

2005 MARYLAND GRP RANKING WORKSHEET

Applicant: _____ County: _____

Date of Application: _____ (Date AD-1153 signed) Assisted by: _____

Farm/Tract Number: _____ (Attach copy of aerial photo)

Tax Map/Parcel: _____

Total acres offered: _____

- All offered acres are contiguous (one large block)
- Offered acres are non-contiguous, but on the same tract

RANKING FACTORS	POINTS	
	SCALE	SCORE
A. Potential for Conversion from Grassland (55% of points)		
1. Ag to non-ag potential:	1	
(a) Land is currently protected by an Agricultural Easement, OR		
(b) For land that is <u>not</u> protected, determine score based on projections provided by Maryland Department of Planning.	50	
2. Grassland to cropland potential: (select all that apply)		
(a) The tract(s) containing the offered acres includes at least 10 acres of cropland that is annually planted and/or tilled.	30	
(b) None of the offered acres are currently grazed.	30	
B. Land Use/Current Condition (20%)		
Score is based on the <u>predominant land use</u> and condition of offered acreage.		
1. If predominantly pasture:		
(a) A Prescribed Grazing Plan is in place and being followed (managed as a minimum of 8 fields or paddocks) OR	30	
Rotational grazing is currently practiced (at least 3 fields or paddocks)	10	
Constantly grazed (more or less)	1	
(b) Livestock are currently excluded from all surface waters, or have very limited access	10	
2. If predominantly permanent hayland:		
(a) Predominantly native warm-season, perennial grasses	40	
(b) Predominantly introduced cool-season grasses and legumes (at least 20% legumes)	20	
(c) Predominantly introduced cool season grasses only (with less than 20% legumes)	1	
3. If predominantly cropland	40	
(a) Native, warm-season, perennial grass will be established without cost-share		
(b) Cool-season grass/legume mixture will be established without cost-share	20	
(c) Cost-share will be requested to establish grassland on current cropland	1	
C. Length of Agreement (10%)		
(a) 30-Year Rental Agreement	20	
(b) 20-Year Rental Agreement	15	
(c) 15-Year Rental Agreement	10	
(d) 10-Year Rental Agreement	5	
SUBTOTAL - PAGE 1	(Max. 170 points)	

RANKING FACTORS	POINTS	
	SCALE	SCORE
D. Biodiversity (5%)		
Score is based on the grassland type with the largest acreage.		
(a) Mixture of native grasses and forbs	10	
(b) Mixture of introduced grasses (less than 50% unimproved tall fescue), with forbs or legumes	7	
(c) Single species native grass, not mixed with forbs or legumes	5	
(d) Single species introduced grass (including endophyte-free fescue), not mixed with forbs or legumes; or forbs or legumes planted alone (no grasses)	3	
(e) Predominantly unimproved tall fescue (KY-31)	1	
E. Nesting Habitat Management (5%)		
(a) On a minimum of 5% of enrolled grassland acreage, applicant commits to no mowing, haying, or other significant disturbance (except prescribed grazing, with a minimum grazing height of 6 inches), from April 15 - August 15. Grassland nesting habitat areas will be at least 35 feet wide, and located adjacent to woody or shrubby protective cover, such as along field borders.	10	
(b) Applicant does not commit to providing nesting habitat.	1	
F. Threatened and Endangered Species (5%)		
(a) Offered acreage includes habitat for Federally or State listed threatened & endangered species (for example, bog turtles).	10	
(b) Threatened & endangered species habitat is not present.	1	
SUBTOTAL - PAGE 2	(Max. 30 points)	
TOTAL SCORE FOR GRP PROJECT	(Max. 200 points)	

Directions for Ranking

A. Potential for Conversion from Grassland to Other Uses

1. Provide Tax Map and Parcel ID for the land. If offered acres include multiple parcels and/or tracts, complete a separate ranking worksheet for each tract, and highlight respective boundaries on the aerial photos. Overall score for the offered acreage will be a weighted average, based on the acreage and score for each tract.

For lands enrolled in an Agricultural Land Preservation Easement, score = 1 point.

