

Name of Practice: FEEDING PAD
VACS Program Specifications for No. WP-4FP

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program's Feeding Pad best management practice which are applicable to all contracts entered into with respect to that practice.

A. Description and Purpose

This practice provides a planned system designed to prevent those areas exposed to heavy livestock traffic from experiencing excessive manure and soil losses due to the destruction of ground cover and to manage liquid and/or solid waste from areas where livestock are concentrated. The intent of this practice is to improve water quality by preventing manure and sediment runoff from entering watercourses and sensitive karst features and capturing a portion of the manure as a resource for other uses by storing and spreading waste at the proper time, rate, and location.

A hardened feeding pad is a gravel or concrete pad that provides a stable area for feeding livestock and allows for the capture of manure. Livestock associated with this practice must be excluded from all live streams or live water.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. Eligibility: Cost-share and tax credit are limited to solving the pollution problems where the livestock operation can show they have either:
 - i. Access to land for application and where a full farm plan approach to solving the water quality problem is being carried out.
 - ii. A current Nutrient Management Plan that has been certified by a Virginia certified Nutrient Management Planner and, if needed, a transfer plan prepared by a certified Nutrient Management Planner for any livestock.
2. Cost-share and tax credit is not authorized for:
 - i. Facilities that do not meet local or state regulations.
 - ii. Installation primarily for the operator's convenience.
 - iii. Operations that are planned or under construction.
3. Practice Development: To develop a hardened pad for feeding of livestock, state cost-share and tax credit are authorized for:
 - i. Grading and shaping, geotextile fabric, gravel, concrete or bituminous concrete. If concrete is utilized, it shall be curbed.
 - ii. The hardened pad will be cost-shared based upon the existing herd size and planned feeding method, not to exceed 50 sq. ft. per animal unit. Cost-share funds cannot be used to accommodate expansion of the herd size.

4. All other means of reducing the environmental impact of the feeding operation must be explored and rejected, due to economic inefficiency or lack of space for relocation, before cost-share or tax credit can be approved.
5. Before cost-share or tax credit can be approved, all other means of reducing the environmental impacts of animal waste from the existing operation must be considered. Lack of space for relocation, economic inefficiency or other factors may be considered. A “Risk Assessment for Water Quality Impairment from Heavy Use Areas/Animal Concentrated Areas” must be completed and a minimum score of 120 is required in order to be eligible. Refer to the “Needs Determination Worksheet” for more guidance on practice development and eligibility.
 - i. A Nutrient Management Plan is required to properly manage the manure collected from around the feeding pad that addresses all enriched runoff and manure accumulations associated with the feeding pad.
6. All appropriate local and state permits must be obtained before beginning construction.
7. In order to be eligible for cost-share or tax credit, producers must be fully implementing a current Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) on all agricultural production acreage contained within the field on which this practice will be implemented (including all associated production acreage). The NMP must comply with all requirements set forth in the Nutrient Management Training and Certification Regulations (4VAC50-85 et seq.) and the Virginia Nutrient Management Standards and Criteria (revised July 2014); must be prepared and certified by a Virginia certified Nutrient Management Planner; and must be on file with the local District before any cost-share payment is made to the participant. Plans shall also contain any specific production management criteria designated in the BMP practice (4VACV50-85-130G).
8. This practice is subject to NRCS Standards 342 Critical Area Planting, 362 Diversion, and 561 Heavy Use Protection.
9. All practice components implemented must be maintained for a minimum of 15 years following the calendar year of installation. The lifespan begins on Jan. 1 of the calendar year following the year of certification of completion. By accepting either a cost-share payment or a state tax credit for this practice, the participant agrees to maintain all practice components for the specified lifespan. This practice is subject to spot check by the District throughout the lifespan of the practice and failure to maintain the practice may result in reimbursement of cost-share and/or tax credits.

C. Rate(s)

1. The VACS payment will not exceed 75% of the approved estimated cost or eligible actual cost, whichever is less.
2. As set forth by Virginia Code, the Commonwealth currently provides a tax credit for implementation of certain agricultural best management practices, as discussed in the Tax Credit Guidelines of the VACS Manual.
3. If a participant receives cost-share, only the participant's eligible out-of-pocket share of the project cost is used to determine the tax credit.

D. Technical Responsibility

Technical and administrative responsibility is assigned to qualified technical DCR and District staff in consultation, where appropriate and based on the controlling standard, with DCR, Virginia Certified Nutrient Management Planner(s), NRCS, DOF, and VCE. Individuals certifying technical need and technical practice installation shall have appropriate certifications as identified above and/or Engineering Job Approval Authority (EJAA) for the designed and installed component(s). All practices are subject to spot check procedures and any other quality control measures.

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