Karen and Patrick O’Donnell milk Holstein cows on their farm in Westfield, located along the headwaters of the Missisquoi River. In October 2017, the O’Donnell’s were awarded a VHCB Water Quality Grant to purchase a manure injection system. This will help the farm manage phosphorus and nitrogen levels in the soil, reduce nutrient runoff, and increase crop yields. In 2017, the O’Don nell’s were also awarded a Dairy Improvement Grant to construct a new manure storage facility, a project which also received funding from USDA-NRCS and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture.

The Water Quality Grants Program, funded by the State of Vermont’s Capital Construction and Bonding Act, helps farmers make water quality-related capital improvements to farm infrastructure. As of the end of 2018, the Viability Program has awarded $881,099 in grants to 29 farms. Grantees are located across the state, including in the high priority St. Albans Bay, Missisquoi Bay, and South Lake portions of Lake Champlain. Water Quality Grants typically support farmers in paying for projects or project components that state and federal grant programs cannot cover, or in some cases assist farmers who are otherwise unable to meet all of their required match for state and federal funding. Anticipated outcomes include improvements in compliance with the Required Agricultural Practices, soil health, environmental stewardship, labor efficiency, animal welfare, energy efficiency, job creation, and employee safety. Grantees include a range of farms: dairy and livestock; small and large; organic and conventional.

“Using a concrete barnyard with runoff collection rather than old barnyards with old curbs or animal access to muddy fields, we will improve water quality in the Dead Creek watershed.”
—Melanie Harrison, Addison

Melanie and Patrick Harrison own Harrison’s Homegrown, a conserved, organic dairy located on 432 acres in Addison. In 2017, the Harrisons used a construction loan and a $25,000 Water Quality Grant to build a bedded pack barn to be able to bring their heifers, boarded off-site at the time, back to the farm and to facilitate management of their cows and their waste in accordance with the RAPs. Concurrently, the Harrisons have made barnyard and wastewater management improvements with assistance from USDA-NRCS EQIP and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture’s Best Management Practices program. The new barn has resulted in increased labor efficiencies for the farm, as well as simpler and more effective waste management and increased cow comfort.
Water Quality Grantees

29 farms awarded a total of $881,099, leveraging an additional $7,846,609 in investments, nearly 9:1. (Jul. 1, 2017 - Dec. 31, 2018)

**Equipment**

Greg Bouchard, Bouchard Family Dairy, Franklin, $40,000
Seth & Brian Leach, Woodlawn Holsteins, Pawlet, $25,000
Patrick & Karen O’Donnell, O’Donnell Farm, Westfield, $14,040

**Barnyard Structures & Improvements**

Chris & Annie Wagner, Green Dream Farm, Franklin, $40,000
Marc & Cheryl Cesario, Meeting Place Pastures, Cornwall, $20,450

**Composting Bedded Pack Barns**

Laurie & Daniel Brooks, Wayward Goose Farm, West Pawlet, $40,000
Melanie & Patrick Harrison, Harrison’s Homegrown, Addison, $25,000
Richard Hulett, Stonebroke Farm, Pawlet, $40,000
Nate & Jessie Rogers, Rogers Farmstead, Berlin, $40,000

**Fenching & Grazing Infrastructure**

Brian & Cindy Kayhart, Chalker Farm, Vergennes, $11,829
Marc & Tiffany Marquis, Marquis Organic Dairy Farm, Newport Center, $3,686

**Wastewater Management**

Jennifer & Jesse Lambert, Lambert Farm, Washington, $10,000
Julie Longway, Longway Farms, Swanton, $40,000

**Manure Storage & Other Manure Management**

Andy & Sarah Birch, Maple Grove Farm, Derby, $40,000
Dana & Wendy Burkewitz, Breezy Valley Farm, Westfield, $34,375
Ken Leach & Joanne Chickering, Ken Leach Farm, North Rupert, $40,000
AnnMarie Gillilan, Quarry Hill Farm, Jeffersonville, $16,750
Brian, Chanin, Ronald, Brian, Joanne, & Kevin Hill, Four Hills Farm Partnership, Bristol, $20,000
Matt & Jennifer Hull, Dalestead Farm and Maple, Enosburg Falls, $40,000
James Jones, Jones Farm, Craftsbury, $39,469
Ramsay & Caroline Mellish, Standard Milk, Cornwall, $35,000
Justin & Angeline Poulin, Poulin & Daughters Family Farm, Brookfield, $10,500
Jamie & Laura Rivers, J & L Dairy, Troy, $40,000
Jacques & Roberta Royer, J&R Family Farm, North Troy, $40,000
Jeremy & Jennie Russo, Southwind Farm, North Rupert, $40,000
Caleb & Jessie Smith, Dorset Peak Jerseys, Danby, $40,000
Ron Sweet, Jr., Bedrock Farm, Georgia, $25,000
Tracy & Glen Tupper, Tupper Farm, Benson, $30,000
Mark & Cecile Vosburg, Vosburg Farm, Swanton, $40,000