

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Ranking Instructions - FY09 Local Work Group (LWG)

An EQIP application will be ranked and compete within the LWG drawing account when it does not specifically address the resource concerns targeted by the Statewide funding pools. An applicant may only provide one Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 EQIP application per operating unit.

Note: ONLY financially assisted conservation practices will be considered during the application ranking.

Efficiency Score:

The Efficiency Score considers the benefits of the cost efficiency of the conservation practice during the evaluation of the applications for funding. This score is generated in the interworkings or conservation databases and is generated automatically. The Efficiency Score takes values from the CPPE (Conservation Practice Physical Effects) and cost information from the Practice Average Cost Tables in SmartTech. The score evaluates the effect of the financially assisted conservation practice in solving resource concerns.

National Priorities Addressed:

1. *Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction of non-point source pollution, such as nutrients, sediment, pesticides, excess salinity in impaired watersheds with total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) where available, groundwater contamination or point sources such as contamination from confined animal feeding operations?* Points shall be awarded if the EQIP application contains practices that will have a positive impact on water quality, either ground or surface water. This question will always be "Yes" for applications applying under the Animal Feeding Operations (AFO) statewide resource concern. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 100 CNMP, 313, Red River Valley Cropping Sequence (RRVCS), 329, 340, 345, 351, 442 (only when converting from flood to pivot), 512, 550, 590, 595, 603, and/or 610.

2. *Will the treatment you intend to implement for water conservation or irrigation efficiency using EQIP result in a considerable reduction in water use?* Points will be awarded if water conservation practices will be implemented through the potential EQIP contract. This question will always be "Yes" for applications applying under the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) statewide resource concern. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 351 (free flowing), 430, 441, 442, 449, and 468.

3. *Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction of emissions, such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxides (NOx), volatile organic compounds, and ozone precursors and depleters that contribute to air quality impairment violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards?* This question will rarely be checked as "Yes." Examples may include reducing horsepower of an irrigation pumping station or the conversion of a diesel or gas motor to an electric/solar motor.

4. *Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation from unacceptable levels on agricultural land?* Points will be awarded when the EQIP application includes practices that will conserve soil resources on land that has an estimated benchmark soil loss greater than the tolerable soil loss (T) and a planned soil loss of less than (T). Points are restricted to the practices listed: RRVCS, 329, 332, 340, 345, 412, 512, 603, 550, 342, and/ or 610.

5. *Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable increase in the promotion of at-risk species habitat conservation?* Points will be awarded if the practices included in the EQIP application will result in protection, restoration, development, or enhancement of grasslands (native or introduced) and/or wetlands for Level 1 Species Habitat. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 390, 511 (645 criteria), 512, 528 incentive, 550, 643, 657, 658, and/or 659.

6. Will the treatment that you intend to implement using EQIP result in considerable benefits to residue management, nutrient management, air quality management, invasive species management, pollinator habitat, and animal carcass management technology or pest management? Points will be awarded when the EQIP application includes practices that will benefit residue, pest or nutrient management, air quality management, invasive species management, pollinator management or animal carcass management technology. Points are restricted to the practices listed: RRVCS, 100 CNMP, 313, 317, 329, 340, 345, 380, 386 (Pollinator scenarios), 390 (Pollinator scenarios), 391, 511, 512, 528 incentive, 550, 590, 595, 603, 612, 633, 666, and/or 643.

7. Will the treatment that you intend to implement using EQIP result in energy conservation benefits? Points will be awarded if the practices included in the EQIP application will result in energy conservation benefits being realized. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 329, 345, 380, 442 (irrigation conversions), 484, 533 (windmills or solar panels), 590, and/or 595.

State Issues Addressed:

1. Does the application acreage lie within 1/4 mile from a Section 303(d) or "Save Our Lakes" listed waterbody, or lie within a wellhead protection area? Points will be awarded if the application acreage is within 1/4 mile from a TMDL priority waterbody in the Clean Water Act Sec. 303(d) list, within 1/4 mile from a "Save our Lakes" waterbody, or is within 1,000 feet of a wellhead protection area. Wellhead Protection Area Maps are available in Section 1 of the Field Office Technical Guide (hard copy). Refer to the "Save our Lakes" excel spreadsheet that was provided to you. The 303(d) map overlays for streams and lakes are available for field office use. They are located at f:\geodata\hydrography. Choose either tmdl_streams_l_2006_z(appropriate utm zone).shp or tmdl_lakes_a_2006_z(appropriate utm zone).shp. These maps may be used as an overlay on the conservation plan map in ArcGIS to determine if the EQIP application meets the criteria.

2. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) that will adjust application amounts and/or timing of organic/inorganic fertilizers according to soil test? Points are awarded when the application includes 590 Nutrient Management.

3. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) that will reduce animal wastes that impact water quality? Points shall be awarded when the practices planned for installation will reduce animal waste's impact on water quality. For example, practices may include the organic component of Nutrient Management (590), Waste Utilization (633), etc.

4. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) for improved quality of livestock drinking water? (516, 614, 642, 574) Points are awarded when the application includes a financially assisted practice that will improve the quality of livestock drinking water. Points are restricted to the practices listed.

5. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) that will mitigate the potential environmental risk of pest management control measures? Points are awarded when the application includes 595 Pest Management.

6. Will the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) which will reduce erosion on cropland fields? (329, 340, 342, 345, 380, 386, 393, 412, 512, 550, and/or 603) Points are restricted to the practices listed. The RRVCS may also receive these points.

7. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) that will address saline seeps, recharge areas, and/or saline/sodic soils? (340, 386, 512, 610) Points shall be awarded if the implementation of new practices will address the problems of saline seeps and the recharge area, or the practices will return cropped acres of saline soils to salt tolerant vegetation. Points are restricted to the practices listed.

8. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) that will reduce the number of tillage operations? (329, 340, 345, 512, 550, RRVCS) Points are awarded when the new practices to be implemented in the application will reduce the number of tillage operations that the participant generally performs. Points are restricted to the practices listed. Note: In regard to 340 Cover Crops – only select this question as “Yes” if a reduction in tillage will truly be achieved. For example, producer practices fall tillage and by implementing cover crops he/she will no longer perform fall tillage.

9. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a carbon sequestering practice(s), any of the following: 329, 340, 342, 345, 380, 386, 391, 393, 472, 512, 528 incentive, 550, 612, 650 or 657? Points are awarded when the practices that sequester carbon are part of the application. Points are restricted to the practices listed.

10. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for the implementation of the **organic** component of 590 Nutrient Management? Points shall be awarded when organic materials are used in nutrient management.

11. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a wildlife habitat improvement practice(s) for Level 1 Species? (380 (645 criteria), 390, 391, 393, 396, 511 (645 criteria), 512 (645 criteria) 528 incentive, 550, 643, 647, 657 or 658) The purpose of this criterion is to specifically focus on a practice that has the greatest opportunity to create wildlife habitat for Level 1 Species. Points are restricted to the practices listed that will impact land within the territory of a Level 1 Species.

12. Will the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) to facilitate grazing distribution? Points shall be awarded when the practice(s) to be applied in this application result in improved grazing distribution. Practices such as 528 incentive, 642, 614, 382, or 516 could have this desired result.

13. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) which requires a prescribed grazing system that contains the following criteria: 1) annually changing season, and 2) providing adequate recovery/rest periods for grazed plants? Points shall be awarded when the conservation plan that accompanies the EQIP application or contract will ensure that the season of use on a particular grazing unit does not occur at the same time annually within the grazing system. In addition, the recovery periods scheduled within the system must meet or exceed the minimum period provided in eFOTG.

14. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) that will convert cropland to introduced and/or native forage production? (512, 550) Points shall be awarded when the EQIP application includes introduced or native herbaceous planting on cropland (512 or 550). Points are restricted to the practices listed.

15. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) that will sustain permanent vegetation on lands formerly in CRP? Points shall be awarded if the EQIP application includes new practices that will allow the applicant to utilize the permanent vegetation on land that will expire in the next year or has expired from CRP within the last 2 years and has not already been converted to cropland. Practices might include water developments, fencing, and forage harvest management.

16. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) that provide native pollinator habitat? (380 (645 Criteria), 386 (Pollinator Scenarios), 390 (Pollinator Scenarios), 391 (Pollinator Scenarios), 550, 612 (Pollinator Scenarios), 643 (Pollinator Scenarios)) Points are awarded if either of the financially assisted practice is applied.

Choose only one of the following questions, either 17 or 18. Points are awarded according to the planned practices that will improve STIR.

17. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance to achieve STIR of less than 9.0? (329) “Yes” will be checked if the **planned** EQIP practices will provide a STIR of less than 9.0 according to RUSL2 calculator. Points are restricted to the practices listed.

18. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance to achieve a STIR of 9.0 to 30.0? (329) “Yes” will be checked if the **planned** EQIP practices will provide a STIR of 9.0 to 30 according to RUSL2 calculator. Points are restricted to the practices listed.

Choose only one of the following questions, either 19 or 20.

19. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) which requires a prescribed grazing system where a single herd rotates through 3-6 pastures? Points shall be awarded when the applicant's current or future grazing system schedules a single herd of livestock to rotate through 3 to 6 pastures per grazing season. This determination shall be documented in the grazing system included in the conservation plan that accompanies the EQIP application or contract.

20. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) which requires a prescribed grazing system where a single herd rotates through 7 or more pastures? Points shall be awarded when the applicant's current or future grazing system schedules a single herd of livestock to rotate through 7 or more pastures per grazing season. This determination shall be documented in the grazing system included in the conservation plan that accompanies the EQIP application or contract.

Local Issues Addressed:

Each Local Work Group (LWG) has developed ranking criteria to prioritize applications to meet local resource concerns. The criteria has been reviewed and approved for use by the State Conservationist. The web-based ranking sheet will simply denote the criteria as "Local Work Group Ranking Criteria #1," "Local Work Group Ranking Criteria #2," "Local Work Group Ranking Criteria #3."

The criteria number corresponds with the number on the LWG fillable ranking worksheet issued for field office use. The fillable worksheet will be used to document whether the criteria was met for each LWG application. The form will be attached to the LWG web ranking report and filed in the case file.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Ranking Instructions – FY09 Animal Feeding Operations (AFO)

An EQIP application will be ranked and compete within the AFO Statewide Funding Pool when it addresses the proper handling of animal wastes. The application must include a financial assistance request for 313 Waste Storage Facility or 100 CNMP Incentive. The applicant must agree to implement a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) in conjunction with the ag waste system. An applicant may only provide one FY 2009 EQIP application per operating unit.

Note: ONLY financially assisted conservation practices will be considered during the application ranking.

Screening Tool:

Prior to ranking the application, EQIP AFO applications will be “screened” for funding priority. This Screening Tool will set priorities for AFO funding opportunities for FY09. The priority for each AFO application will be populated in ProTracts.

Applications that provide financial assistance for **only** a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP), will be considered “High” priority and will have first opportunity for funding.

“Medium” priority shall be assigned to applications that request financial assistance for an ag waste facility for an existing animal feeding operation.

“Low” priority shall be assigned to applications that request financial assistance for an ag waste facility for a facility with an operational permit or new animal feeding operation.

In situations where it is difficult to determine if the facility is an expansion of a current facility or the application will assist in the development of a facility in a new or existing location, the determination will be based on the amount of permits that will be required by the NDSHD. If the NDSHD determines there is a need for one permit, it is an expansion. If two, the application receives a new or existing designation.

Efficiency Score:

The Efficiency Score considers the benefits of the cost efficiency of the conservation practice during the evaluation of the applications for funding. This score is generated in the interworkings or conservation databases and is generated automatically. The Efficiency Score takes values from the CPPE (Conservation Practice Physical Effects) and cost information from the Practice Average Cost Tables in SmartTech. The score evaluates the effect of the financially assisted conservation practice in solving resource concerns.

National Priorities Addressed:

1. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction of non-point source pollution, such as nutrients, sediment, pesticides, excess salinity in impaired watersheds with total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) where available, groundwater contamination or point sources such as contamination from confined animal feeding operations? Points shall be awarded if the EQIP application contains practices that will have a positive impact on water quality, either ground or surface water. This question will always be “Yes” for applications applying under the Animal Feeding Operations (AFO) statewide resource concern. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 100 CNMP, 313, Red River Valley Cropping Sequence (RRVCS), 329, 340, 345, 351, 442 (only when converting from flood to pivot), 512, 550, 590, 595, 603, and/or 610.

2. Will the treatment you intend to implement for water conservation or irrigation efficiency using EQIP result in a considerable reduction in water use? Points will be awarded if water conservation practices will be implemented through the potential EQIP contract. This question will always be “Yes” for applications applying under the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) statewide resource concern. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 351 (free flowing), 430, 441, 442, 449, and 468.

3. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction of emissions, such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxides (NO_x), volatile organic compounds, and ozone precursors and depleters that contribute to air quality impairment violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards? This question will rarely be checked as “Yes.” Examples may include reducing horsepower of an irrigation pumping station or the conversion of a diesel or gas motor to an electric/solar motor.

4. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation from unacceptable levels on agricultural land? Points will be awarded when the EQIP application includes practices that will conserve soil resources on land that has an estimated benchmark soil loss greater than the tolerable soil loss (T) and a planned soil loss of less than (T). Points are restricted to the practices listed: RRVCS, 329, 332, 340, 345, 412, 512, 603, 550, 342, and/ or 610.

5. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable increase in the promotion of at-risk species habitat conservation? Points will be awarded if the practices included in the EQIP application will result in protection, restoration, development, or enhancement of grasslands (native or introduced) and/or wetlands for Level 1 Species Habitat. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 390, 511 (645 criteria), 512, 528 incentive, 550, 643, 657, 658, and/or 659.

6. Will the treatment that you intend to implement using EQIP result in considerable benefits to residue management, nutrient management, air quality management, invasive species management, pollinator habitat, and animal carcass management technology or pest management? Points will be awarded when the EQIP application includes practices that will benefit residue, pest or nutrient management, air quality management, invasive species management, pollinator management or animal carcass management technology. Points are restricted to the practices listed: RRVCS, 100 CNMP, 313, 317, 329, 340, 345, 380, 386 (Pollinator scenarios), 390 (Pollinator scenarios), 391, 511, 512, 528 incentive, 550, 590, 595, 603, 612, 633, 666, and/or 643.

7. Will the treatment that you intend to implement using EQIP result in energy conservation benefits? Points will be awarded if the practices included in the EQIP application will result in energy conservation benefits being realized. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 329, 345, 380, 442 (irrigation conversions), 484, 533 (windmills or solar panels), 590, and/or 595.

State Issues Addressed:

1. Is the facility frequently flooded (at least once every 5 years)? Check yes if the facility is flooded at least once every five years. This is an observation based on local knowledge.

2. Does the facility require a permit to comply with State water quality regulations? Award points if the either of the following situations exist **AND** the animal feeding operation is not permitted: >200 AU on location at one time; > 100 AU within a floodplain; or located within 2ft/AU of waters of the State.

3. Is the facility located within 1/4 mile from a Section 303(d) or "Save Our Lakes" listed waterbody, or lie within a wellhead protection area? Points will be awarded if the application acreage is within 1/4 mile from a TMDL priority waterbody in the Clean Water Act Sec. 303(d) list, within 1/4 mile from a "Save our Lakes" waterbody, or is within 1000 feet of a wellhead protection area. Wellhead Protection Area Maps are available in Section 1 of the Field Office Technical Guide (hard copy). Refer to the "Save our Lakes" excel spreadsheet that was provided to you. The 303(d) map overlays for streams and lakes are available for field office use. They are located at f:geodata\hydrography. Choose either tmdl_streams_l_2006_z(appropriate utm zone).shp or tmdl_lakes_a_2006_z(appropriate utm zone).shp. These maps may be used as an overlay on the conservation plan map in ArcGIS to determine if the EQIP application meets the criteria.

4. Will the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) to facilitate grazing distribution? Points shall be awarded when the practice(s) to be applied in this application result in improved grazing distribution. Practices such as Water Wells (642), Water Tanks (614), Fencing (382), or Livestock Water Pipelines (516) could have this desired result.

5. Will the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) which will reduce erosion on cropland fields? (329, 340, 342, 345, 380, 386, 393, 412, 512, 550, and/or 603) Points are restricted to the practices listed in this ranking question. The RRVCS may also receive these points.

6. The applicant currently possess an unimplemented CNMP, completed preliminary design, or is applying for practice code 100 CNMP? Points shall be awarded if the applicant currently possesses an unimplemented CNMP, has a completed preliminary design for their animal feeding operation in hand and is ready for structural implementation, or is applying for practice code 100 in this application.

Questions 7, 8, 9, and 10:

Identify the location of the livestock feeding operation on a USGS Quad topographic map. Measure the distance from the feeding operation location to the nearest **solid** blue line stream symbol, or waterbody identified by a blue basin color or the blue marsh symbol. If the topographic feature is blue or purple, it is a waterbody or stream and points will be awarded. Only one of the questions 7, 8, 9, or 10 can be answered "yes."

7. According to the topo map, is the facility adjacent to a "blue line" stream or waterbody?

8. According to the topo map, is the facility within 1/4 mile of a "blue line" stream or waterbody?

9. According to the topo map, is the facility between 1/4 and 1/2 mile of a "blue line" stream or waterbody?

10. According to the topo map, is the facility between 1/2 and 1 mile of a "blue line" stream or waterbody?

Questions 11, 12, and 13:

Using the applicant's well log, the North Dakota Geological Survey County Geological and Ground Water Resource Studies books, or producer observations determine the depth to groundwater at the feeding location. The points are awarded based on the depth range. Only one of the questions 11, 12, or 13 can be answered "Yes."

11. Is the depth to an aquifer or groundwater within 10 feet?

12. Is the depth to an aquifer or groundwater between 11 and 25 feet?

13. Is the depth to an aquifer or groundwater between 26 and 50 feet?

Questions 14, 15, and 16:

Using the web soil survey or Toolkit/ArcGis, determine the predominant soil mapping unit underlying the facility. Then using the Soil Data Mart (SDM) determine the Saturated Hydraulic Conductivity (Ksat) of soil layer having the least Ksat. SDM is found at <http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/default.aspx> in the report entitled "Physical Soil Properties." Only one of the questions 14, 15, or 16 can be answered "yes."

14. Is the Ksat of the least soil layer of the map unit underlying the facility greater than 10 um/s (micrometers per second)?

15. Is the Ksat of the least soil layer of the map unit underlying the facility between 1 and 10 um/s (micrometers per second)?

16. Is the Ksat of the least soil layer of the map unit underlying the facility between less than 1 um/s (micrometers per second)?

