

# Seeding and Filter Strip (SFS) Program

The Seeding and Filter Strip (SFS) Program provides technical and financial assistance to support the long-term installation of perennial vegetation. The goal is to help reduce soil erosion & agricultural runoff, preventing this runoff from reaching waterbodies. Eligible practices include harvestable filter strips, pasture/hayland plantings, and grassed waterways.

## Eligibility:

- Applicant must be a farm as defined in Vermont's Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs)
- Applicant must control the enrolled land either through ownership or a lease that covers the maintenance agreement period of 10 years.
- Land must be in active use and within 300 ft of surface water or a ditch.
- Land must be currently maintained as 1) annual cropland, 2) pasture or hay land with a history in annual crops within the past five years, or 3) a buffer area as required in the RAPs.
- Project must meaningfully address on-site natural resource concerns.

## Practice Descriptions:

**Filter Strip:** A strip or area of herbaceous, perennial vegetation located primarily between a cropland field and an adjacent surface water or ditch. Filter strips must be adequately planned, seeded and maintained to remove sediments and/or nutrients from overland flow. Regular harvesting of vegetation from filter strips is strongly encouraged.

**Grassed Waterway:** A shaped or graded channel within a field of annual crops which has a broad and shallow cross section and suitable perennial vegetation designed to convey surface water at a nonerosive velocity to a stable outlet.



**Pasture/Hayland Planting:** An area of herbaceous, perennial vegetation that will be regularly harvested for hay or grazed by ruminant livestock according to a VAAFM-approved grazing plan. This practice requires conversion into perennial vegetation that will be maintained as pasture or hayland throughout the length of the ten year agreement. To be eligible for this practice, at the time of application land must be in annual cropland OR be in perennial production with a history in annual crops and where the remainder of the field is being rotated back into annual cropland. In some cases, this practice may also be used to support the reseeding of an existing of pasture/hayland which was significantly damaged by flooding.

## Payment Rates:

Practice	Payment Rate
Filter Strip (30-40 ft)	\$200/acre
Wide Filter Strip (40 ft+)	\$1,000/acre
Pasture/Hayland Planting – High Risk	\$1,000/acre
Pasture/Hayland Planting – Moderate Risk	\$500/acre
Grassed Waterway	\$1,000/acre
Other Associated Practices*	90% cost-share

\*Other associated practices which are necessary to the success of SFS practices may be also eligible for up to 90% cost share. Examples of eligible associated practices/expenses include lined waterways, stable outlets, erosion control structures, re-grading work, and clean water diversion structures.

## Other Program Information:

- **Applications are accepted on a rolling basis but are due at least 60 days prior to the planting date:** Optimal planting windows for perennial seedings in Vermont vary across the state but are typically early spring (e.g. April 15- May 30 for plant hardiness zone 4b) and late summer (e.g. August 7-September 15 for plant hardiness zone 4b).
- **Total grant award/payment will not exceed \$50,000 per project.**
- **A project plan, including a map of the project and the proposed seeding species and rates, is required** and must be approved by VAAFM prior to grant award and project installation.
- **Practice payment will occur after the successful installation and certification of the practice:** payment will be based on the final mapped acreage of the project.
- **All enrolled land must be maintained as harvestable perennial vegetation and managed to promote practice function for the length of the maintenance agreement.** Projects will be reviewed for ongoing adherence to the grant maintenance requirements and the Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) throughout the length of the agreement.

**Learn more and apply at [agriculture.vermont.gov/sfs](https://agriculture.vermont.gov/sfs)  
or by contacting the Water Quality Division at (802) 828-2431**