EQIP, AMA and WHIP PROGRAM RANKING PROCESS
RHODE ISLAND(ALL COUNTIES)
FY14

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) offer financial assistance to agricultural producers and Non-Industrial private forest landowners to implement conservation practices. Eligible land is determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and is based on an identified resource concern. Eligible producers may apply for financial assistance on conservation practices that will address the identified resource concerns.

Interested applicants may apply in person at the Warwick, RI USDA Service Center. Applicants may also request assistance by telephone, FAX, e-mail, or letter. A signed application must be received no later than the close of business on the application evaluation cutoff date. For more information you can contact our office at:

USDA-NRCS
60 Quaker Lane, Suite 46
Warwick, RI 02886
Phone: 401-828-1300
Fax: 401-828-0433

Eligible Practices and Payment Rates:
See the attachment posted on the website for the applicable program and funding pool.

Application Period:
Applications may be taken at any time. Ranking cut-off will be set by the State Office refer to: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ri/programs for more information.

Funding Pools:
Applications for EQIP, AMA and WHIP will be placed in a funding pool based upon the land use where the identified resource concern(s) will be treated. Participants will compete for funds statewide within each individual fund pool.

FY14 Fund Pools

EQIP	
State Fund Pools	**National Initiative Fund Pools**
Cropland	Conservation Activity Plans
Forestry	Organic
Livestock	Transition to Organic
Pasture	Energy
Beginning Farmer	Water Quality
Socially Disadvantaged Farmer	High Tunnel
Air Quality	NY-NE Forest

AMA	
State Fund Pools	**National Initiative Fund Pools**
Cropland	

WHIP	
State Fund Pools	**National Initiative Fund Pools**
	NE Cottontail

Applications will be placed in a funding pool based upon the land use where the identified resource concern(s) will be treated. If the application contains multiple land uses, the application will be placed in the funding pool that covers the predominant cost of the application. Applicants may choose to apply in more than one funding pool (if applicable) if the practices in the applications can operate independently of each other. Applications in the Beginning Farmer or Socially Disadvantaged funding pools will contain all the practices being applied for.

Ranking: Scoring of all eligible applications will be done after the application ranking period has ended. Scoring of the applications will be done according to the scoring system posted on this webpage for the appropriate funding pool(s). Applications will be selected for plan development and contracting in ranked order according to the score as funds allow. In the event of a tie score, the assign tracking code feature in ProTracts (the NRCS) will assign random numbers to applications to be used as a tiebreaker.

Priority Resource Concerns: The Rhode Island Local Working Group (LWG) determined the primary resource concern to be: Water Quality (EQIP ONLY)

Funding:
The NRCS Rhode Island Local Work Group will allocate the available EQIP, AMA and WHIP funds based on the numerical ranking system set forth on the website. All ranking will be conducted in ProTracts. If insufficient funds are available to fund all eligible applicants, applications will be held and may be funded with additionl funds that may received later during the fiscal year, or deferred to the next ranking period.

Attachments:
Local Working Group (LWG) local ranking questions, by program and fund code……Page 3

