

Ranking Category—Ogallala Aquifer Initiative

Primary Resource Concerns—

- Water Quantity—Inefficient Water Use on Irrigated Land
- Water Quantity—Aquifer Overdraft
- Water Quantity—Insufficient Flows in Water Courses

Secondary Resource Concern—

- Fish and Wildlife—Threatened and Endangered Species, Declining Species, Species of Concern (Arkansas Darter, Arkansas River Shiner, Bald Eagle, Eastern Spotted Skunk, Greater Prairie—Chicken, Lesser Prairie—Chicken, Neosho Madtom, Neosho Mucket Mussel, Northern Bobwhite Quail, Topeka Shiner)

Eligible Land Uses—

- Crop, Hay, Pasture

Additional Requirements for this Category—

- If the land continues to be irrigated, producer must currently have or will install a functioning state—approved water measuring device to state installation specifications (Kansas Administrative Regulations (K.A.R.) 5-1-6) before financial assistance is received.
- If the land continues to be irrigated, well capacity must be able to meet the seasonal Net Irrigation Requirement (NIR), with 50 percent chance rainfall, for the crop grown.
- If the land continues to be irrigated, the producer will stay within the certified rate, amount, and location of the existing water right at the time the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract is obligated.
- If the land continues to be irrigated, the producer will use an irrigation scheduling system that meets Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG).
- If the land continues to be irrigated, no end gun or similar appurtenances will be present or used on the pivot system for the lifespan of the system.
- Producer reports to the Division of Water Resources (DWR) or water districts will be used to determine the benchmark condition of water use in the ag operation. Producers will furnish reports from the previous five years to determine the average benchmark condition, and each year during the contract to ensure a reduction in the ground and surface water use in the ag operation.

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State Issues—

If applicable, answer ONE of the following six questions describing your plan to obtain a net water savings in your agricultural operation. If none apply leave the answers “NO.”

- (1.1) Producer will install a three-year crop rotation that will reduce their current water use by at least 50 percent, using their current irrigation system. The producer will also stay within a three-year average of 1.5 years of the Net Irrigation Requirement (NIR) for corn (using 80 percent chance rainfall). (900 points)
- (1.2) Producer will install a three-year crop rotation that will reduce their current water use by greater than or equal to 35 percent, but less than 50 percent, using their current irrigation system. The producer will also stay within a three-year average of 1.95 years of the Net Irrigation Requirement (NIR) for corn (using 80 percent chance rainfall). (700 points)
- (1.3) The entire unit of concern (100.0 percent) will be converted from irrigated to non-irrigated (STARTING with the first FULL cropping season of the contract) on the entire water right. Producer will install proper wellhead protection and will verify that water rights will not be used elsewhere. (500 points)
- (1.4) Participant will irrigate at 75 percent of evapotranspiration starting when the contract is obligated. (400 points)
- (1.5) Irrigation rating will be increased by at least 30 points. (300 points)
- (1.6) Irrigation rating will be increased by 20 to 29 points. (200 points)
- (1.7) Irrigation rating will be increased by 10 to 19 points. (100 points)

Answer the following question related to enrollment into a Groundwater Conservation Agreement with a Kansas Groundwater Management District (GMD) for conversions to non-irrigated.

- (2) The entire unit of concern (100 percent) will be enrolled into a Groundwater Conservation Agreement with a Kansas GMD, if the land is located in an eligible area. Applicant must sign agreement with the GMD prior to receiving any EQIP payment and provide a copy of the GMD agreement to the NRCS. (90 points)

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Answer the following questions related to the at-risk species.

- (3) The point of diversion (well/water source) is located within an Arkansas Darter, Arkansas River Shiner, Bald Eagle, Eastern Spotted Skunk, Neosho Madtom, Neosho Mucket Mussel, and/or Topeka Shiner critical habitat area; acres will be converted from irrigated to non-irrigated; and the planned treatment will meet NRCS eFOTG species habitat requirements. (5 points)
- (4) Any part of the unit of concern is located within a Greater Prairie-Chicken, Lesser Prairie-Chicken, or Northern Bobwhite Quail Habitat Area, and native grass and forbs will be planted according to the NRCS eFOTG standards and specifications on a minimum of 40 contiguous acres. (5 points)

If applicable, answer ONE of the following seven questions related to Kansas Water Plan Priority Groundwater Decline Areas (If the application has multiple wells, points will only be taken for the highest priority well). If none apply leave the answers “NO.”