Example: Used web soil survey or ArcGIS to determine the dominant soil type under the ag waste facility (e.g., 33B). Then go into soil data mart and look for the “Physical Soil Properties” report for that given soil (33B). Under saturated hydraulic conductivity, for the given soil (33B), look for the least permeable soil layer OR the smallest range of numbers (0.10 – 10.00). When looking at this range of numbers, 0.10 – 10.00, look at the high end of the range which is the least permeable soil layers greatest potential to release water or leach nutrients. In this case it is 10.00; use this number to answer AFO ranking questions 14-16. For example, answer yes to AFO ranking question 15.

| Map symbol and soil name | Depth | Sand | Silt | Clay | Moist bulk density | Saturated hydraulic conductivity |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| | <i>In</i> | <i>Pct</i> | <i>Pct</i> | <i>Pct</i> | <i>g/cc</i> | <i>micro m/sec</i> |
| 33B: | | | | | | |
| Savage | 0-7 | — | — | 27-35 | 1.00-1.30 | 1.00-10.00 |
| | 7-25 | — | — | 35-50 | 1.25-1.50 | 0.10-10.00 |
| | 25-51 | — | — | 27-45 | 1.30-1.50 | 0.10-10.00 |
| | 51-80 | — | — | 35-45 | 1.30-1.50 | 0.10-10.00 |

Choose only one of the following questions, either 17 or 18:

17. Does the facility meet EPA's definition of a small Animal Feeding Operation (AFO)?
 An AFO is a lot or facility (other than an aquatic animal production facility) where the following conditions are met: Animals (other than aquatic animals) have been, are, or will be stabled or confined and fed or maintained for a total of 45 days or more in any 12-month period, and crops, vegetation, forage growth, or post-harvest residues are not sustained in the normal growing season over any portion of the lot or facility.

18. Does the facility meet EPA's definition of a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO)?
 Large Confined Animal Feeding Operation (Large CAFO), an AFO, is defined as a Large CAFO if it stables or confines greater than or equal to the number of animals specified in any of the following categories: 700 mature dairy cows, whether milked or dry; 1,000 veal calves; or 1,000 cattle other than mature dairy cows or veal calves. Cattle includes, but is not limited to, heifers, steers, bulls, and cow/calf pairs; 2,500 swine, each weighing 55 pounds or more; 10,000 swine, each weighing less than 55 pounds; 500 horses; 10,000 sheep or lambs; 55,000 turkeys; 30,000 laying hens or broilers, if the AFO uses a liquid manure handling system; 125,000 chickens (other than laying hens), if the AFO uses other than a liquid manure handling system; 82,000 laying hens, if the AFO uses other than a liquid manure handling system; 30,000 ducks, if the AFO uses other than a liquid manure handling system; or 5,000 ducks, if the AFO uses a liquid manure handling system.

Choose only one of the following questions, either 19, 20, or 21, if applicable.

Points are awarded according to the distance to urban development. Urban development is defined as a location where home density exceeds 4 houses on 40 acres. Only one of the questions 19, 20, or 21 can be answered “Yes.” Neither question will be selected if the facility is further than 1 mile.

19. Is the facility within 1/4 mile of urban development (density of at least 4 houses per 40 acres)?

20. Is the facility within 1/4 to 1/2 mile of urban development (density of at least 4 houses per 40 acres)?

21. Is the facility within 1/2 to 1 mile of urban development (density of at least 4 houses per 40 acres)?

Local Issues Addressed:

If applicable, choose only one of the following questions, either 1, 2, or 3.

1. Does the EQIP application request financial assistance for the implementation of a structural ag waste system and request Practice Code 100 CNMP?

Points will be awarded when the application requests financial assistance for **BOTH** the development Practice Code 100 CNMP **AND** the structural implementation of the ag waste system.

2. Does the EQIP application request financial assistance for implementation of an ag waste systems of an existing animal feeding operation (no expansion planned)? Points will be awarded when the application requests financial assistance for an ag waste system where there is not an AUM expansion planned.

3. Does the EQIP application request financial assistance for implementation of an ag waste systems of an expanding animal feeding operation that does not have an operational agricultural waste system? Points will be awarded when the application requests financial assistance for an ag waste system where an AUM expansion is planned and the current system will not meet permitting requirements.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Ranking Instructions – FY09 Ground & Surface Water (GSW)

An EQIP application will be ranked and compete within the Ground & Surface Water (GSW) Funding Pool when it addresses ground and surface water conservation and improved water quality through Irrigation System, Sprinkler. An applicant may only provide one FY 2009 EQIP application per operating unit.

Note: ONLY financially assisted conservation practices will be considered during the application ranking.

Screening Tool:

Prior to ranking the application, refer to the Irrigation Planning Flowchart located in the electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG). Applications that “pass” the screening tool will be considered “High” priority and will be ranked. The Irrigation Planning Flowchart and its associated tools are located in Section 1, Cost Tables, EQIP Irrigation, County Irrigation Workbook. The flowchart will walk you through the application and ranking process.

In situations where the application does not pass the Irrigation Screening Tool because of conditional soils, the field office shall consult with the Area Resource Soil Scientist to determine what management considerations may be implemented to mitigate for the conditional nature of the soils. Any planned management strategy to mitigate the effects will be scheduled for implementation within the 449 - Irrigation Water Management. Applications shall be assigned “Medium” priority while awaiting specialist review. Once the review is complete, then the application priority will be changed to “High” or “Low” based on review outcome.

Applications that do not pass the Irrigation Screening Tool will be tagged “Low” priority in ProTracts.

Efficiency Score:

The Efficiency Score considers the benefits of the cost efficiency of the conservation practice during the evaluation of the applications for funding. This score is generated in the interworkings or conservation databases and is generated automatically. The Efficiency Score takes values from the CPPE

(Conservation Practice Physical Effects) and cost information from the Practice Average Cost Tables in SmartTech. The score evaluates the effect of the financially assisted conservation practice in solving resource concerns.

National Priorities Addressed:

1. *Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction of non-point source pollution, such as nutrients, sediment, pesticides, excess salinity in impaired watersheds with total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) where available, groundwater contamination or point sources, such as contamination from confined animal feeding operations?* Points shall be awarded if the EQIP application contains practices that will have a positive impact on water quality, either ground or surface water. This question will always be “Yes” for applications applying under the Animal Feeding Operations (AFO) statewide resource concern. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 100 CNMP, 313, Red River Valley Cropping Sequence (RRVCS), 329, 340, 345, 351, 442 (only when converting from flood to pivot), 512, 550, 590, 595, 603, and/or 610.

2. *Will the treatment you intend to implement for water conservation or irrigation efficiency using EQIP result in a considerable reduction in water use?* Points will be awarded if water conservation practices will be implemented through the potential EQIP contract. This question will always be “Yes” for applications applying under the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) statewide resource concern. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 351 (free flowing), 430, 441, 442, 449, and 468.