EQIP, AMA and WHIP Fund Pool - Local Ranking Questions

FY14 EQIP Water Quality	
Issue Questions	**Points**
1. Based upon RIGIS data, is the operation located in a watershed of drinking water supply reservoir, surface water quality or water conservation issues are being addressed with proposed practices? The practice must be listed in in the Resource Concern AERT Matrix for the NWQI.	32
2. Based upon RIGIS data, is the operation located in a groundwater area mapped GAA or community wellhead and ground water quality issues are being addressed with proposed practices? The practice must be listed in in the Resource Concern AERT Matrix for the NWQI.	32
3. Based upon RIGIS data, is the operation located in a watershed affecting class SA waters impacted by agriculture and water quality issues are being addressed with proposed practices? The practice must be listed in in the Resource Concern AERT Matrix for the NWQI.	32
4. Based upon the current 303d list is the operation located within 300 feet of the impaired waterbody or tributary thereto or is hydrogically connected that is directly impaired by nutrients (dissolved oxygen or excessive algal growth), pesticides, turbidity or other agricultural pollutants such as bacteria/pathogens and the particular water quality issue(s)) is being addressed with proposed practices? The practice must be listed in in the Resource Concern AERT Matrix for the NWQI.	32
5. Is the site located within 300 feet of cold water fishery or Special Resource Protection Waters (SRPW) where water quality and/or water conservation practices are needed to improve and/or protect one of the identified SRPW categories listed (Ecological Habitat, Critical Habitat (Rare and Endangered Species), Unique Freshwater Wetland, and Drinking Water Supply)? See Rhode Island Bulletin No. 300-10-7 for a listing of the SRPW. The practice must be listed in in the Resource Concern AERT Matrix for the NWQI.	32
6. Will soil erosion or soil conservation practices have a positive effect on prime farmland soils or a soil of statewide importance as listed by Rhode Island NRCS?	32
7. Will planned practices enhance protection and are within 1000 feet of T & E species or State listed species?	32
8. Will planned practices address water quality and/or water quantity resource concerns that are within 300 feet of a private well or other surface waters/wetlands?	32
9. Has the applicant previously deveoped a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) and is going to implemnt it under this contract?	64
FY 14 EQIP Organic	
Issue Questions	**Points**
1. Will the applicant implement or maintain a 35 foot riparian buffer (herbacious or woody) on all water bodies through the EQIP contract?	10
2. Has the a resource concern been identified in one of the following conservation partner plans?	10
3. Is the practice going to improve water quality with regard to excessive nutrients in ground and surface water?	10
4. Is the applicant installing practices that will create or enhance pollinator habitat?	10
5. If this application is approved for funding, will this be the applicants first EQIP contract?	45
6. Will practices be applied to reduce erosion? (Practices must be listed in the EQIP Handbook)	10
7. Does the applicant currently have and implement an approved Irrigation Water Management Plan including record keeping?	10
8. Does the applicant currently use no-till, reduced tillage or will implement practices resulting in improved soil quality?	10
9. Is the applicant in compliance with any exisitng NRCS contracts including O&M and record keeping.	70
10. Will the applicant implement or maintain a 35 foot riparian buffer (herbacious or woody) on all water bodies through the EQIP contract?	10
11. Will practiced be installed to exclude livestock from riparian areas and wetlands or vernal pools?	10
12. a Is the program application for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) for a TSP prepared Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition (138)? If answer is ?Yes?, do not answer any other state level questions. If answer is ?No?, proceed with evaluation to address the	45

FY 14 EQIP Organic Transition	
Issue Questions	**Points**
1. Will the applicant implement or maintain a 35 foot riparian buffer (herbacious or woody) on all water bodies through the EQIP contract?	10
2. Has the a resource concern been identified in one of the following conservation partner plans?	10
3. Is the practice going to improve water quality with regard to excessive nutrients in ground and surface water?	10
4. Is the applicant installing practices that will create or enhance pollinator habitat?	10
5. If this application is approved for funding, will this be the applicants first EQIP contract?	45
6. Will practices be applied to reduce erosion? (Practices must be listed in the EQIP Handbook)	10
7. Does the applicant currently have and implement an approved Irrigation Water Management Plan including record keeping?	10
8. Does the applicant currently use no-till, reduced tillage or will implement practices resulting in improved soil quality?	10
9. Is the applicant in compliance with any exisitng NRCS contracts including O&M and record keeping.	70
10. Will the applicant implement or maintain a 35 foot riparian buffer (herbacious or woody) on all water bodies through the EQIP contract?	10
11. Will practiced be installed to exclude livestock from riparian areas and wetlands or vernal pools?	10
12. a Is the program application for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) for a TSP prepared Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition (138)? If answer is ?Yes?, do not answer any other state level questions. If answer is ?No?, proceed with evaluation to address the	45

FY 14 EQIP ENERGY	
Issue Questions	**Points**
1. If this application is approved for funding, will this be the applicants first EQIP contract?	50
2. Is the applicant implementing any changes to their field operation to conserve energy? Reduced tillage, energy conserving cover crops.	50
3. Does the applicant currently implement an irrigations water management plan?	50
4. Does the applicant currently implement a nutrient management plan?	50
6. Is the applicant in compliance with any exisitng NRCS contracts including O&M and record keeping.	50
7. Is the program application for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) for a TSP prepared Agricultural Energy Management Plan (122 or 124)? If answer is ?Yes?, do not answer any other state level questions. If answer is ?No?, proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.	250

FY 14 EQIP HIGH TUNNEL	
Issue Questions	**Points**
1. If the application is approved for funding, will this be the applicants first EQIP contract?	100
2. Is the applicant in compliance with any exisitng NRCS contracts including O&M and record keeping.	150

