

**2023 ACEP - AGRICULTURAL LAND EASEMENT
GRASSLAND of SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE
(ALE-GSS)
SITE EVALUATION RANKING QUESTIONS**

- 1. Percent of prime, unique, and important farmland in the parcel to be protected. Attach report from Web Soil Survey. (<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm>).**

80 to 100%
65 to 79%
50 to 64%
40 to 49%
Less than 40%

- 2. Percent of cropland, rangeland, grassland, historic grassland, pastureland, or nonindustrial private forestland in the parcel to be protected. (ex. Acres of land in production vs. headquarters or building envelopes).**

99% or greater
98% and greater but less than 99%
97% and greater but less than 98%
96% and greater but less than 97%
Less than 96%

- 3. Ratio of the total acres of land in the parcel to be protected to average farm size in the county according to the most recent USDA Census of Agriculture (<http://www.agcensus.usda.gov>).**

1.0 and greater
.95 and greater but less than 1
.9 and greater but less than .95
.8 and greater but less than .9
Less than .8

- 4. Decrease in the percentage of acreage of farm and ranch land in the county in which the parcel is located between the last two USDA Censuses of Agriculture (<http://www.agcensus.usda.gov>).**

> 0%
< 0%

- 5. Decrease in the percentage of acreage of permanent grassland, pasture, and rangeland, other than cropland and woodland pasture, in the county in which the parcel is located between the last two USDA Censuses of Agriculture.**

10% or greater
7% and greater but less than 10%
4% and greater but less than 7%
1% and greater but less than 4%
Less than 1% but greater than 0%

- 6. Percent population growth in the county as documented by the U.S. Census (<http://www.census.gov>).**

40% and greater
20% and greater but less than 40%
10% and greater but less than 20%
5% and greater but less than 10%

1% and greater but less than 5%
Less than 1%

7. Population density (population per square mile) as documented by the most recent U.S. Census (<http://www.census.gov>). Maximum points for county density greater than state density.

Greater than 96.3
60 and greater but less than 96.3
40 and greater but less than 60
25 and greater but less than 40
Less than 25

8. Entity provided evidence of the existence of a farm or ranch succession plan or similar plan established to address farm viability for future generations.

Yes
No

9. Proximity of the parcel to other protected land, such as military installations; land owned in fee title by the United States or an Indian Tribe, State or local government, or by a nongovernmental organization whose purpose is to protect agricultural use and related conservation values; or land that is already subject to an easement or deed restriction that limits the conversion of the land to nonagricultural use or protects grazing uses and related conservation values.

Adjacent
Less than 1 mile
Less than 3 miles
Greater than 3 miles

10. Proximity of the parcel to other agricultural operations and agricultural infrastructure.

85 to 100%
70 to 84%
50 to 69%
40 to 49%
Less than 40%

11. Maximizing the protection of contiguous acres devoted to agricultural use.

Is the parcel adjacent to an existing FRPP, GRP or similar easement?

Yes
No

12. Is the land currently enrolled in a CRP contract that is set to expire within 1 year and is grassland that would benefit from protection under a long-term easement or is land under a CRP contract that is in transition to a beginning farmer or rancher, a veteran farmer or rancher, or a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher?

Yes
No

13. Is the land grassland of special environmental significance that contains little to no noxious or invasive species, as designated by State or Federal law, are subject to the threat of conversion to nongrassland uses or fragmentation, and the land provides habitat to threatened, endangered or at risk species, or protects highly sensitive natural areas that would benefit from protection under a long-term easement?

Yes

No

14. What percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land easement that is the eligible entity's own cash resources for payment of easement compensation to the landowner and comes from sources other than the landowner

50% and greater

Less than 15%

15. Is the landowner a limited resource farmer/rancher, beginning farmer/rancher, veteran farmer/rancher or socially disadvantaged farmer/rancher?

Yes

No

16. How is the entity's performance in completing easement transactions to close on a contracted parcel?

Entity closes 90% or more of contracted parcels

Entity closes less than 90% contracted parcels

17. How is the entity's performance managing annual monitoring activities and reporting results annually?

Entity monitors and reports results to NRCS 100% annually

Entity monitors and reports results to NRCS less than 100% annually

18. Are there cultural, historic, or archaeological sites on the property that are listed with state or national registries and the entity provided evidence of such sites?

Yes

No

19. Percent of land to be protected that is devoted to grazing uses.

80% or greater

65% to 79%

50% to 64%

Less than 50%

20. Extent to which the grassland remains intact.

80% or greater

65% to 79%

50% to 64%

Less than 50%

21. Land to be enrolled is considered suitable habitat for a federally listed threatened, endangered, proposed or candidate plant or animal species and proper management is likely to provide a direct benefit to that specie(s). Requires concurrence from FWS.

Documented Occurrence
Critical Habitat
Suitable Habitat

22. Number of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (according to the Texas Conservation Action Plan Ecoregional Handbook) documented on the property.

5<
2-4
1
None

23. Soil Productivity Index (0-100). Weighted Index from Web Soil Survey National Commodity Crop Production Index.

Greater than .6
.35 to .59
.15 to .34
Less than .15

24. Entity provided evidence of an existing conservation plan that is developed to maintain or increase the agricultural viability for the land be offered for easement.

Currently have plan
Will develop plan before closing
No plan