

# Conservation Measurement Tool

## Conservation Performance Scoring

The Conservation Measurement Tool (CMT) will be utilized to evaluate CSP applications using a point based system for environmental benefits. The CMT evaluates existing and proposed new activities to calculate conservation performance points that will be used for ranking and payment purposes. The CMT is size neutral ensuring that all operations, despite the size of each operation, have the same potential to accrue a similar number of points.

All scoring of the relative environmental impacts of existing activity questions and additional activities are based on the Conservation Practice Physical Effects scoring system of -5 to +5. Points for the seven resource concerns plus energy have been established nationally for each question and additional activity. Each land use is evaluated independently to determine if program stewardship eligibility requirements are met, land use annual payments, supplemental payment, and ranking score.

### Meeting Stewardship Eligibility Requirements

Existing Activity Conservation Performance Points are calculated by resource concern for each land use by dividing the actual existing activity points by the potential existing activity points and multiplying by 100. Existing Activity Conservation Performance Points are compared to stewardship threshold values established by land use for each resource concern to determine if minimum stewardship eligibility requirements are met.

### Annual Payments – Conservation Performance Payment Points

Conservation performance payment points for each land use are determined by adding the Total Existing Activity Conservation Performance Points and Total Additional Activity Conservation Performance Payment Points together. Additional Activity Conservation Performance Points are calculated by resource concern for each land use by dividing the actual additional activity points by the potential additional activity points and multiplying by 100.

If a resource conserving crop rotation is scheduled, the points associated with this activity are subtracted from the cropland conservation performance payment points.

### Conservation Performance Ranking Score

The conservation performance ranking score is used to determine the priority of funding for an applicant. Applicants will be funded starting with the highest score and working down the list until acres are exhausted.

The conservation performance ranking score is based on 4 factors:

1. The level of conservation treatment on priority resource concerns at the time of application.
2. The degree to which treatment on priority resource concerns increases conservation performance.
3. The number of priority resource concerns to be treated to meet or exceed thresholds by the end of the contract.
4. The extent to which other resource concerns will be addressed to meet or exceed stewardship thresholds by the end of the contract.

Each factor is multiplied by a weighting factor that is currently set at 25% for each factor. The final ranking score is the sum of the four weighted factors.