3. *Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction of emissions, such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxides (NOx), volatile organic compounds, and ozone precursors and depleters that contribute to air quality impairment violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards?* This question will rarely be checked as “Yes.” Examples may include reducing horsepower of an irrigation pumping station or the conversion of a diesel or gas motor to an electric/solar motor.

4. *Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation from unacceptable levels on agricultural land?* Points will be awarded when the EQIP application includes practices that will conserve soil resources on land that has an estimated benchmark soil loss greater than the tolerable soil loss (T) and a planned soil loss of less than (T). Points are restricted to the practices listed: RRVCS, 329, 332, 340, 345, 412, 512, 603, 550, 342, and/ or 610.

5. *Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable increase in the promotion of at-risk species habitat conservation?* Points will be awarded if the practices included in the EQIP application will result in protection, restoration, development, or enhancement of grasslands (native or introduced) and/or wetlands for Level 1 Species Habitat. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 390, 511 (645 criteria), 512, 528 incentive, 550, 643, 657, 658, and/or 659.

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7. *Will the treatment that you intend to implement using EQIP result in energy conservation benefits?* Points will be awarded if the practices included in the EQIP application will result in energy conservation benefits being realized. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 329, 345, 380, 442 (irrigation conversions), 484, 533 (windmills or solar panels), 590, and/or 595.

State Issues Addressed:

1. *Does any portion of the EQIP application acreage lie above a sensitive aquifer?*

Points will be awarded if a portion of the acreage lies over a sensitive aquifer. The sensitive aquifer map is located on the FY 2009 EQIP ND NRCS Webpage at http://www.nd.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/EQIP/2009_eqip_signup_and_application_inf.html.

2. Does the application acreage lie within 1/4 mile from a Section 303(d) or "Save Our Lakes" listed waterbody, or lie within a wellhead protection area? Points will be awarded if the application acreage is within 1/4 mile from a TMDL priority waterbody in the Clean Water Act Sec. 303(d) list, within 1/4 mile from a "Save our Lakes" waterbody, or is within 1000 feet of a wellhead protection area. Wellhead Protection Area Maps are available in Section 1 of the Field Office Technical Guide (hard copy). Refer to the "Save our Lakes" excel spreadsheet that was provided to you. The 303(d) map overlays for streams and lakes are available for field office use. They are located at f:geodata\hydrography. Choose either tmdl_streams_l_2006_z(appropriate utm zone).shp or tmdl_lakes_a_2006_z(appropriate utm zone).shp. These maps may be used as an overlay on the conservation plan map in ArcGIS to determine if the EQIP application meets the criteria.

3. Will the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) which will reduce erosion on cropland fields? (329, 340, 342, 345, 380, 386, 393, 412, 512, 550, and/or 603) Points are restricted to the practices listed.

4. Will the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) to facilitate grazing distribution? Points shall be awarded when the practice(s) to be applied in this application result in improved grazing distribution. Practices such as Prescribed Grazing Incentive (528), Water Wells (642), Water Tanks (614), Fencing (382), or Livestock Water Pipelines (516) could have this desired result.

Questions 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9:

Points shall be awarded according to the estimated water savings. The "Water Saved" worksheet in the County Irrigation Workbook shall be used to estimate water savings. Only one of the questions 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 can be answered "Yes."

5. Will the EQIP application provide for greater than 35 inches of net water savings at the pump from the original system?

6. Will the EQIP application provide for 34.9 to 25 inches of net water savings at the pump from the original system?

7. Will the EQIP application provide for 24.9 to 15 inches of net water savings at the pump from the original system?

8. Will the EQIP application provide for 14.9 to 5 inches of net water savings at the pump from the original system?

9. Will the EQIP application provide 1 to 5 inches of net water savings at the pump from the original system?

Questions 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14:

Points shall be awarded according to the estimate energy savings at the pump. These calculations will be completed utilizing the Irrigation Energy Savings Calculator located in eFOTG, Section 1, Cost Data, EQIP Irrigation. Only one of the questions 10, 11, 12, 13, or 14 can be answered "Yes."

10. Will the EQIP application provide for an energy savings of greater than or equal to 20 horsepower (hp)?

11. Will the EQIP application provide for energy savings of 19.9 to 15 hp?

12. Will the EQIP application provide for energy savings of 14.9 to 10 hp?

13. Will the EQIP application provide for energy savings of 9.9 to 5 hp?

14. Will the EQIP application provide for energy savings of less than 5 hp?

Local Issues Addressed:

1. *Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for the conversion of a flood irrigation system to a pivot?* Points shall be awarded if the application provides for the conversion of a flood irrigation system to a low pressure pivot system.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Ranking Instructions - FY09 Forestry & Energy

An EQIP application will be ranked and compete within the Forestry and Energy Statewide Funding Pool when it includes a financial assistance request for 650 Windbreak Renovation, 666 Forest Stand Improvement, 394 Firebreak ("Firewise" Assessment), 380 Windbreak Establishment, and 612 Tree and Shrub Establishment. At least 90 percent of the requested application costs must include one or more of these practices and/or the facilitative practices to compete in this funding pool. An applicant may only provide one FY 2009 EQIP application per operating unit.

Note: ONLY financially assisted conservation practices will be considered during the application ranking.

Efficiency Score:

The Efficiency Score considers the benefits of the cost efficiency of the conservation practice during the evaluation of the applications for funding. This score is generated in the interworkings or conservation databases and is generated automatically. The Efficiency Score takes values from the CPPE (Conservation Practice Physical Effects) and cost information from the Practice Average Cost Tables in SmartTech. The score evaluates the effect of the financially assisted conservation practice in solving resource concerns.

National Priorities Addressed:

1. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction of non-point source pollution, such as nutrients, sediment, pesticides, excess salinity in impaired watersheds with total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) where available, groundwater contamination or point sources such as contamination from confined animal feeding operations? Points shall be awarded if the EQIP application contains practices that will have a positive impact on water quality, either ground or surface water. This question will always be "Yes" for applications applying under the Animal Feeding Operations (AFO) statewide resource concern. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 100 CNMP, 313, Red River Valley Cropping Sequence (RRVCS), 329, 340, 345, 351, 442 (only when converting from flood to pivot), 512, 550, 590, 595, 603, and/or 610.

2. Will the treatment you intend to implement for water conservation or irrigation efficiency using EQIP result in a considerable reduction in water use? Points will be awarded if water conservation practices will be implemented through the potential EQIP contract. This question will always be "Yes" for applications applying under the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) statewide resource concern. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 351 (free flowing), 430, 441, 442, 449, and 468.

3. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction of emissions, such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxides (NOx), volatile organic compounds, and ozone precursors and depleters that contribute to air quality impairment violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards? This question will rarely be checked as "Yes." Examples may include reducing horsepower of an irrigation pumping station or the conversion of a diesel or gas motor to an electric/solar motor.

4. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation from unacceptable levels on agricultural land? Points will be awarded when the EQIP application includes practices that will conserve soil resources on land that has an estimated benchmark soil loss greater than the tolerable soil loss (T) and a planned soil loss of less than (T). Points are restricted to the practices listed: RRVCS, 329, 332, 340, 345, 412, 512, 603, 550, 342, and/ or 610.

5. *Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable increase in the promotion of at-risk species habitat conservation?* Points will be awarded if the practices included in the EQIP application will result in protection, restoration, development, or enhancement of grasslands (native or introduced) and/or wetlands for Level 1 Species Habitat. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 390, 511 (645 criteria), 512, 528 incentive, 550, 643, 657, 658, and/or 659.

6. *Will the treatment that you intend to implement using EQIP result in considerable benefits to residue management, nutrient management, air quality management, invasive species management, pollinator habitat, and animal carcass management technology or pest management?* Points will be awarded when the EQIP application includes practices that will benefit residue, pest or nutrient management, air quality management, invasive species management, pollinator management or animal carcass management technology. Points are restricted to the practices listed: RRVCS, 100 CNMP, 313, 317, 329, 340, 345, 380, 386 (Pollinator scenarios), 390 (Pollinator scenarios), 391, 511, 512, 528 incentive, 550, 590, 595, 603, 612, 633, 666, and/or 643.

7. *Will the treatment that you intend to implement using EQIP result in energy conservation benefits?* Points will be awarded if the practices included in the EQIP application will result in energy conservation benefits being realized. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 329, 345, 380, 442 (irrigation conversions), 484, 533 (windmills or solar panels), 590, and/or 595.

State Issues Addressed:

1. *Does the application acreage lie within 1/4 mile from a Section 303(d) or "Save Our Lakes" listed waterbody, or lie within a wellhead protection area?* Points will be awarded if the application acreage is within 1/4 mile from a TMDL priority waterbody in the Clean Water Act Sec. 303(d) list, within 1/4 mile from a "Save our Lakes" waterbody, or is within 1000 feet of a wellhead protection area. Wellhead Protection Area Maps are available in Section 1 of the Field Office Technical Guide (hard copy). Refer to the "Save our Lakes" excel spreadsheet that was provided to you. The 303(d) map overlays for streams and lakes are available for field office use. They are located at f:geodata\hydrography. Choose either tmdl_streams_l_2006_z(appropriate utm zone).shp or tmdl_lakes_a_2006_z(appropriate utm zone).shp. These maps may be used as an overlay on the conservation plan map in ArcGIS to determine if the EQIP application meets the criteria.

2. *Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) that will adjust application amounts and/or timing of organic/inorganic fertilizers according to soil test?* Points are awarded when the application includes 590 Nutrient Management.

3. *Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) that will reduce animal wastes that impact water quality?* Points shall be awarded when the practices planned for installation will reduce animal waste's impact on water quality. For example, practices may include the organic component of Nutrient Management (590), Waste Utilization (633), etc.

4. *Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) for improved quality of livestock drinking water? (516, 614, 642, 574)* Points are awarded when the application includes a financially assisted practice that will improve the quality of livestock drinking water. Points are restricted to the practices listed.

5. *Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) that will mitigate the potential environmental risk of pest management control measures?* Points are awarded when the application includes 595 Pest Management.

6. *Will the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) which will reduce erosion on cropland fields? (329, 340, 342, 345, 380, 386, 393, 412, 512, 550, and/or 603)* Points are restricted to the practices listed. The RRVCS may also receive these points.

7. *Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) that will address saline seeps, recharge areas, and/or saline/sodic soils? (340, 386, 512, 610)* Points shall be awarded if the implementation of new practices will address the problems of saline seeps and the recharge area, or the

practices will return cropped acres of saline soils to salt tolerant vegetation. Points are restricted to the practices listed.

8. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) that will reduce the number of tillage operations? (329, 340, 345, 512, 550, RRVCS) Points are awarded when the new practices to be implemented in the application will reduce the number of tillage operations that the participant generally performs. Points are restricted to the practices listed.

9. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a carbon sequestering practice(s), any of the following: 329, 340, 342, 345, 380, 386, 391, 393, 472, 512, 528 incentive, 550, 612, 650 or 657? Points are awarded when the practices that sequester carbon are part of the application. Points are restricted to the practices listed.

10. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for the implementation of the **organic** component of 590 Nutrient Management? Points shall be awarded when organic materials are used in Nutrient Management.

11. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a wildlife habitat improvement practice(s) for Level 1 Species? (390, 391, 393, 396, 511 (645 criteria), 512 (645 criteria) 528 incentive, 550, 643, 647, 657, or 658) The purpose of this criterion is to specifically focus on a practice that has the greatest opportunity to create wildlife habitat for Level 1 Species. Points are restricted to the practices listed that will impact land within the territory of a Level 1 Species.

12. Will the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) to facilitate grazing distribution? Points shall be awarded when the practice(s) to be applied in this application result in improved grazing distribution. Practices such as 528 incentive, 642, 614, 382, or 516 could have this desired result.

13. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) which requires a prescribed grazing system that contains the following criteria: 1) annually changing season, and 2) providing adequate recovery/rest periods for grazed plants? Points shall be awarded when the conservation plan that accompanies the EQIP application or contract will ensure that the season of use on a particular grazing unit does not occur at the same time annually within the grazing system. In addition, the recovery periods scheduled within the system must meet or exceed the minimum period provided in eFOTG.

14. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) that will convert cropland to introduced and/or native forage production? (512, 550) Points shall be awarded when the EQIP application includes introduced or native herbaceous planting on cropland (512 or 550). Points are restricted to the practices listed.

15. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) that will sustain permanent vegetation on lands formerly in CRP? Points shall be awarded if the EQIP application includes new practices that will allow the applicant to utilize the permanent vegetation on land that will expire in the next year or has expired from CRP within the last 2 years and has not already been converted to cropland. Practices might include Water Developments, Fencing, and Forage Harvest Management.

16. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) that provide native pollinator habitat? (380 (645 Criteria), 386 (Pollinator Scenarios), 390 (Pollinator Scenarios), 391 (Pollinator Scenarios), 550, 612 (Pollinator Scenarios), 643 (Pollinator Scenarios)) Points are awarded if either of the financially assisted practices is applied.