FY 14 EQIP NY-NE FOREST	
Issue Questions	**Points**
1. Is the practice going to improve water quality with regard to excessive sediment in surface water?	8
2. Is the land unit designated in a RIGIS drinking water supply area?	8
3. Does this application include Early Successional Habitat development.	8
4. Is the applicant installing forestry wildlife structures such as bird boxes, bat baxes or will create or enhance pollinator habitat?	8
5. If this application is approved for funding, will this be the applicants first EQIP contract?	65
6. Are adjacent lands implementing forest management practices?	35
7. Has the applicant participated in the Coverts program?	35
8. Will the applicant implement or maintain a 35 foot riparian buffer (herbacious or woody) on all water bodies through the EQIP contract?	8
9. Is the applicant currently compliant with any existing NRCS contracts including O&M and record keeping?	75

FY 14 EQIP CONSERVATION ACTIVITY PLANS	
Issue Questions	**Points**
1. If the application is for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP), the agency will assign significant ranking priority and conservation benefit by answering "Yes" to the following question. Answering "Yes" to question 1a will result in the application being awarded the maximum amount of points that can be earned for the national priority category	250

FY 14 EQIP Pasture	
Issue Questions	**Points**
1. Is the practice going to improve water quality with regards to nutrients and pathogens in ground water or suface water.	25
2. Is the applicant using the contract to implement a Grazing Management Plan?	50
3. Does a practice in this plan support an existing CNMP?	50
4. Is the applicant installing practices that will create or enhance pollinator habitat?	25
5. If this application is approved for funding, will this be the applicants first EQIP contract?	25
6. Will practices be installed to exclude livestock from riparian areas and wetlands or vernal pools?	25
7. Will a heavy use area (outside headquarters) be stabilized to prevent erosion and or water quality resource concerns?	25
8. Will the applicant implement or maintain a 35 foot riparian buffer (herbaceous or woody) on all water bodies through the EQIP contract?	25
9. Is the applicant currently compliant with existing NRCS contracts including O&M and record keeping?	150

FY 14 EQIP Livestock	
Issue Questions	**Points**
1. Is the pracatice going to improve water quality with regards to nutrients and pathogens in ground and/or surface water?	25
2. Is the applicant using the contract to implement a CNMP?	50
3. If this application is approved for funding, will this be the applicants first EQIP contract?	50
4. Will practices be applied to address water quality in a TMDL/303d/drinking water reservoir?	50
5. Will practiced be installed to exclude livestock from riparian areas and wetlands or vernal pools?	5
6. Will a heavy use area be stabilized to prevent erosion and or water quality resource concerns?	25
7. Will the applicant implement or maintain a 35 foot riparian buffer (herbacious or woody) on all water bodies through the EQIP contract?	25
8. Is the applicant currently compliant with existing NRCS contracts including O&M and record keeping?	150

FY 14 EQIP Cropland	
Issue Questions	**Points**
1. Will the applicant implement or maintain a 35 foot riparian buffer (herbacious or woody) on all water bodies through the EQIP contract?	25
2. Has the a resource concern been identified in one of the following conservation partner plans?	25
3. Is the practice going to improve water quality with regard to excessive nutrients in ground and surface water?	25
4. Is the applicant installing practices that will create or enhance pollinator habitat?	25
5. If this application is approved for funding, will this be the applicants first EQIP contract?	75
6. Will practices be applied to reduce erosion? (Practices must be listed in the EQIP Handbook)	25
7. Does the applicant currently have and implement an approved Irrigation Water Management Plan including record keeping?	25
8. Does the applicant currently use no-till, reduced tillage or will implement practices resulting in improved soil quality?	25
9. Is the applicant in compliance with any exisitng NRCS contracts including O&M and record keeping.	150

FY 14 EQIP Forest	
Issue Questions	**Points**
1. Is the practice going to improve water quality with regard to excessive sediment in surface water?	10
2. Is the land unit designated in a RIGIS drinking water supply area?	10
3. Does this application include Early Successional Habitat development.	10
4. Is the applicant installing forestry wildlife structures such as bird boxes, bat baxes or will create or enhance pollinator habitat?	10
5. If this application is approved for funding, will this be the applicants first EQIP contract?	75
6. Are adjacent lands implementing forest management practices?	50
7. Has the applicant participated in the Coverts program?	75
8. Will the applicant implement or maintain a 35 foot riparian buffer (herbacious or woody) on all water bodies through the EQIP contract?	10
9. Is the applicant currently compliant with any existing NRCS contracts including O&M and record keeping?	150

