# **Ranking Tool Summary**

### for FY2014 - Ogallala Acquifer Initiative (Released 01/07/2014)

#### **Description:**

Ranking tool for the conservation of water resources critical to the Ogallala Aquifer (OAI) states (South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas). The OAI is designed, through EQIP, to provide producers in approved states with financial and technical assistance to reduce the quantity of water removed from the aquifer and to improve water quality using conservation practices on cropland and rangeland. Priority areas in the Ogallala Aquifer Initiative (OAI) will be those that are within either a priority area for Water Ouality (WOL) or Water Quantity (WOT). Water quality priority areas are those that meet 60% or greater chance of nitrate levels exceeding 4 ppm in recent groundwater recharge. Water quantity priority areas are those that have greater than 25 foot of decline. Both of these priority criteria are based on analysis of USGS published data and as described in the OAI proposal document. For 2014 Nebraska has also included areas regulated by a legally binding compact or agreement as high priority. NRD wide priority maps are available on the Nebraska sharepoint site. All applications will be screened and assigned a priority of high, medium or low in ProTracts. High priority applications will include those that are located within the designated WQL or WQT priority areas and those that are located within any other multi-state based priority areas, including compacts, agreements and other legislated issues. Medium priority applications will include other locally important water quality/quantity concern areas located within the Ogallala Aquifer Initiative project area. High priority applications must be ranked, approved and obligobligated before any Medium priority applications are ranked or funded. Low priority applications will not be ranked or funded without written approval from the Regional Conservationist.

#### Land Uses:

Associated Agriculture Land, Crop, Farmstead, Pasture, Range

**Efficiency Score:** 

Scoring Multiplier: 1.000

# **Optional Notes:**

## **National Priorities:**

Scoring Multiplier: 1.000 Questions:

Number	Question	Points
1	a. Is the program application to support the development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP)? If answer is "Yes", do not answer any other national level questions. If answer is "No", proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.	250
2	a. Meet regulatory requirements relating to animal feeding operations, or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?	15
2	b. Reduce sediment, nutrients or pesticides from agricultural operations located within a field that adjoins a designated "impaired water body" (TMDL, 303d, etc.)?	15
2	c. Reduce sediment, nutrients or pesticides from agricultural operations located within a field that adjoins a "non-impaired water body"?	5
3	a. Decrease aquifer overdraft?	15
3	b. Conserve water from irrigation system improvements and saved water will be available for other beneficial uses?	10
3	c. Conserve water in an area where the applicant participates in a geographically established or watershed-wide project?	5
4	a. Meet on-farm regulatory requirements relating to air quality or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?	15
4	b. Reduce on-farm generated green house gases such as CO2 (Carbon Dioxide), CH4 (Methane), and N2O (Nitrous Oxide)?	15
4	c. Increase on-farm carbon sequestration?	5
5	a. Reduce erosion to tolerable limits (Soil "T")?	15
5	b. Improve soil tilth, organic matter, structure, health, etc.?	5
6	a. Benefit on-farm habitat associated with threatened and endangered, at-risk, candidate, or species of concern as identified in a State wildlife plan?	15
6	b. Help retain wildlife and plant habitat on land exiting the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)?	10
7	a. Help manage or control noxious or invasive plant species on non-cropland?	10
7	b. Increase, or improve habitat to benefit pollinator or other targeted wildlife species?	10
7	c. Properly dispose of livestock carcasses?	5
7	d. Are identified in an Integrated Pest Management plan?	10
7	e. Are identified in a Nutrient Management plan?	10
7	f. Apply principles of adaptive nutrient management?	5
8	a. Reduce energy consumption on the agricultural operation?	15
8	b. Increase on-farm energy efficiency with practices and improvements identified in an approved energy audit equivalent to criteria required in Ag EMP?	10

8	c. Assist in implementing energy conservation measures that also reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants?	10
9	a. Implementation of all conservation practices scheduled in the contract on the CPA-1155 within three years of date of obligation?	10
9	b. Improvement of existing conservation practices or conservation systems already in place at the time the application is accepted?	5
9	c. Implementation of practice(s) which will complete an existing conservation system or suite of practices?	5
	Total Points	500

### State Issues:

Scoring Multiplier: 1.190 Questions:

