contact information is listed on the side bar here on the first page.



2020 FAP Cover Crop Assistance Applications Deadline Extended

The deadline for 2020 cover crop assistance applications to the Vermont Agency of Agriculture's Farm Agronomic Practices Program has been extended to AUGUST 7, 2020.

Applicants are advised to apply online when able to do so if you have not done so already. Apply Now! The payment rates vary by practice type and applications are due for each practice at least 30 days prior to implementation. There is a maximum of \$8,000 available per farm operation from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Farm operations that meet the threshold for the Required Agricultural Practices are eligible to apply; operations must be in good standing with water quality regulations (do not owe the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets any funds, and are not in final order in enforcement) in order to receive financial assistance.

Cover crop payments for 2020 and recommended planting dates and seeding rates are detailed here:

- Broadcast or Interseeded method with a payment rate of \$30 / acre, plant by October 1st at a seeding rate (may vary) of 100 lbs per acre for Winter Rye;
- Drilled or Otherwise Incorporated methods with a payment rate of \$45 / acre, plant by October 15th at a seeding rate (may vary) of 75 lbs per acre for Winter Rye; and
- Helicopter Seeded method with a payment rate of \$35 / acre, plant by October 1st at a seeding rate (may vary) of 100 lbs per acre for Winter Rye.

**NOTE* The recommended seeding rate will vary for alternative cover crop species and mixes. You should contact your local agronomist or crop consultant for comparable cover crop soil coverage rates when planting cover crops with a mixture of species and varieties.*

The Agency advises farmers to plan ahead as best as possible for implementation of agronomic practices, especially when seeking financial assistance. Any applications that request funding for a specific practice are only eligible for funding as detailed on their application and grant agreement.

If you have specific questions about practice eligibility, or how the FAP program works, you can contact Clark Parmelee at 802-661-8284 or learn more on the [FAP program webpage](#).

If farms need assistance on their applications, please contact me at the phone number below so we can help! Kindly, Nina Gage 802-622-4098 Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets Water Quality www.agriculture.vermont.gov

DON'T WAIT—APPLY TODAY!



Farmer Member Spotlight

Caleb Smith | Dorset Peak Jerseys (Danby, Vermont)



Caleb Smith operates a small farm in the Rutland County town of Danby. The 325-acre farm is located above 1,200 feet in elevation, the farm's production area is nestled into a wooded hillside with a northeast aspect. Caleb works mostly by himself, so capital invested wisely to make his days more productive and to achieve water quality improvements is important to him. Caleb's farm is in the Otter Creek watershed, near the headwaters of the river. The Otter Creek, the longest river in Vermont, flows north through Rutland, Brandon, Middlebury, and Vergennes before flowing into Lake Champlain.

To that end Caleb has worked with USDA-NRCS, in their Middlebury and Rutland offices, to execute a significant EQIP contract. In the last 18 months Caleb has used this grant to construct a 500,000 gallon Slurrystore, into which all manure, barnyard runoff and milkhouse waste are collected. In addition, a hoop style covered barnyard now houses all the heifers and dry cows. All waste from this are, again, being contained in the Slurrystore. This was a considerable change from the daily field stacking of manure that occurred in the past. The end of daily field stacking has resulted in more time to manage other aspects of running his dairy farm. When it came to spreading, "the contractor did the whole job in less than two days" said Caleb, while he was able to spend that time on other important jobs on the farm.

Caleb has been very progressive in his field management too. He has used no-till techniques for over eight years, coupled with cover cropping. He grows about 70 acres of corn and selects varieties around 90 days in relative maturity. He plans on being done chopping by the end of September. As Caleb puts it, chopping in October is akin to having a "root canal." On his hay land Caleb has tried different grass and forage varieties in his fields to find out what best suits his location, soils and climate. At the present time he is using a meadow fescue, clover, and perennial ryegrass mixture. He has tried annual ryegrass which gave good results, but was expensive to plant. Feed is stored in tubular "ag bags." Currently Caleb is also instituting a rotational grazing management program with help from his local NRCS office.

See more of Caleb's farm on his website: <http://www.dorsetpeakjerseys.com/>