Choose only one of the following questions, either 17 or 18. Points are awarded according to the planned practices that will improve STIR.

17. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance to achieve STIR of less than 9.0? (329) "Yes" will be checked if the **planned** EQIP practices will provide a STIR of less than 9.0 according to RUSL2 calculator. Points are restricted to the practices listed.

18. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance to achieve a STIR of 9.0 to 30.0? (329) "Yes" will be checked if the **planned** EQIP practices will provide a STIR of 9.0 to 30 according to RUSL2 calculator. Points are restricted to the practices listed.

Choose only one of the following questions, either 19 or 20.

19. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) which requires a prescribed grazing system where a single herd rotates through 3-6 pastures? Points shall be awarded when the applicant's current or future grazing system schedules a single herd of livestock to rotate through 3 to 6 pastures per grazing season. This determination shall be documented in the grazing system included in the conservation plan that accompanies the EQIP application or contract.

20. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a practice(s) which requires a prescribed grazing system where a single herd rotates through 7 or more pastures? Points shall be awarded when the applicant's current or future grazing system schedules a single herd of livestock to rotate through 7 or more pastures per grazing season. This determination shall be documented in the grazing system included in the conservation plan that accompanies the EQIP application or contract.

21. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for the implementation of 650 Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation? Points shall be provided if the application requests assistance for 650.

22. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for a 394 Firebreak assessment? The application requests the incentive for having a "Firewise" assessment on the application acreage.

23. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for the implementation of 666 Forest Stand Improvement? Points shall be provided if the application requests assistance for 666.

24. Does the EQIP application provide financial assistance for the implementation of either 380 Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment or 612 Tree and Shrub Establishment? Points shall be provided if the application requests assistance for 380 or 612.

Local Issues Addressed:

There are no Local Issue questions for this ranking sheet. Answer questions 1, 2 and 3 "No".

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Ranking Instructions - FY09 Soil Quality

An EQIP application will be ranked and compete within the Soil Quality Statewide Funding Pool when it includes the suite of practices and level of implementation noted in the 2009 EQIP Practice Eligibility Criteria for this initiative. An applicant may only provide one FY 2009 EQIP application per operating unit.

Note: ONLY financially assisted conservation practices will be considered during the application ranking.

Efficiency Score:

The Efficiency Score considers the benefits of the cost efficiency of the conservation practice during the evaluation of the applications for funding. This score is generated in the interworkings or conservation databases and is generated automatically. The Efficiency Score takes values from the CPPE (Conservation Practice Physical Effects) and cost information from the Practice Average Cost Tables in SmartTech. The score evaluates the effect of the financially assisted conservation practice in solving resource concerns.

National Priorities Addressed:

1. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction of non-point source pollution, such as nutrients, sediment, pesticides, excess salinity in impaired watersheds with total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) where available, groundwater contamination or point sources such as contamination from confined animal feeding operations? Points shall be awarded if the EQIP application contains practices that will have a positive impact on water quality, either ground or surface water. This question will always be "Yes" for applications applying under the Animal Feeding Operations (AFO) statewide resource concern. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 100 CNMP, 313, Red River Valley Cropping Sequence (RRVCS), 329, 340, 345, 351, 442 (only when converting from flood to pivot), 512, 550, 590, 595, 603, and/or 610.

2. Will the treatment you intend to implement for water conservation or irrigation efficiency using EQIP result in a considerable reduction in water use? Points will be awarded if water conservation practices will be implemented through the potential EQIP contract. This question will always be "Yes" for applications applying under the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) statewide resource concern. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 351 (free flowing), 430, 441, 442, 449, & 468.

3. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction of emissions, such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxides (NOx), volatile organic compounds, and ozone precursors and depleters that contribute to air quality impairment violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards? This question will rarely be checked as "Yes." Examples may include reducing horsepower of an irrigation pumping station or the conversion of a diesel or gas motor to an electric/solar motor.

4. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation from unacceptable levels on agricultural land? Points will be awarded when the EQIP application includes practices that will conserve soil resources on land that has an estimated benchmark soil loss greater than the tolerable soil loss (T) and a planned soil loss of less than (T). Points are restricted to the practices listed: RRVCS, 329, 332, 340, 345, 412, 512, 603, 550, 342, and/ or 610.

5. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable increase in the promotion of at-risk species habitat conservation? Points will be awarded if the practices included in the EQIP application will result in protection, restoration, development, or enhancement of grasslands (native or introduced) and/or wetlands for Level 1 Species Habitat. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 390, 511 (645 criteria), 512, 528 incentive, 550, 643, 657, 658, and/or 659.

6. Will the treatment that you intend to implement using EQIP result in considerable benefits to residue management, nutrient management, air quality management, invasive species management, pollinator habitat, and animal carcass management technology or pest management? Points will be awarded when the EQIP application includes practices that will benefit residue, pest or nutrient management, air quality management, invasive species management, pollinator management or animal carcass management technology. Points are restricted to the practices listed: RRVCS, 100 CNMP, 313, 317, 329, 340, 345, 380, 386 (Pollinator scenarios), 390 (Pollinator scenarios), 391, 511, 512, 528 incentive, 550, 590, 595, 603, 612, 633, 666, and/or 643.

7. Will the treatment that you intend to implement using EQIP result in energy conservation benefits? Points will be awarded if the practices included in the EQIP application will result in energy conservation benefits being realized. Points are restricted to the practices listed: 329, 345, 380, 442 (irrigation conversions), 484, 533 (windmills or solar panels), 590, and/or 595.

State Issues Addressed:

Questions 1 and 2 refer to the number of crop types in the primary cash crop rotation. Additional crop types added through the use of a Cover Crop do not count towards these ranking questions. Crop types are cool season grass, cool season broadleaf, warm season grass, and warm season broadleaf.

Answer "Yes" to only one question; either 1 or 2, not both.

1. *Application provides for an increase in crop diversity from 2 crop types to 3 or more crop types.* Points are to be awarded if the current crop rotation contains 2 or fewer crop types and practice 328 Conservation Crop Rotation is being financially assisted to encourage a change to 3 or more crop types. An example is switching from a Corn-Soybean rotation to Corn-Soybean-Spring Wheat.
2. *Application provides for an increase in crop diversity from 3 crop types to 4.* Points are to be awarded if the current crop rotation contains 3 crop types and practice 328 Conservation Crop Rotation is being financially assisted to encourage a change to all 4 crop types. An example is switching from Corn-Soybeans-Spring Wheat to Corn-Soybeans-Spring Wheat-Field Peas.