For lands not protected by an Ag Easement, a score of 1-50 will be assigned based on an index developed in cooperation with the Maryland Department of Planning, which assesses vulnerability to development. (50 = most vulnerable to conversion; 1 = least vulnerable)

Item A. 1 (b), points if land is <u>not</u> in Ag Land Preservation			
County	Points	County	Points
Allegany	30	Kent	30
Anne Arundel	30	Montgomery	50
Baltimore	50	Prince George's	30
Calvert	40	Queen Anne's	40
Caroline	35	Somerset	30
Carroll	40	St. Mary's	20
Cecil	30	Talbot	25
Charles	30	Washington	30
Dorchester	40	Wicomico	40
Frederick	45	Worcester	40
Garrett	20	Kent	30
Harford	40	Montgomery	50
Howard	15		

2. If the tract containing the offered acres also contains at least 10 acres of annually planted or tilled cropland, 30 points will be awarded to reflect additional risk of conversion from grass to cropland.
3. If none of the offered acres are currently grazed, 30 points will be awarded to reflect additional risk of conversion from grass to cropland.

B. Predominant Land Use/Current Condition – Score will be based on the predominant use of the offered acreage. For grasslands used both for pasture and permanent hay, take points either under pasture OR hayland, but not both.

1. For Pasture:

- (a). To earn 30 points, operator must be currently following a grazing plan consistent with the NRCS Standard for Prescribed Grazing (Code 528) and be able to demonstrate that current grassland management is based on prescribed, minimum grazing heights and including rest and recovery periods consistent with principles of Intensive Grazing, **OR**

If the grazing operation falls short of the standard for Prescribed Grazing, the applicant is eligible for 10 points if livestock are rotated between at least 3 fields or paddocks, **OR**

Earn only 1 point if little or no rotational grazing is practiced (continually grazed).

- (b). To earn 10 points, livestock must be currently excluded from all surface waters, or have very limited access to water, such as at a ford. Riparian areas between the fencing and the stream may be “flash” grazed as a management tool, but only in accordance with the Operation and Maintenance Plan.

2. For Permanent Hayland:

- (a). Earn 40 points if the current stand is predominantly native warm-season, perennial grasses. **OR**
- (b). Earn 20 points if the current stand consists of predominantly introduced, cool-season grasses and legumes (at least 20% legumes). **OR**
- (c). Earn 1 point if the current stand is predominantly introduced cool-season grasses, with less than 20% legumes.

3. For Cropland

- (a). Earn 40 points if the applicant agrees to establish a stand of native, warm-season, perennial grasses (according to NRCS Standards for Pasture and Hayland Planting, Code 512), without cost-share assistance.
- (b). Earn 20 points if the applicant agrees to establish a stand of improved cool-season grasses and legumes (according to NRCS Standards for Pasture and Hayland Planting, Code 512), without cost-share assistance.
- (c). If cost-share assistance is requested, applicant earns only 1 point. All similar applications will be ranked as a group and only considered if funding is available, after funding those not requesting cost-share.

C. Length of Agreement – Longer rental agreements earn more points. For 2005, Maryland will not offer an easement option.

D. Biodiversity – for the offered acres, score is based on the grassland type with the highest acreage.

1. Earn 10 points for a mixture of predominantly native perennial grasses and forbs
2. Earn 7 points for a mixture of introduced improved grasses (less than 50% unimproved tall fescue), with forbs or legumes. Improved grasses include orchardgrass, timothy, bluegrass, brome, ryegrass, endophyte-free fescues, etc.
3. Earn 5 points for a single species native grass, not mixed with forbs or legumes
4. Earn 3 points for a single species of introduced grass (including endophyte-free fescue), not mixed with forbs or legumes; or forbs or legumes planted alone (no grasses)
5. Earn 1 point for a stand dominated by unimproved tall fescue.

E. Nesting Habitat Management

1. Earn 10 points if the applicant commits in their management plan to no mowing, haying, or other significant disturbance (except prescribed grazing, with minimum grazing height of 6 inches), from April 15 - August 15, on a minimum of 5% of enrolled grassland acreage. Grassland nesting habitat areas will be at least 35 feet wide, and located adjacent to woody or shrubby protective cover, such as along field borders.
2. Score is 1 point if no provisions for protecting nesting habitat are agreed to.

F. Threatened and Endangered Species

1. Earn 10 points if the offered acreage includes habitat for Federally or State listed threatened & endangered species (such as bog turtles).
2. Score is 1 point if threatened & endangered species habitat is not present.

In case of a tie:

- First tie-breaker will favor contiguous over non-contiguous acreage;
- Second tie-breaker will favor the overall pasture condition score, based on results from the Northeast Pasture Condition Scoresheet;
- Third tie-breaker will favor the higher score compiled by MD Department of Planning;
- Fourth tie-breaker will be date that AD-1153 was signed;
- Fifth tie-breaker will be by alphabetical order of the last names of the applicants, beginning with A.