

Ranking Category–GRAZING LANDS HEALTH;
BEGINNING FARMER/RANCHER;
LIMITED RESOURCE FARMER/RANCHER;
SOCIALY DISADVANTAGED FARMER/RANCHER

Primary Resource Concerns–

- **Plant Condition–Productivity, Health, and Vigor (Rangeland, Pastureland, Hayland)**
- **Plant Condition–Noxious and Invasive Plants**
- **Domestic Animals–Inadequate Stock Water**

Secondary Resource Concern–

- **Fish and Wildlife–Threatened and Endangered Species, Declining Species, Species of Concern (Greater Prairie–Chicken, Lesser Prairie–Chicken, Northern Bobwhite Quail, Topeka Shiner)**

Eligible Land Uses–

- **Grazed Range, Hay, Pasture**

Additional Requirements for this Category–

- **The unit of concern will be converted to a grazing plan during the life of the contract that will:**
 - o **On grazed range, achieve 50 percent or less use for the year on the key forage species in identified grazing areas.**
 - o **On pastureland or hayland, meet electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG) requirements for regrowth by the end of the growing season.**
- **On native rangeland, producer will implement a monitoring system using grazing exclusion cages approved by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), that will verify the degree of use of the key forage species in identified key grazing areas, in the defined or planned grazing system, during the life of the contract.**
- **Cropland converted to grazing land will make up no more than 20 percent of the application acres to be eligible for this ranking category.**

State Issues–

Answer the following question related to resource concerns:

- (1) Unit of concern has resource concerns of Plant Condition–Productivity, Health, and Vigor and/or Plant Condition–Noxious and Invasive Plants. (1100 points)

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If applicable, answer ONE of the following questions related to the amount of rest to be provided by your planned grazing system. If none apply leave the answers “NO”:

- (2.1) The planned grazing system will provide rest for greater than 91 percent of the days during the growing season. (800 points)
- (2.2) The planned grazing system will provide rest no more than 90.9 percent and no less than 86 percent of the days during the growing season. (700 points)
- (2.3) The planned grazing system will provide rest no more than 85.9 percent and no less than 82 percent of the days during the growing season. (450 points)
- (2.4) The planned grazing system will provide rest no more than 81.9 percent and no less than 74 percent of the days during the growing season. (200 points)
- (2.5) The planned grazing system will provide rest no more than 73.9 percent and no less than 49 percent of the days during the growing season. (75 points)
- (2.6) The planned grazing system will provide rest no more than 48.9 percent and no less than 30 percent of the days during the growing season. (25 points)

If applicable, answer ONE of the following questions related to tamarisk (salt cedar) or sericea lespedeza infestation. If none apply leave the answers “NO”:

- (3.1) Agricultural land is infested with up to 10 percent of tamarisk (salt cedar) or sericea lespedeza and the producer will implement a plan to control these species. (200 points)
- (3.2) Agricultural land is infested with no more than 20 percent and no less than 10.1 percent of tamarisk (salt cedar) or sericea lespedeza and the producer will implement a plan to control these species. (75 points)
- (3.3) Agricultural land is infested with no more than 30 percent and no less than 20.1 percent of tamarisk (salt cedar) or sericea lespedeza and the producer will implement a plan to control these species. (25 points)

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Answer the following questions related to at-risk species habitat areas:

- (4) Any part of the unit of concern is located in a Greater Prairie–Chicken, Lesser Prairie–Chicken, and/or Northern Bobwhite Quail habitat area that has at least a medium or greater woody canopy infestation level for targeted undesirable species as indicated in the NRCS eFOTG Brush Management specification. The producer will implement a plan that meets NRCS eFOTG requirements to benefit Greater Prairie–Chicken, Lesser Prairie–Chicken, or Northern Bobwhite Quail. (10 points)
- (5) Any part of the unit of concern is located within a Greater Prairie–Chicken, Lesser Prairie–Chicken, Northern Bobwhite Quail, and/or Topeka Shiner habitat area and the planned treatment will meet NRCS eFOTG species habitat requirements. (5 points)

Answer the following question related to brush infestation:

- (6) The grazing unit is infested with a brush species at the medium priority level as indicated in the NRCS eFOTG for Brush Management and the producer will implement a plan to control the brush species. (5 points)

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

- (7) The unit of concern will be converted to a grazing plan during the life of the contract that will achieve 50 percent or less use for the year on the key forage species in identified grazing areas on grazed range. Pastureland or hayland will meet eFOTG requirements for regrowth by the end of the growing season.
- (8) On native rangeland, the participant will implement a modified harvest method monitoring system using grazing exclusion cages approved by the NRCS, that will verify the degree of use of the key forage species in identified key grazing areas, in the defined or planned grazing system, during the life of the contract. If cropland is converted to grazing land, it will make up no more than 20 percent of the application acres.

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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 cut–off 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)
- (5) If applicable, where livestock are wintered on grazing land where perennial streams are located, plan of operations will remove livestock access to the streams. (5 points)
- (6) Unit of concern contains 50 percent or greater expired or expiring Conservation Reserve Program land and will be used for grazing or haying purposes. (5 points)
- (7) Plan of operations includes a Prescribed Burn after Brush Management. (5 points)
- (8) Plan of operations includes a Prescribed Burn. However, continuous annual burning will not occur. (5 points)