Questions 3, 4, and 5 refer to the extent to which the residue management practices will be improved. The STIR rating calculated by RUSLE2 will be utilized to evaluate these questions.

Answer "Yes" to only one question of 3 - 5 if applicable.

3. *Application provides for an improvement in residue management from a system with a STIR rating greater than 30 to a system with a STIR rating less than 6.0.* Answer "Yes" to this question if the current tillage practices have a STIR rating greater than 30 and practice 329 is being financially assisted to encourage a change to a no-till system with a STIR rating less than 6.0. This would include producers currently practicing conventional tillage, 344 Seasonal Residue Use, or 345 Mulch Till.
4. *Application provides for an improvement in residue management from a system with a STIR rating between 9 and 30 to a system with a STIR rating less than 6.0.* Answer "Yes" to this question if the current tillage practices have a STIR rating between 9 and 30, and practice 329 is being financially assisted to encourage a change to a no-till system with a STIR rating less than 6.0. This would include producers currently practicing Strip-till, Direct Seeding, or a 345 Mulch Till system with a STIR less than 30.
5. *Application provides for an improvement in residue management from a system with a STIR rating between 6 and 9 to a system with a STIR rating less than 6.0.* Answer "Yes" to this question if the current tillage practices have a STIR rating between 6 and 9 and practice 329 is being financially assisted to encourage a change to a no-till system with a STIR rating less than 6.0. This would include producers currently practicing no-till; but with a STIR rating greater than 6.

Questions 6, 7, and 8 refer to the number of years during the contract period in which a financially assisted 340 Cover Crop will be utilized on the same acres. The practice eligibility criteria for this funding pool require either a mixture of 5+ species or inter-seeding of 1+ species into growing row crops.

Answer "Yes" to only one question of 6 - 8 if applicable.

6. *Application provides for 3 years of cover crop/companion crops meeting the practice eligibility requirements of this funding pool.*
7. *Application provides for 2 years of cover crop/companion crops meeting the practice eligibility requirements of this funding pool.*
8. *Application provides for 1 year of cover crop meeting the practice eligibility requirements of this funding pool.*

Note: The acreage cap for SQI is 160 acres. A producer may elect to include additional acres above 160 in his SQI application. However, he/she will only receive a payment incentive on the 160 acres. When working with cover crops it might not be possible to have cover crops seeded on the 160 acres for all 3 years due to late season row crops etc. In this case, a producer may move those cover crop acres to the other land they include in the application. They will still receive a payment on acres planted to cover crops, not to exceed 160 acres. Please note: The ranking questions above are to be answered only if the cover crops stay on the original 160 acre system and are not moved to the additional acreage outside the SQI test quarter.

Questions 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 refer to improvements which will be made in the nutrient management system.

Answer "Yes" to all that apply for questions 9 - 13.

9. *Application provides for new implementation of a grid soil sampling program for determining crop fertility needs. Answer "Yes" to this question if the financially assisted 590 Nutrient Management will consist of a grid soil sample to enhance a site specific application of nutrients.*
10. *Application provides for at least one Soil Biology test sampling point. Answer "Yes" to this question if the contract contains financially assisted 590 Nutrient Management to submit at least one soil sample for biological testing (e.g., Soil Foodweb analysis) during the contract period.*
11. *Application utilizes more than one legume crop and/or legume cover crop species to enhance biological nitrogen fixation. Answer "Yes" to this question if practice 328 and/or 340 is financially assisted and will consist of more than one legume species to enhance biological nitrogen fixation. An example of this would be a Corn-Soybean-Spring Wheat rotation which consists of a Cover Crop of Triticale and Hairy Vetch following Spring Wheat; or if practice 328 Conservation Crop Rotation is financially assisted and encourages a change to a rotation consisting of Corn-Soybean-Spring Wheat-Field Pea.*
12. *Application provides for split applications of fertilizer, part pre-plant and part post-emergence. Answer "Yes" to this question if practice 590 Nutrient Management is financially assisted and requires a change in the nutrient management system to split application due to a switch from anhydrous ammonia to more biologically-friendly fertilizer products, or if environmentally sensitive soils require split application of fertilizers.*
13. *Application provides for GPS located soil sampling sites to increase sampling consistency. Answer "Yes" to this question if financially assisted practice 590 Nutrient Management consists of landscape based soil sampling sites which will be marked with GPS technology as this will increase sampling consistency.*

Questions 14 and 15 refer to the extent to which the producer's Pest Management system is improved.

Answer "Yes" to only one of questions 14 – 15, as applicable.

14. *Application provides for an improvement of pest management from a system which does not meet 595 specifications to a system which meets IPM standards. Answer "Yes" to this question if 595 Pest Management is financially assisted and leads to a change from a system which currently does not meet 595 specifications to an Integrated Pest Management system consisting of biological controls being used.*
15. *Application provides for an improvement of pest management from a system which does meet 595 specifications to a system which meets IPM standards. Answer "Yes" to this question if 595 Pest Management is financially assisted and leads to a change from a system which currently does meet 595 specifications to an Integrated Pest Management system consisting of biological controls being used. The use of biological controls should result in a decrease in the amount of pesticides used.*

Answer "Yes" to all that apply for questions 16 - 19.

16. *Application provides for the proper grazing of cover crops (take half-leave half) to enhance rangeland health and nutrient management. Answer "Yes" to this question if the 340 Cover Crop will be utilized as part of a prescribed grazing system. Sufficient cover crop stubble height must be maintained to protect soil resources and provide snow catch.*
17. *Application provides for site specific cover crops designed to address documented soil salinity. Answer "Yes" to this question if a site has documented salinity with an EC greater than 4 and the site will be seeded to a site specific saline mixture such as Sugarbeet, Barley, and Sunflower.*
18. *Application provides for a Crop Rotation Diversity greater than 3.0. Answer "Yes" to this question if practice 328 is financially assisted and the change in rotation leads to a Rotation Diversity greater than 3.0 using the Automated Rotation Diversity and Intensity Worksheet.*
19. *Application provides for a Crop Rotation Intensity greater than 1.7 east of Highway 281 and greater than 1.5 west of Highway 281. Answer "Yes" to this question if practice 328 is financially assisted and the change in rotation leads to a Rotation Intensity greater than 1.7 east of Highway 281 or 1.5 west of Highway 281 using the Automated Rotation Diversity and Intensity Worksheet.*