Sub- heading Number	Question Number	Question	Points
	1	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP funding result in water conservation treatment (water quality / water quantity) within a high priority area identified in the Ogallala Initiative?	15
	2	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP funding result in nutrient management that exceeds the minimum requirements of NRCS Practice Standard 590 including the use of variable rate technologies for nutrient application using computer controlled equipment that adjusts fertilizer application based on management zones or grids?	10
	3	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP funding result in wetlands being created, restored or enhanced to allow aquifer recharge?	30
	4	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP funding EQIP result in conversion from irrigated land to non-irrigated land on 100% of the total contract acres?	100
	5	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP funding EQIP result in conversion from irrigated land to non-irrigated land on 75% of the total contract acres?	50
	6	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP funding EQIP result in conversion from irrigated land to non-irrigated land on at least 50% of the total contract acres?	35
	7	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP funding EQIP result in conversion from irrigated land to non-irrigated land on at least 25% of the total contract acres?	30
	8	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP funding EQIP result in conversion from irrigated land to non-irrigated land on at least 5%	15

	of the total contract acres?	
9	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP funding result in conversion from a surface irrigation to a micro-irrigation system? Surface irrigation is defined as irrigation by means of a gravity distribution system (e.g. furrow, flood, graded border, level basin).	35
10	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP funding result in conversion from a surface irrigation to a low-pressure/improved sprinkler irrigation system? Surface irrigation is defined as irrigation by means of a gravity distribution system (e.g. furrow, flood, graded border, level basin).	25
11	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP funding have a minimum 20% irrigation system efficiency improvement as a result of the conversion to a more efficient irrigation system from the existing irrigation system?"	10
12	Will the treatment you intended to implement using Ogallala Aquifer Initiative EQIP funding result in irrigation system improvements which will provide an overall reduction of water use on the entire farming operation?	25
13	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP funding result in water conservation treatment (water quantity) within a legally defined area established to addresses the decline of groundwater levels in an organized area?	20
	Maximum Points: Total Points	400

## Local Issues:

Scoring Multiplier: 0.800 Questions:

Sub- heading Number	Question Number	Question	Points
	1	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP result in the implementation of irrigation water management using a high intensity soil moisture monitoring system 100% of the irrigated contract acres? (remote soil moisture monitoring, data program enhanced)	30
	2	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP result in the implementation of irrigation water management using a medium intensity soil moisture monitoring system 100% of the irrigated contract acres? (data logger to gather soil moisture information)	18
	3	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP result in the implementation of irrigation water management using a low intensity soil moisture monitoring system 100% of the irrigated contract acres?	5
	4	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP result in the installation of a SDI system or sprinkler irrigation system that applies	56

	water under a span (radius) with a linear travel path or 360 degree rotation at the center pivot point?	
5	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP result in the installation of a sprinkler irrigation system that applies water under a span (radius) with greater than a 270 degree but less than 360 degree rotation at the center pivot point?	30
6	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP result in the installation of a sprinkler irrigation system that applies water under a span (radius) with a 270 degree rotation at the center pivot point?	13
7	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP result in the installation of a sprinkler irrigation system that applies water under a span (radius) with greater than a 180 degree but less than 270 degree rotation at the center pivot point?	5
8	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP funding result in water conservation benefits to an area located within the designated Water Quality or Water Quantity high priority area? (see map located on sharepoint and in guidance document)	21
9	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP result in no-till with no row cultivation and no more than 25% total ground disturbance related to fertilizing, planting, pivot tracks, etc. on all cropland in the contract?	31
10	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP result in permanent wildlife habitat being established in newly created incidental areas such as new pivot corners that are a result of irrigation system effiency improvements?	33
11	Will the treatment you intend to implement using Ogallala Initiative EQIP directly benefit a Federal or State listed, threatened, endangered or candidate species as identified in the State wildlife plan (Nebraska Natural Legacy Project)?	15
12	If the applicant who is applying for Ogallala Initiative EQIP is also a previous/present contract holder or has been associated with a contract, has the applicant ever had a contract out of compliance or modified to reschedule a practice without a meritorious reason? Meritorious reason examples include personal hardship, adverse weather conditions, etc.	-25
13	Does the applicant who is applying for Ogallala Initiative EQIP qualify have either Limited Resource, Beginning Farmer/Rancher or Socially Disadvantaged status?	18
	Maximum Points: Total Points	250