FY 14 EQIP Beginning Farmer and EQIP Socially Disadvantaged	
Issue Questions	**Points**
Cropland	
1. Will the applicant implement or maintain a 35 foot riparian buffer (herbacious or woody) on all water bodies through the EQIP contract?	25
2. Has the a resource concern been identified in one of the following conservation partner plans?	25
3. Is the practice going to improve water quality with regard to excessive nutrients in ground and surface water?	25
4. Is the applicant installing practices that will create or enhance pollinator habitat?	25
5. If this application is approved for funding, will this be the applicants first EQIP contract?	75
6. Will practices be applied to reduce erosion? (Practices must be listed in the EQIP Handbook)	25
7. Does the applicant currently have and implement an approved Irrigation Water Management Plan including record keeping?	25
8. Does the applicant currently use no-till, reduced tillage or will implement practices resulting in improved soil quality?	25
9. Is the applicant in compliance with any exisitng NRCS contracts including O&M and record keeping.	150
Livestock	
1. Is the pracatice going to improve water quality with regards to nutrients and pathogens in ground and/or surface water?	25
2. Is the applicant using the contract to implement a CNMP?	50
3. If this application is approved for funding, will this be the applicants first EQIP contract?	50
4. Will practices be applied to address water quality in a TMDL/303d/drinking water reservoir?	50
5. Will practiced be installed to exclude livestock from riparian areas and wetlands or vernal pools?	25
6. Will a heavy use area be stabilized to prevent erosion and or water quality resource concerns?	25
7. Will the applicant implement or maintain a 35 foot riparian buffer (herbacious or woody) on all water bodies through the EQIP contract?	25
8. Is the applicant currently compliant with existing NRCS contracts including O&M and record keeping?	150
Forest	
1. Is the practice going to improve water quality with regard to excessive sediment in surface water?	10
2. Is the land unit designated in a RIGIS drinking water supply area?	10
3. Does this application include Early Successional Habitat development.	10
4. Is the applicant installing forestry wildlife structures such as bird boxes, bat baxes or will create or enhance pollinator habitat?	10
5. If this application is approved for funding, will this be the applicants first EQIP contract?	75
6. Are adjacent lands implementing forest management practices?	50
7. Has the applicant participated in the Coverts program?	75
8. Will the applicant implement or maintain a 35 foot riparian buffer (herbacious or woody) on all water bodies through the EQIP contract?	10
9. Is the applicant currently compliant with any existing NRCS contracts including O&M and record keeping?	150

Pasture	
1. Is the practice going to improve water quality with regards to nutrients and pathogens in ground water or suface water.	25
2. Is the applicant using the contract to implement a Grazing Management Plan?	50
3. Does a practice in this plan support an existing CNMP?	50
4. Is the applicant installing practices that will create or enhance pollinator habitat?	25
5. If this application is approved for funding, will this be the applicants first EQIP contract?	25
6. Will practices be installed to exclude livestock from riparian areas and wetlands or vernal pools?	25
7. Will a heavy use area (outside headquarters) be stabilized to prevent erosion and or water quality resource concerns?	25
8. Will the applicant implement or maintain a 35 foot riparian buffer (herbaceous or woody) on all water bodies through the EQIP contract?	25
9. Is the applicant currently compliant with existing NRCS contracts including O&M and record keeping?	150

FY 14 AMA Cropland	
Issue Questions	**Points**
1. Existing diviersified operation (produces three or more crops, or value added agricultural produts) or Organic operation?"	25
2. Currently diversifying their operation or transitioning to organic status?	50
3. Has a business plan developed for thier operation?	50
4. Historically Underserved Client?	50
5. Does not currently have a suitable water supply to avert risk associated with drought?	50
6. Will convert from sprinkler to micro-irrigation to conserve water.	25

FY 14 WHIP NE Cottontail	
Issue Questions	**Points**
1. Is the property permanantly protected through a conservation easement such as PDR or fee simple purchase?	100
2. Is the property enrolled in the FFOS program and they will implement a forest management plan?	150