

**ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)
APPLICATION EVALUATION RANKING TOOL (AERT) NATIONAL QUESTIONS
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**

EQIP Ranking Questions	Points
1. Clean and Abundant Water: Water Quality – Will the proposed project assist the producer to:	
1a. Meet regulatory requirements relating to animal feeding operations, or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?	15
1b. Reduce sediment, nutrients or pesticides from agricultural operations located within a field that adjoins a designated impaired water body?	10
1c. Reduce sediment, nutrients or pesticides from agricultural operations located within a field that adjoins a water body?	5
2. Clean and Abundant Water: Water Conservation – Will the proposed project assist the producer to:	
2a. Increase groundwater recharge in identified groundwater depletion areas (http://water.usgs.gov/ogw/rasa/html/TOC.html)?	15
2b. Conserve water from irrigation system improvements and result in estimated water savings of at least 5% and saved water will be available for other beneficial uses?	10
2c. Conserve water in an area where the applicant participates in a geographically established or watershed-wide project?	10
3. Clean Air: Treatment of Air Quality from Agricultural Sources – Will the proposed project assist the producer to:	
3a. Meet regulatory requirements relating to air quality or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?	15
3b. Reduce green house gases such as methane, nitrous oxide, and volatile organic compounds (VOC)?	15
3c. Increase carbon sequestration?	10
4. High Quality, Productive Soils Erosion Reduction – Will the proposed project assist the producer to:	
4a. Reduce erosion to tolerable limits (Soil "T")?	15
5. Healthy Plant and Animal Communities Wildlife Habitat Conservation – Will the proposed project assist the producer to:	
5a. Benefit threatened and endangered, at-risk, candidate, or species of concern as identified in a State wildlife plan?	15
5b. Retain wildlife and plant benefits on land exiting the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)?	15

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6. High Quality, Productive Soils, Healthy Plant and Animal Communities: Special Environmental Efforts/Initiatives – Will the proposed project assist the producer to:	
6a. Eradicate or control noxious or invasive species?	10
6b. Increase, improve or establish pollinator habitat?	10
6c. Properly dispose of animal carcasses?	10
6d. Implement an Integrated Pest Management plan?	10
6e. Implement precision agricultural methods?	10
7. Strategic Initiative – Energy Conservation and Sustainable Production Energy Conservation – Will the proposed project assist the producer to:	
7a. Reduce energy consumption on the agricultural operation?	10
8. Business Lines – Conservation Implementation Additional Ranking Considerations - Will the proposed project result in:	
8a. Implementation of all planned conservation practices within three years of contract obligation?	10
8b. Improvement of existing conservation practices or conservation systems already in place at the time the application is accepted, or will complete an existing conservation system?	10
9. Does the applicant meet the following conditions:	
9a. If the applicant has an existing EQIP contract, has it been, and is it now, on schedule and in full compliance?	10
9b. Did the applicant successfully complete any past contract(s) in full compliance?	5
9c. Is this the applicant's first EQIP application?	5
Total Points	250