

**Orange / Windsor County Local Work Group**  
**Input for Top Ten Conservation Practices FY 23**

Prepared by: White River NRCD

Prepared for: Obe Racicot, NRCS-VT

We respectfully submit the following comments in response to the proposed list of Top Ten practices to be paid at a 90% cost share rate for FY23.

Suggestion: **Replace Filter Strips with Riparian Forest Buffer**  
Reasoning: The NRCS filter strip practice standard is for a 20' wide planting. This does not meet the RAP requirement of a 25' buffer width. Cost of trees can also be prohibitive.

Suggestion: **Replace Waste Storage Facility with Wood Chip Packs or Covered Bedded Packs**  
Reasoning: These practices are excellent but costly alternatives that are actively being recommended to farmers and gaining traction. The cost of woodchips and bedding is an ongoing expense that farmers have a difficult time adjusting to, but lead to cost savings over time. The upfront costs of these practices need to be reduced to increase adoption of these practices.

Suggestion: **Add Fencing**  
Reasoning: Fencing is a consistently underfunded practice that makes adopting rotational grazing cost prohibitive. If this practice is better suited to be funded at 90% under the new DEC RCPP, that would be an acceptable alternative, as long as it is available state-wide.

Suggestion: **Add Water Systems, Water Storage, and/or Spring Development**  
Reasoning: These practices are all important in grazing systems. Current payments for waterlines are far below current actual costs.