75 percent of your cost to implement for your farming operation. This is because while all of the practices are known to improve or protect water quality, many also can increase farm productivity by conserving soil and making wise use of

ASK YOUR SWCD ABOUT FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR:

- Preserving wetlands
- Managing nutrients, erosion and water quality
- Stream fencing and alternative watering systems
- Managing pastures
- Restoring riparian areas
- Restoring forests
- Planting cover crops

Through the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program, or “VACS,” your SWCD works with homeowners and municipalities to address these laws and regulations as part of the broader effort to improve water quality. The VACS offers more than 50 conservation practices that cover the full spectrum of agricultural

CONSERVATION AND THE BOTTOM LINE

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As a farmer, you’ve probably heard the expression that “conservation pays.” You’re interested in doing what’s right for your farm and right for protecting our natural resources. But as a business owner, you need to weigh the cost and benefit of every farm investment. The Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program, or “VACS,” helps farmers balance their desire to be good stewards with the need to remain profitable. In fact, thousands have participated in this statewide program for more than two decades - just ask your neighbors.

VACS is administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and carried out by the Commonwealth’s 47 Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Your local SWCD can help you implement the best management practices that make sense for your farming operation.

In fact, your SWCD often provides funding that will cover as much as 75 percent of your cost to implement conservation measures that can help improve water quality.

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation programs, activities, and employment opportunities are available to all people regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, or disability. DCR is an equal opportunity employer.
VACS offers more than 50 conservation practices that cover the full spectrum of agricultural operations. Here are a few of the practices with the greatest impact on water quality.

INSTALL A STREAMSIDE BUFFER
Planting trees, shrubs and herbaceous vegetation between field margins and streams creates habitat for enemies of crop pests and can limit your losses from flooding. Riparian buffers also filter nutrient runoff and prevent erosion.

FENCE STREAMS AND PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE WATER SOURCES.
When you fence livestock out of streams and provide another source of drinking water, your herd will enjoy better health. You'll lower nutrient and bacteria levels in local waters, too.

USE A PLAN TO MANAGE NUTRIENTS
Following a professionally developed nutrient management plan lets you maintain optimum conditions for crop growth while improving efficiency and even saving money. Plans also reduce the nutrients that leave your farm.

STABILIZE HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND
Grassed waterways, contoured strip cropping and stream bank stabilization control erosion so you can hold on to your valuable land. In addition, these practices keep sediment from choking streams.

PLANT YEAR-ROUND COVER
Implement a continuous system of year-round cover and you'll improve soil structure, suppress weeds and conserve moisture—all while reducing erosion. There's a cover crop to fit almost every rotation and production need.

To learn more, contact your local SWCD. See back panel for contact information.

At your local SWCD, we work with the people who work the land.