- (5.1) The point of diversion (well/water source) is located within a Kansas Water Plan Priority Groundwater Decline Area, Priority 1. (60 points)
- (5.2) The point of diversion (well/water source) is located within a Kansas Water Plan Priority Groundwater Decline Area, Priority 2. (50 points)
- (5.3) The point of diversion (well/water source) is located within a Kansas Water Plan Priority Groundwater Decline Area, Priority 3. (40 points)
- (5.4) The point of diversion (well/water source) is located within a Kansas Water Plan Priority Groundwater Decline Area, Priority 4. (40 points)

If applicable, answer ONE of the following two questions related to Kansas Geological Survey (KGS) identified sensitive groundwater areas. If neither applies leave the answers “NO.”

- (6.1) Greater than or equal to 50 percent of the unit of concern is located within a KGS identified sensitive groundwater area. (5 points)
- (6.2) Any part of the unit of concern, but less than 50 percent, is located within a KGS identified sensitive groundwater area. (3 points)

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If applicable, answer ONE of the following four questions related to Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL). If none apply leave the answers “NO.”

- (7.1) Greater than or equal to 50 percent of the unit of concern is located within a Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) identified high priority TMDL watershed for eutrophication, dissolved oxygen, nutrients, and/or pesticides AND is targeted to meet the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Strategic Plan to improve water quality nationwide by 2012. (10 points)
- (7.2) Any part of the unit of concern, but less than 50 percent, is located within a KDHE identified high priority TMDL watershed for eutrophication, dissolved oxygen, nutrients, and/or pesticides AND is targeted to meet the EPA Strategic Plan to improve water quality nationwide by 2012. (7 points)
- (7.3) Greater than or equal to 50 percent of the unit of concern is located within a KDHE identified high priority TMDL watershed for eutrophication, dissolved oxygen, nutrients, and/or pesticides but is NOT a TMDL targeted to meet the EPA Strategic Plan. (5 points)
- (7.4) Any part of the unit of concern, but less than 50 percent, is located within a KDHE identified high priority TMDL watershed for eutrophication, dissolved oxygen, nutrients, and/or pesticides but is NOT a TMDL targeted to meet the EPA Strategic Plan. (3 points)

If applicable, answer ONE of the following two questions related to Kansas Source Water Assessment Areas. If neither applies leave the answers “NO.”

- (8.1) Greater than or equal to 50 percent of the unit of concern is located within a Kansas Source Water Assessment Area. (5 points)
- (8.2) Any part of the unit of concern, but less than 50 percent, is located within a Kansas Source Water Assessment Area. (3 points)

Answer the following question related to Intensive Groundwater Use Conservation Areas (IGUCAs).

- (9) Any part of the unit of concern is located in an IGUCA or a proposed IGUCA. (5 points)

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EACH of the following questions MUST BE ANSWERED "YES" in order for this application to be considered eligible for this ranking category.

- (10) The following requirements must be met: (1) If the land continues to be irrigated, producer must currently have or will install a functioning state approved water measuring device to state installation specifications (K.A.R. 5-1-6) before cost-share dollars are received; (2) If the land continues to be irrigated, well capacity must be able to meet the seasonal Net Irrigation Requirement, with 50 percent chance rainfall, for the crop grown; and (3) If the land continues to be irrigated, the producer will stay within the certified rate, amount, and location of the existing water right at the time the EQIP contract is obligated.
- (11) The following requirements must be met: (1) Producer reports to the DWR or water districts will be used to determine the benchmark condition of water use in the ag operation. Producer has furnished reports from the previous five years to determine the average benchmark condition. Producer will provide these reports to the NRCS each year during the contract to ensure a reduction in the ground and surface water use in the ag operation; and (2) If the land continues to be irrigated, producer will use an irrigation scheduling system that meets the NRCS eFOTG requirements; and (3) If the land continues to be irrigated, no end guns or similar appurtenances will be present or used on the pivot system for the lifespan of the system. (15 years).

Local Issues–

Answer the following questions related to the application.

- (1) Application includes at least one practice with a lifespan of 10 years or greater, as documented in the eFOTG. (5 points)
- (2) Practices are scheduled to be completed within four years. (5 points)
- (3) Participant completed the appropriate Self-Assessment Worksheet (SAW) prior to the application evaluation period cut-off date and returned it to the appropriate NRCS field office (SAW was NOT completed by NRCS staff), OR participant has a conservation plan approved at least 30 days prior to the application cutoff date that addresses a primary resource concern. (5 points)
- (4) Application was deferred from a previous funding period in the Program Contracts System (ProTracts) (5 points)