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***ARS Program***  
Vermont Association of  
Conservation Districts

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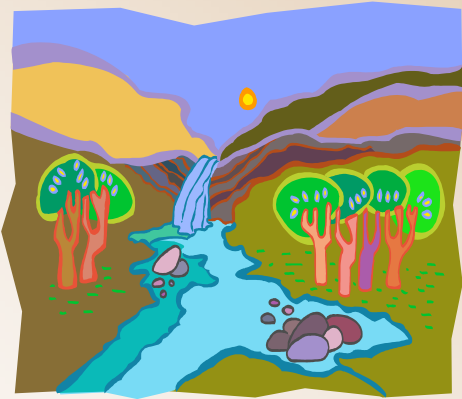
# **AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE SPECIALIST PROGRAM**

**Vermont Association of  
Conservation Districts**



## Water...

Safe drinking water, clean rivers and streams, good fishing and healthy farms...



These are all common goals for Vermonters. The Agricultural Resource Specialist (ARS) program is designed to help landowners work toward reaching these goals on their property.

Working with the Natural Resources Conservation Districts and Vermont's Non-point Source Pollution program, the ARS program helps bring technical expertise to landowners who want to improve water quality and habitat and to producers who want to meet the Accepted Agricultural Practices.

## Vermont's Agricultural Resource Specialist Program

This program is offered by the Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Districts and is supported by funding from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets. Two main services are offered to farmers: the Farm\*A\*Syst and the AAP assistance program.

### Farm\*A\*Syst

is a free and confidential drinking water protection program for farms which includes voluntary assessments to determine how current practices and structures may pose risks to drinking water. Free water testing for farm wells provides information on bacteria, nitrates and common pesticide levels. If a water quality problem is found, ARS staff will assist the landowner in trying to determine the cause of the contamination and to find the best solution.

Voluntary Farm Assessments provide information that help ARS staff offer farm-specific suggestions for protecting the farm's drinking water. Suggested actions are linked with technical resources for design and implementation and financial resources for cost-share opportunities.

### AAP Assistance

program offers farmers free technical assistance and information to help them meet the requirements of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets' AAP regulations.

Implementation of Accepted Agricultural Practices on the farm helps ensure that agriculture is here to stay. Taking the lead in preventing non-point source pollution also helps avoid increased regulations.

Technical assistance for manure and nutrient management, runoff potential, floodway determinations, streambank stabilization, vegetative buffer strips and soil erosion potential are all addressed by the AAP Assistance program. The Agricultural Resource Specialist works with farmers on developing strategies specific to the farm, accommodating seasonal changes and soil characteristics. If strategies involve implementation costs, the ARS provides information and referrals for State and Federal cost-share programs.



Free technical assistance and education about AAP's and BMP's are available to all farmers from Vermont's Natural Resources Conservation Districts.

<http://www.vacd.org/>