

GARBER FARMS, INC.

STATE PROGRAM: Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

ASSISTANCE RECIPIENT: Garber Farms, Inc.

ASSISTANCE AMOUNT: \$230,000



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Garber Farms, a picturesque cattle farm located in Augusta County, Virginia, was experiencing significant overgrazing alongside a nearby stream that created severe streambank erosion. The stream that runs through the farm is a tributary to the Middle River, part of the Potomac River watershed in the Shenandoah Valley, and discharges to the Chesapeake Bay. Direct livestock access to the stream resulted in high bacterial and nutrient loads from livestock manure deposited in the stream. To address these water quality issues, the producer worked with the Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to draft a land management plan that incorporates new grazing practices and includes a riparian buffer along the Farm's stream. The Farm was eligible to receive funding from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP) Cost Share program (VACS). They also applied for a water quality grant for the installation of agricultural BMPs from the DuPont Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Settlement. Garber Farms received commitments from the VACS program and DuPont Settlement, covering the cost of the project. However, the Farm needed to provide funding up-front to construct the project, as grant funding would be received after project completion. This led the Farm to seek out a loan to cover these up-front expenses.

The newly relaunched Agricultural BMP Loan program, part of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's CWSRF, was able to provide a no-interest loan of nearly \$230,000 to Garber Farms for the full project cost. Thanks to CWSRF loan financing, this project installed over 5 miles of stream exclusion fencing, over 2 miles of water lines, 11 watering troughs, and created 77 acres of riparian buffers. These installments remove an estimated 3,481 pounds of total phosphorus annually at a cost of approximately \$66 per pound. Through the partnership between Garber Farms, Headwaters SWCD, DCR, DuPont, and DEQ's CWSRF, this cost-effective water quality project in the Shenandoah Valley was made possible.

To read more about this case study, please visit <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-02/2021-pisces-compendium.pdf>.