

## **Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program**

The Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program offers business planning and technical assistance services to Vermont farmers, as part of a statewide effort to improve the economic viability of Vermont agriculture. The program is funded by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board in collaboration with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, and with funding assistance provided by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Once enrolled, farms work with a farm business planner through one of our cooperating organizations, listed below, or directly with an individual consultant. Our staff works with enrolled farmers to identify a good match for the farm. Farmers and planning consultants meet and work together for approximately one year to produce a written business plan, and in the second year farmers are provided with additional technical assistance and help updating their plans. Farmers that have completed business plans with the program are eligible for grants towards capital expenses or additional technical support needed in implementing the business plan, when funding is available.

At the present time the cooperating organizations are:

- Intervale Center
- NOFA-Vermont
- UVM Extension
- Working Landscapes, Inc.

### **FARMER APPLICATION**

Filling out the application is not a guarantee that you will be selected to receive services, as the program has limited slots available. Applications are accepted at any time, and enrollment decisions are made following several application deadlines throughout the year. Applications should be postmarked by the following deadlines; applications postmarked after the deadline (late applications) will be considered at the next round.

Deadlines for 2009-2010 are:

- August 31, 2009
- November 30, 2009
- February 28, 2010
- May 30, 2010

Applicants are screened for eligibility, along with interest and ability to commit time and effort to participation. Applications should demonstrate the need to develop a plan to improve their business, help with an upcoming transition, or another compelling purpose. The program is not able to enroll all eligible applicants, therefore more thorough information in the application will enable reviewers to have a good understanding of your business, intended changes, and need for assistance. You may attach additional materials to the application.

## **ENROLLMENT FEE**

There is a \$75 fee to enroll in the VT Farm Viability Enhancement Program. Aside from this enrollment fee, business planning and technical assistance will be provided free of charge if your farm is chosen to participate. Please submit a check with your application. We will return your check if we are not able to enroll you in the program.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

- 1) Complete the attached application form,
- 2) Enclose a \$75 check or money order made out to VHCB, and
- 3) Mail to:

**VT Farm Viability Program  
VHCB  
58 E. State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05602**

Please contact **Ela Chapin, Program Director**, at **828-2117** or [ela@vhcb.org](mailto:ela@vhcb.org) with any questions.

*Note: The USDA NRCS is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

Cooperating organization: (Leave blank if unsure)

- UVM
- Intervale Center
- NOFA-VT
- Working Landscapes
- Other

**Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program  
FARMER APPLICATION, PAGE ONE**

Received:

Office use only.

(Please Print)

Name(s) of farmer applicant(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address (street) \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_, VT Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS (please circle Yes or No)**

- Are you a year-round Vermont resident? Yes No
- Do you own or rent by written lease at least one parcel of Vermont farmland? Yes No
- Do you have at least 3 years experience managing or working on a farm? Yes No
- Did your farm produce at least \$10,000 of gross farm income in the most recent tax year? Yes No
- In the next 12 months do you again plan to engage in the business of farming on this land? Yes No

**If you answered "Yes" to all of the above you are eligible to apply for services from the Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program. Please call for help in finding other sources of assistance if you are not eligible.**

**YOUR FARM INFORMATION**

- Check one:**
- I (we) own the farm as a sole proprietorship.
  - I (we) own the farm as part of a partnership.
  - I (we) own the farm as part of a corporation.
  - I (we) own the farm under some other ownership arrangement (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  - I (we) lease the farm from someone else.

- Check one:**
- I (we) live on the farm and are involved in its day-to-day management.
  - I (we) do not live on the farm, but are involved in its day-to-day management.
  - I (we) are not involved in the farm's day-to-day management.

