

Name of Practice: VOLUNTARY STREAM EXCLUSION WITH NARROW
WIDTH BUFFER AND GRAZING LAND MANAGEMENT
VACS Program Specifications for No. VSL-6N

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

A. Description and Purpose

This is a structural and/or management practice that will enhance or protect vegetative cover to reduce runoff of sediment and nutrients from grazing livestock on existing pastureland through livestock exclusion.

Livestock watering systems and fencing improve water quality control erosion and eliminate direct access to or a direct runoff input to all live streams or live water. **Stream exclusion fencing and an off-stream watering facility (existing or concurrently installed) are required components of this practice.** Rotational grazing is an optional enhancement 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. An exception to this may be granted in cases of severe environmental degradation occurring in and around features such as: springs, seeps, ponds, wetlands, or sinkholes, etc.
2. A written Grazing Management Plan and Operation and Maintenance plan that includes all acres in the grazing system must be prepared, implemented, and followed if more than three new grazing units are created by the installation of interior fencing. Factors to be addressed in the management plan should include water sources, environmental impacts, soil fertility maintenance, access lanes, fencing needs, wetlands, minimum cover or grazing heights, carrying capacity of the land and rotational schedules. Plans may be prepared using VA Graze, NRCS FOTG, Forage Balance Sheet, or other applicable resources.
3. The buffer must be maintained as perennial species for the practice lifespan. Regardless of the actual installed exclusion fence location, timber harvesting is not allowed within the minimum fence setback as approved for the practice, unless otherwise approved by DCR, DOF, and the District. Grazing (including flash grazing) and haying are not allowed in the protected riparian area during the lifespan of this practice. When both sides of the stream are under the same ownership, livestock must be excluded from both sides.

4. The minimum fence setback from the stream must be either (i) at least 10 feet except as designed in areas immediately adjacent to livestock crossings and controlled hardened accesses. Wetlands, intermittent springs, seeps, ponds connected to streams, sensitive karst features, and gullies adjacent to streams should be included in the buffer area.
5. Portable or temporary system components (fencing, etc.) cannot be utilized in other areas or moved from fields utilized in the system plan.
6. 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.
7. The primary water use of the components must be for the purpose of providing water for livestock. However, incidental use is not prohibited. When an incidental use is anticipated, the District Board should consider the applicant's intent before approving the request. Incidental use will be documented in the applicant's file.
8. Soil loss rates must be computed for all applications.
9. All permits or approvals necessary are the responsibility of the applicant.
10. This practice is subject to NRCS Standards, 382 Fence, 390 Riparian Herbaceous Cover, 472 Access Control, 516 Livestock Pipeline, 533 Pumping Plant, 561 Heavy Use Area Protection, 574 Spring Development, 575 Trails and Walkways, 578 Stream Crossing, 614 Watering Facility and 642 Water Well.
11. All practice components implemented must be maintained for a minimum of 5 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 verification by the District throughout the lifespan of the practice.

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 described 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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