

Nutrient Management in VACS

-Focus: Practices with NMP Requirements-



Agricultural Incentives Program Manager

Objectives

- Intro to VACS
- The NMP as a “Gateway Practice”
- Role within WIP III
- Key VACS Practices with NMP Requirements
- Tax Credits



Credit: agfax.com

Purpose of the VACS Program

- Funded by the taxpayers of Virginia for BMPs
- Provides up to \$300,000 per participant/year
- Goal is to maximize nutrient and sediment reductions while implementing the most cost-effective BMPs that are appropriate.
- The program is implemented on a field by field basis.
- “Least cost, technically feasible”

Eligibility for VACS

- Land used in a bona fide program of agricultural management and engaged in production of agricultural, horticultural or forest products for market;
- **Minimum of 5 acres (contiguous);**
- Must be **verifiable gross receipts in excess of \$1,000 per year** from the production or sale of agricultural, horticultural or forest products produced on the applicant's agricultural land for each of the **past 3 years.**

Nutrient Management Plans

- Fully implemented NMPs are the key or gateway to over 30 VACS cost-share and tax credit practices
- Can be written by a DCR NM Specialist *or* a private, certified NM Planner
- Can be funded through the NM-1A VACS practice *or* the DCR Direct Pay Program *or* privately by the farmer

Nutrient Management Plans

- Required for the following practices:
 - All No-Till or Minimal Tillage Systems
 - All “NM” Nutrient Management practices
 - All Cover Crop Practices



Nutrient Management Plans

- Required for the following practices:
 - All Animal Waste Practices
 - Both Resource Management Plan practices
 - Long Term Vegetative Cover (SL-1)
 - Stripcropping (SL-3, SL-3B)
 - Terrace Systems (SL-4)
 - Grass Filter Strips (WQ-1)



WIP III “Bay Bill” Impacts

- Nutrient management planning is a huge part of the Commonwealth’s WIP III goals
- Goal of 85% coverage on all cropland acres in the Chesapeake Bay watershed
- Per the Bay Bill, if WIP III goal isn’t met, NMPs shall be required by law for all operators of 50+ CB crop acres



Intro to Key Nutrient Management Options in VACS



Key Nitrogen Application Options

- **NM-3C** Sidedress Application of Nitrogen on Corn
- **NM-4** Late Winter Split Application of Nitrogen on Small Grains
- **NM-5N** Precision Nutrient Management on Cropland – Nitrogen Application

Other Key NM Practices

- **NM-5P** Precision Nutrient Management on Cropland – Phosphorus Application
- **NM-6** Manure Injection
- **NM-7** Cover Crop for Managing Liquid or Semi-Solid Manure
- **WFA-NM** Whole Farm Approach Nutrient Management Bundle (pilot practice available in certain SWCDs)



Credit: farmtek.wordpress.com

Intro to Key VACS Cover Crops Options



Credit: agronomator.wordpress.com

Key VACS Cover Crop Options

- **SL-8B** Small Grain and Mixed Cover Crop for Nutrient Management and Residue Management (**the “go to” option**)
- **WQ-4** Legume Based Cover Crop
- **SL-8H** Harvestable Cover Crop
- **SL-8** Protective Cover for Specialty Crops
- **SL-8A** Protective Cover for Agricultural Cropland (**the “catch all” CC option**)

Key VACS Cover Crop Options

- **SL-8M** Small Grain and Mixed Cover Crop for Nutrient Management and Residue Management with Fall Manure Application
- **WFA-CC** Whole Farm Approach Cover Crop Bundle (pilot practice available in certain SWCDs, requires participation in WFA-NM)

Key CC Practice Commonalities

- SL-8, SL-8B, SL-8H and WQ-4 are all commonly used to establish vegetative cover on cropland to reduce erosion and loss of nutrients
- Annual practices; can sign up every year
- Participants can elect for cost-share or tax credit, but not both
- Most seed types, rates and planting dates prescribed
- NMP Required
- **No nutrients allowed at planting!**
- Require multiple field checks (cover check & end of season)

Other Key VACS Practices



Credit: no-tillfarmer.com

Other Key Agronomic VACS Practices

- **SL-1** Long Term Vegetative Cover on Cropland
- **SL-11** Permanent Vegetative Cover on Critical Areas
- **WP-3** Sod Waterway

WP-3



versus

SL-11

The Difference?

Concentrated flow is causing the erosion for the potential grassed waterway.



PY21 Expansion of WP-4 Options

- In PY21, DCR expanded the WP-4 Animal Waste Control Facilities to the following:
 - WP-4LC -> For livestock in confinement
 - WP-4LL -> For non-bovine loafing lot systems
 - WP-4FP -> For feeding pads
 - WP-4SF -> For seasonal feeding facilities
- Also, WP-4B for Dairy Loafing Lot Management Systems

Examples: Bedded Pack



Examples: Litter Shed and Composter (WP-4C)



Examples: Manure Lagoon



Examples: Dairies



Examples: Dairy Bedded Pack



Agricultural Tax Credit Program

- Includes many standalone “tax credit only” practices
- Also can be coupled with many VACS cost-share practices for tax credit on the “out of pocket” portion of the participant’s expenses.
- Offers a Virginia state tax credit of 25% up to \$25,000 expended by a participant for agricultural BMPs.
- New 50% tax credit up to \$50,000 for BMPs on agricultural lands covered by an approved RMP in implementation stage or beyond.
- No taxpayer may receive more than \$75,000 in credit.

Equipment Tax Credit Program

- Offers a Virginia state tax credit equal to 25% of all expenditures for no-till or precision ag equipment as outlined in the VACS Manual.
- Capped at \$17,500 per individual/entity.



VACS Resources

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Current VACS Manual:

<https://consapps.dcr.virginia.gov/htdocs/agbmpman/agbmptoc.htm>

QUESTIONS?



Credit: Tri-County/City SWCD