

Getting the Answers That You Need From VI*A*SYST

If you answered **YES** to any of the questions in the checklist, a matching factsheet in the **VI*A*SYST Manual** will help you develop an action plan to protect your family's health, your property values, and the environment. Simple and low cost individual activities go a long way in preventing pollution! For example, here's information about the first question in the Cistern Assessment checklist.

HAS IT BEEN OVER THREE YEARS SINCE YOUR CISTERN WAS EMPTIED & CLEANED?

Your cistern water quality is directly dependent upon how you manage your collection system. You should empty and clean your cistern every three to five years to remove sludge deposits. This will minimize the amount of coliform bacteria and other contaminants in your drinking water. Some people may need to clean their cisterns more often, depending on how much vegetation is overhanging the roof or other parts of the collection system. Screens and downspouts need to be inspected and cleaned on a more frequent basis, ideally once a month or after heavy rainstorms.

In addition to this helpful information, the factsheets also list phone numbers for contacts who can provide additional help. If you have more questions or need further assistance with developing your action plan, VI*A*SYST trainers can work with you personally. This assessment program is completely confidential and easy to use.

You can also become a VI*A*SYST trainer/educator. VI*A*SYST community educators can:

- K Help residents discover how their activities may contribute to health or pollution problems;
- K Deliver presentations at community and association meetings;
- K Provide information on where to get further assistance.

*FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOW YOU CAN BECOME INVOLVED IN THE VI*A*SYST PROGRAM, CONTACT:*



University of the Virgin Islands
Cooperative Extension Service
St. Croix: (340) 692-4080
St. John: (340) 776-6492
St. Thomas: (340) 693-1080
<http://rps.uvi.edu/CES/>

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*Farm*A*SYST/Home*A*SYST is a national program supported by the USDA Cooperative States Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).*

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University of the Virgin Islands
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
SERVICE

VI*A*SYST

V.I. Home & Farm Water Quality
Assessment Program
Voluntary Pollution Prevention

IS YOUR HOME AT RISK FROM ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTANTS ?

HAS IT BEEN MORE THAN 3 YEARS SINCE YOU'VE CLEANED YOUR CISTERN AND TESTED YOUR DRINKING WATER ?

DO YOU THROW PRODUCTS LIKE PAINTS, CLEANERS, PESTICIDES, FURNITURE POLISH AND/OR THEIR CONTAINERS IN YOUR GARBAGE OR POUR THEM DOWN YOUR DRAIN OR ON THE SOIL ?

HAVE YOU NOTICED SIGNS OF A FAILING SEPTIC SYSTEM – SLOW DRAINS, FOUL ODORS, OR SOGGY SOIL OVER THE SEEPAGE PIT / LEACH FIELD ?

DO YOU HAVE BARE SOILS OR DO YOU NOTICE VALUABLE TOPSOIL RUNNING OFF YOUR YARD OR FARM WHEN IT RAINS ?



What is VI*A*SYST?



UVI-CES's VI*A*Syst Assessment is a tool that can help you conduct a complete environmental assessment of your home, yard, business and/or farm.

VI*A*Syst Topics Include:

Water Supply

Cistern and well care and maintenance

Site Assessment

Knowing your soils, topography and hydrology

Lawn & Garden Care

Conserving soil and water, landscaping with native plants and habitats

Wastewater Treatment

Proper septic system design and maintenance

Household Solid & Hazardous Waste

Reuse, reduce, recycle and compost

Construction Planning

Erosion, sediment and stormwater control practices; protecting plants and habitats

Pesticides

Safe storage and handling practices

Pasture & Animal Waste Management

Safe management practices

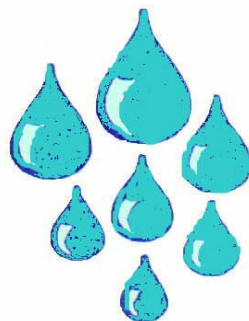
Cropland Management

Conserving resources, maximizing production, safe management practices



our home or farm are often your most valuable investments.

*Activities in and around the home or farm can cause pollution that can affect the quality of the environment and human health. The University of the Virgin Islands Cooperative Extension Service (UVI-CES) Home and Farm Water Quality Assessment (VI*A*Syst) Program can help you identify environmental risks in or around your home or farm and recommend preventative, cost-effective practices to use before problems occur.*



How Do You Use VI*A*SYST Assessments ?

You simply answer **YES** or **NO** to questions about specific topics. Depending on your answer to the questions, you will be directed to a section of the assessment that will give you more detailed information on the topic. These factsheets will help you develop an Action Plan to establish practices to reduce health and pollution risks.

Here's an example from the **VI*A*SYST Assessment Manual...**

RAIN WATER COLLECTION SYSTEM (CISTERN)

Is your drinking water supply from a rain water collection system (cistern)?

YES	NO	
9	9	1. Has it been over three (3) years since your cistern was emptied and cleaned ?
9	9	2. Has it been over one month since you treated your cistern water with chlorine ?
9	9	3. Has it been longer than one month since you cleaned debris from you roof and/or collection system (gutters, pipes, screens) ?
9	9	4. Is your roof made of or coated with toxic materials (i.e., asbestos, lead paint, zinc) ?
9	9	5. Are there places on your roof, collection area, or in your gutters where water stands instead of flowing into your cistern ?