

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Capital Improvement Grant

FY2011 Request for Applications

I. BACKGROUND

A. Funding Source and Available Funds

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFAM) received \$100,000 from the Vermont Legislature to provide matching grants for capital investments that will support Vermont agricultural producers in obtaining GAP certification. There is a maximum cap among all GAP Capital Improvements Program grants of \$10,000 per farm, and farms must contribute a minimum of 50% of the total project costs.

This funding will be disbursed in two grant rounds, with the first grant round open from July 1 to September 30, 2011. A total of \$50,000 is available in the first grant round, and will be made available to producers for eligible expenses in the order that applications are received. Applications received after first round grant funds are fully expended will be automatically considered in the second round of funding. The second round will open on November 1, 2011.

Please note that all farmers who undergo a USDA GAP audit through VAAFAM are also eligible for a reimbursement of up to \$500 of audit costs, for a maximum of two growing seasons or \$1000 per farm. Audit costs are not an eligible expense for the GAP Capital Improvement Grant. Please contact Chelsea Bardot Lewis at 802-828-3360 for more information.

B. Eligibility and Program Goals

The goals of the GAP Capital Improvement Grant Program are to increase sales of Vermont fruits and vegetables by maintaining or increasing market access and promoting food safety. To be eligible for funding the participant must be in good standing with the Agency of Agriculture regarding regulatory requirements and resulting penalties.

Current GAP-certified producers, or those who are looking towards GAP certification are eligible. By June 30, 2012, producers must either 1) obtain GAP certification; 2) create a food safety plan that will bring them closer to their goal of GAP certification; or 3) have an appointment with a GAP auditor to begin the audit process.

Pre-approved uses for this grant include:

- Water systems, delivery and treatment devices and improvements
- Fixed or portable restrooms
- Hand-washing sinks (mobile or stationary)
- Crop production equipment to reduce food safety risks
- Field harvest systems to reduce food safety risks

- Cooler walls and refrigeration units
- Packing-shed walls, ceilings, and light fixtures
- Drainage systems in coolers and packing sheds
- Fencing

Additional uses may be proposed.

C. Application and Review Process

The full application format is provided below. This grant application must be fully completed, signed, and submitted to the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets, hereby referred to as the Agency, for eligibility. Proposals will be reviewed by a committee composed of representatives of the Agency, UVM-Extension, NOFA-VT, and producer groups.

If selected, you will be notified by the Agency. We expect to notify applicants of funding decisions within 4 weeks of the application receipt. Successful applicants will have to sign grant agreements and submit W-9 forms to the Agency before funds can be disbursed.

Application Instructions

1. Fill out the cover sheet
2. Answer the application questions.
3. Fill out the one-page budget form, and attach a budget narrative, showing and describing the sources and uses of funding for your project. Be sure to show the required 50% funding match from sources other than the GAP Capital Improvements Grant Program.
4. Mail or email the completed application materials to:
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
116 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602

Email: chelsea.lewis@state.vt.us

Application assistance: If you need assistance with your application, please contact Chelsea Bardot Lewis, Agriculture Development Coordinator at 802-828-3360 or chelsea.lewis@state.vt.us.

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
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Cover Sheet

Name(s) of individual applicant(s) _____

Name of business _____

Mailing address (street) _____

Town _____, VT Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email Address _____

Amount of financial assistance (up to \$10,000) requested: \$ _____

Proposed use(s) of grant funds: _____

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Grant Application

**Please answer the following questions in no more than 3 pages (not including budget).
Answers must be typed. Bulleted lists are acceptable.**

1. Overview of Business.

Please provide a basic description of your business, including a brief history, ownership and management, crops grown (e.g. apples, potatoes, mixed vegetables), and markets sold to. In this section, state whether or not you have previously been GAP audited, which GAP certifier you use or plan on using, and (for USDA GAP), which scopes you have been audited for, and which scopes you plan on completing in 2011 or 2012.

2. Proposed Project Description.

Please describe the proposed investment (project) for which you are seeking assistance and how it will improve your food safety system. Identify the specific USDA (or private) GAPs Audit Checklist question number(s) each capital improvement will address. The USDA GAP Checklist is downloadable: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5091326>. If you are not familiar with the Audit Checklist, please contact Ginger Nickerson, UVM-Extension GAPs Outreach Coordinator, for assistance at (802) 249-6701.

3. Outcomes.

Please explain how the proposed investment will allow you to improve your market access and maintain or create jobs. Please also include information on projected financial returns to your business, and how this investment will help your business to retain markets and become more profitable. How will you measure your progress towards meeting your goals?

4. Project Timeline.

Please provide a timeline for the project. Assuming successful funding, when do you expect completion of this project?

5. Contingencies and Permits.

Please list any other applications upon which your project is contingent (i.e. other grants or bank loans). Please list any federal, state, or local permits or approvals that will be necessary for you to implement this project, and their status.

6. Budget.

Please complete the budget sheet on the next page (required), and provide a budget narrative to demonstrate how the funds will be used, where matching funds are expected to come from, and what matching funds are already secured. In addition, you may provide a more detailed project budget in your own format, although this is not required. Optional detailed budget does not serve as a replacement for the required budget sheet.

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Budget Sheet

Please show budgeted amounts for the investment you hope to make. Fill in as many lines as are appropriate.

The first part of the budget should show how you would use funding from the GAP Capital Improvement Grant program. The second part of the budget should identify each additional source of funding (the matching funds), such as personal savings, bank loan, grants, labor, etc. Your labor or that of your employees may only appear in the "Match" section. Match must total at least 50% of the total project cost.

PART ONE: GAP CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT GRANT-FUNDED ITEMS (REQUEST)

Category	Funds Requested	Describe Use of Funds
Construction (may combine materials and hired labor)		
Equipment		
Other Materials		
Other		
Total Request		

PART TWO: NON-GRANT-FUNDED ITEMS (MATCH)

Category	Amount	Source of Funds	Describe Use of Funds
Construction			
Equipment			
Materials			
Other			
Total Match			

Total Project Costs: \$ _____ (total request from above, plus total match funding)