Ranking Tool Summary
for FY2014 - FY14 Certified Organic
(Released 01/09/2014)

Description:

NRCS will assist eligible producers with installation of conservation practices on agricultural operations related to organic production. This ranking tool is to used for certified organic and exempt from certification producers in support of the NRCS National Organic Initiative (NOI).

Land Uses:

Associated Agriculture Land, Crop, Farmstead, Forest, Pasture, Range

Efficiency Score:

Scoring Multiplier: 222.000

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: 1.130
Questions:

Sub-heading Number	Question Number	Question	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 state priority category.	
	1	a Is the program application for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) for a TSP prepared Transition to Organic Plan (138)? 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.	400
2		Soil Quality Degradation: Answer all questions that apply for a maximum of 45 points.	
	2	a EQIP Schedule of Operations includes implementation of two or more soil quality or enhancing practices that address soil tilth, crusting, water infiltration, organic matter compaction, etc.?	45
	2	b EQIP Schedule of Operations includes implementation of one soil quality or enhancing practice that addresses soil tilth, crusting, water infiltration, organic matter, compaction, etc.?	25
3		Soil Erosion: Maximum of 45 points	
	3	a Does the EQIP Schedule of Operations include practices that will result in reduction of erosion?	45
4		Water Quality Degradation: Answer all that apply for a maximum of 110 points	
	4	a EQIP Schedule of Operations includes 595 Integrated Pest Management?	45
	4	b EQIP Schedule of operations includes implementation of practices for the management of noxious and invasive species ONLY on "non-cropland" acreage?	20
	4	c EQIP Schedule of Operations includes implementation of practice 590 Nutrient management for management of soil fertility, plant nutrients, and soil amendments?	45
5		Degraded Plant Condition: Answer all that apply for a maximum of 90 points	
	5	a EQIP Schedule of Operations includes practices that will result in creation of buffer zones that will mitigate offsite contaminates from entering farm?	30
	5	b EQIP Schedule of Operations includes practices with the intent of increasing habitat for pollinators and/or beneficial insects?	30
	5	c EQIP Schedule of Operations includes practice(s) that support Integrated Pest Management?	30
6		Insufficient Water: Answer all that apply for a maximum of 50 points	

	6	a Practices scheduled in the EQIP Schedule of Operations will improve the efficiency of an existing irrigation system?	25
	6	b EQIP Schedule of Operations will include practices that will improve irrigation water management and/or conserve soil moisture?	25
7		Livestock Production Limitation: Answer all that apply for a maximum of 60 points	
	7	a EQIP Schedule of Operations includes implementation of practice 528 Prescribed Grazing AND/OR 512 Pasture & Hayland Planting for management of plant species, livestock, residues, feed, and other identified resource needs?	30
	7	b EQIP Schedule of Operations includes implementation of practices that limit and manage domestic livestock access to streams, creeks, and other natural water bodies?	20
	7	c EQIP Schedule of Operations includes implementation of practices to assure adequate domestic livestock drinking water sources (not to include streams) are available in the treatment unit?	10
		Maximum Points: 400 Total Points	825

Local Issues:

Scoring Multiplier: 4.030
Questions:

Sub-heading Number	Question Number	Question	Points
	1	Is the program application to support the development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP)? If answer is "Yes", do not answer any other local level questions. If answer is "No", proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.	250
	2	Domestic Animal Resource Issues: EQIP plan includes implementation of practice 528 Prescribed Grazing to FOTG quality criteria standards for management of plant species, livestock, residues, feed, and other identified resource needs.	43
	3	Domestic Animal Resource Issues: EQIP plan includes implementation of practices that limit and manage domestic livestock access to streams, creeks, and other natural water bodies to FOTG quality criteria standards.	36
	4	EQIP plan includes implementation of practices to assure adequate clean off-stream domestic livestock drinking water sources are available in the treatment unit and meets FOTG quality criteria standards.	34
	5	Domestic Animal Resource Issues: EQIP plan includes implementation of practice 511 Forage Harvest Management to address NOP requirements for management of feed supplements and forage supplies.	37
	6	Fish and Wildlife Resource Issues: EQIP plan includes implementation of practices that include pollinator-friendly plant species in the crop rotation	19

		system.	
	7	Fish and Wildlife Resource Issues: EQIP plan includes implementation of conservation practices that include pollinator plant species for organic production systems (e.g., filter and buffer strips, hedge rows, windbreaks, etc.).	19
	8	Plant Condition: EQIP plan includes practices that will result in management of vegetation and surface residues to FOTG quality criteria standards.	62
		Maximum Points: 250 Total Points	500

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