**Please give acres of:**

Total owned \_\_\_\_\_

Total rented \_\_\_\_\_

Forage crops (hay, corn, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Pasture \_\_\_\_\_

Vegetables or berries \_\_\_\_\_

Ornamentals \_\_\_\_\_

Tree fruits \_\_\_\_\_

Sugarbush \_\_\_\_\_

Food Grains \_\_\_\_\_

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Please give numbers of:**

Mature dairy cows \_\_\_\_\_

Young dairy cattle \_\_\_\_\_

Dairy goats \_\_\_\_\_

Dairy sheep \_\_\_\_\_

Other sheep \_\_\_\_\_

Beef cattle \_\_\_\_\_

Hogs \_\_\_\_\_

Poultry \_\_\_\_\_

Horses \_\_\_\_\_

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Please give numbers of:**

Fulltime family laborers \_\_\_\_\_

Part time family laborers \_\_\_\_\_

Fulltime hired laborers \_\_\_\_\_

Part time/seasonals hired \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check if your farm:**

Is certified organic \_\_\_\_\_

Has on-farm processing \_\_\_\_\_

Sells direct to consumers \_\_\_\_\_

Has an agri-tourism element \_\_\_\_\_

Is your farm currently under foreclosure or is your farm business currently in a bankruptcy proceeding? Yes No

Gross farm income \_\_\_\_\_ Net farm income \_\_\_\_\_ Off farm income \_\_\_\_\_  
for most recent tax year \_\_\_\_\_ for most recent tax year \_\_\_\_\_ for most recent tax year \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to set aside significant time (at least several hours twice a month) to meet at your farm with a Farm Viability Program business planner and technical assistance providers? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you considering transferring the farm (sale or lease) to another farmer in the immediate future? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there family members who don't share ownership of the farm, but who have an interest in becoming owners? (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

Is the farm enrolled in use value appraisal? \_\_\_\_\_ Is the farm protected by a conservation easement? \_\_\_\_\_

**Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program  
FARMER APPLICATION, PAGE TWO**

**YOUR INTEREST IN BUSINESS PLANNING ASSISTANCE FROM THE FARM VIABILITY PROGRAM**

**Please attach a one-page description of your ideas for business planning, including plans for changing or improving your farm enterprise. Please address the following:**

- A brief description of your farm business
- Your ideas and plans for the future
- What you hope to get out of enrolling in the VT Farm Viability Program
- What technical assistance you are already receiving or actively seeking

**Please check your top priorities for specific technical assistance you might be interested in receiving during the business planning process (up to 6 boxes):**

- |   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cash flow analysis         | <input type="checkbox"/> Animal health/nutrition | <input type="checkbox"/> Enterprise analysis          | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Borrowing capacity         | <input type="checkbox"/> Composting              | <input type="checkbox"/> Expansion planning           | <input type="checkbox"/> Wholesale markets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farming with disabilities  | <input type="checkbox"/> Manure management       | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Supported Ag.      | <input type="checkbox"/> On-farm sales     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farm transfer              | <input type="checkbox"/> Forage crop management  | <input type="checkbox"/> Market niche development     | <input type="checkbox"/> Labor management  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement/estate planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental concerns  | <input type="checkbox"/> On-farm processing           | <input type="checkbox"/> Agri-tourism      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sale of development rights | <input type="checkbox"/> Pasture management      | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy efficiency/renewables |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health insurance           | <input type="checkbox"/> Organic transition      |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal/family stress     | <input type="checkbox"/> Organic crops           |   |  |

**Please answer the following questions:**

Is your farm enrolled in a financial record-keeping program? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have detailed balance sheets and income statements for the last two years? \_\_\_\_\_

Is your farm enrolled in production record keeping such as DHIA or crop enterprise reporting? \_\_\_\_\_

If applicable, does your farm comply with NRCS highly erodible land recommendations? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you managed a farm? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any formal education in farm management? \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any awards the farm has received under your management. \_\_\_\_\_

The information given in this application is true to the best of my (our) knowledge.	
<b>Signature(s)</b> _____	<b>Date</b> _____

**Return application to:** Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program  
VHCB  
58 E. State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05602

**For more information contact:**  
Ela Chapin, Program Director  
(802) 828-2117, [ela@vhcb.org](mailto:ela@vhcb.org)