Name of Practice: VOLUNTARY ALTERNATIVE WATER SYSTEM
VACS Program Specifications for No. VSL-6B

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

A. Description and Purpose

This structural practice provides an alternative water source for livestock to reduce direct deposition of animal waste to waterways. This practice may reduce stream bank erosion and livestock waste reaching the stream.

Its purpose is to document and provide a livestock watering system and/or fencing that will improve water quality by discouraging animal access to streams for watering where there is a defined water quality problem. Stream exclusion fencing is an optional component of this practice.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. This practice is limited to pastureland that borders a live stream or Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act Resource Protection Area, as defined by local ordinance. Exception to this may be granted in cases of severe environmental degradation occurring in and around features such as seeps, ponds, wetlands, or sinkholes, etc.

2. To protect stream banks, this practice may include:
   i. Fencing to exclude livestock from a stream or waterway as a stand-alone component or in combination with an alternative water system of this best management practice; no minimum setback distance is required.
   ii Hardened stream crossings for livestock watering and grazing distribution, so long as the crossing restricts access to the stream in those fields serviced by the hardened access.
   iii. Fence chargers used to electrify permanent or temporary fencing.

3. To supply water this practice may include:
   i. Construction or deepening of wells if it is the only technically feasible alternative for a water source.
   ii. Development of springs or seeps, including fencing of the area, where needed, to protect the development from pollution by livestock.
   iii. Construction or repair of dugouts, dams, pits, or ponds (if the only cost effective and technically feasible alternative for water source), including fencing of the area, where needed, to protect the development from pollution by livestock.
   iv. Installing pipelines, storage facilities, cisterns, and troughs.

v. A portable system to meet the management requirements necessary for systems operation rather than a large number of permanent water facilities.
vi. Pumping equipment (except for artesian wells) and adequate facilities.
vii. Pumps and equipment associated with portable and permanent watering systems. Pumps may operate on purchased electrical current or alternative energy sources such as solar, battery, mechanical or hydraulic energy.

4. A portable water supply system is any system or component (i.e. trough, pipe, etc.) that is:
   i. Commercially available or farmer constructed;
   ii. Large enough to provide a timely and sufficient volume of water for the livestock to be contained in a specific area for which the system is designed;
   iii. Capable of being maintained in a stable position and protected from any damage while the system or component is in use;
   iv. Capable of being moved in a timely manner from one location to another within the acreage for which the system is designed.

5. All permits or approvals necessary are the responsibility of the applicant.

6. Soil loss rates must be computed for all applications.

7. The practice must not be in lifespan from any other conservation program.

8. This practice is subject to NRCS Standards 382 Fence, 390 Riparian Herbaceous Cover, 472 Access Control, 516 Livestock Pipeline, 512 Pasture and Hay Planting, 533 Pumping Plant, 528 Prescribed Grazing, 561 Heavy Use Area Protection, 574 Spring Development, 575 Trails and Walkways, 578 Stream Crossing, 614 Watering Facility, and 642 Water Well.

9. The conservation planning process for developing an alternative watering system for livestock should include consideration of some means to provide water to the livestock during emergency conditions.

9. All practice components implemented should be maintained for a minimum of five years following the calendar year of installation. The lifespan begins on Jan. 1 of the calendar year following the year of implementation. This practice is subject to spot check by the District throughout the lifespan of the practice.

10. 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. 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. Plans shall also contain any specific production management criteria designated in the BMP practice (4VACV50-85-130G).

C. 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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