

Ranking Criteria for FY2024 ACEP ALE Applications in Pennsylvania

Section: Category Question		
Question	Answer Choices	Points
Is the application for a permanent easement through the ACEP-ALE program?	YES	--
	NO	--
Section: National Ranking Questions - ACEP-ALE		
Question	Answer Choices	Points
Percent of prime, unique, and important farmland in the parcel to be protected	17 points for greater than 80%	17
	12 points for greater than 70% and less than or equal to 80%	12
	8 points for greater than 60% and less than or equal to 70%	8
	4 points for greater than 50% and less than or equal to 60%	4
	0 points for 50% or less	0
Percent of cropland, rangeland, grassland, historic grassland, pastureland, or nonindustrial private forest land in parcel to be protected	17 points for greater than 50 percent	17
	8 points for greater than 40 percent and less than or equal to 50 percent	8
	4 points for greater than 33 percent and less than or equal to 40 percent	4
	0 points for 33 percent or less	0
Ratio of the total acres of land in the parcel to be protected to the average farm size in the county according to the most recent USDA Census of Agriculture	15 points for ratios of greater than 2.0	15
	7 points for ratios of greater than 1.0 and less than or equal to 2.0	7
	0 points for a ratio of 1.0 or less	0
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 (USDA - NASS - Census of Agriculture)	16 points for a decrease of more than 15 percent	16
	9 points for a decrease of greater than 10 and less than or equal to 15 percent	9
	5 points for a decrease of greater than 5 and less than or equal to 10 percent	5
	1 point for a decrease of greater than 0 and less than or equal to 5 percent	1
	0 points for decrease of 0 percent or less,	0
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 (USDA - NASS - Census of Agriculture)	15 points for a decrease of more than 15 percent	15
	8 points for a decrease of greater than 10 and less than or equal to 15 percent	8
	5 points for a decrease of greater than 5 and less than or equal to 10 percent	5
	3 points for a decrease of greater than 0 and less than or equal to 5 percent	3
	0 points for a decrease of 0 percent or less,	0
Percent population growth in the county as documented by the United States Census (www.census.gov)	15 points for a growth rate of more than three times the State growth rate	15
	7 points for a growth rate of two and less than three times the State growth rate	7
	4 points for a growth rate of greater than one and less than two times the State growth rate	4
	0 points for a growth rate of less than one times the State growth rate	0

Section: National Ranking Questions - ACEP-ALE		
Question	Answer Choices	Points
Population density (county population per square mile) as documented by the most recent United States Census (www.census.gov)	15 points for population density of greater than three times the State population density	15
	7 points for population density of greater than two and less than three times the State population density	7
	4 points for population density of greater than one and less than two times the State population density	4
	0 points for population density less than one times the State population density	0
Proximity of the parcel to other protected land, such as compatible military installations; land owned in fee title by the United States or an Indian Tribe, State or Local Government, or by a non-governmental 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	15 points for an EOA that adjoins a protected land boundary	15
	7 points for an EOA within 1 mile of a protected land boundary	7
	4 points for an EOA greater than 1 mile but less than 3 miles from a protected land boundary	4
	0 points easement offer area (EOA) greater than 3 miles from a protected land boundary	0
Proximity of the parcel to other agricultural operations and agricultural infrastructure	15 points EOA boundary adjoins	15
	7 points EOA is within 1 mile in proximity	7
	4 points if EOA is greater than or equal to 1 mile but less than 3 miles in proximity	4
	0 points if EOA is greater than 3 miles in proximity	0
Existence of a farm succession plan or similar plan established to address agricultural viability for future generations	YES	5
	NO	0
Whether the land is currently enrolled in CRP in a contract that is set to expire within one 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 covered farmer or rancher pursuant to 16 U.S.C. 3835(f)	YES	10
	NO	0
Is the applicant a covered producer participating in the CRP Transition Incentives Program (CRP-TIP) and NRCS is evaluating the assessment during the two-year period covered by the CRP-1R?	YES	5
	NO	0
Parcel ability to maximize the protection of contiguous or proximal acres devoted to agricultural use	15 points if the parcel links two non-continuous corridors of protected agricultural use	15
	6 points if parcel is a contiguous or proximal expansion of agricultural use protected area	6
	0 points parcel does not increase a protected agricultural use area	0
The parcel is a grassland of special environmental significance that will benefit from the protection under the long-term easement	YES	10
	NO	0
Percent of the Fair Market Value (FMV) 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	15 points if the providing 50% or more of the FMV	15
	7 points if providing at least 33% but less than 50% of the FMV	7
	0 points if the eligible entity is providing less than 33% of the FMV	0

Section: State Ranking Questions ACEP-ALE		
Question	Answer Choices	Points
The Parcel is located within an area zoned for agricultural use, is located within an Agricultural Security Area or other locally identified unique agricultural area	YES	50
	NO	0
The Parcel contains an archaeological or historical resource	YES	10
	NO	0
Eligible entity has demonstrated performance in managing and enforcing easements by successfully completing the required monitoring (per ACEP Policy 527.170) each year in the past 5 years	YES	30
	NO	0
Protecting the parcel provides multifunctional benefits of farm or ranch land protection or improvement; the landowner is a historically underserved group, small scale farmer, limited resource landowner, new or beginning farmer or rancher or veteran landowner	YES	10
	NO	10
The parcel contains State-specific factors for grasslands of special environmental significance	YES	20
	NO	0
The eligible entity is certified or for noncertified eligible entities, the entity will append or incorporate the NRCS minimum deed terms to or into their conservation easement deed or the entity has an already approved entity-specific deed template	YES	50
	NO	0
Entity is eligible but is deficient in meeting the requirements of ACEP-ALE including: 1) Annual monitoring reports are insufficient, late, or not provided to NRCS; 2) Entity has failed to complete actions toward closing on an existing FRPP or ACEP-ALE agreement by the third year; 3) Documents are not submitted in accordance with ALE-agreement timeframes or policy; 4) Entity has not abided by the terms of an existing or closed FPP, FRPP, or ACEP-ALE agreement; 5) Entity failed to enforce an existing FPP, FRPP, or ACEP-ALE funded after notification of a violation	-25 points for five deficiencies	-25
	-20 points for four deficiencies	-20
	-15 points for three deficiencies	-15
	-10 point for two deficiencies	-10
	-5 points for one deficiencies	-5
	0 points if no deficiencies	0
The Parcel contains a state or federal threatened or endangered species (based on PNDI hit)	YES	10
	NO	0
The landowner has a current conservation plan addressing soil, water, plant, animal, and other potential resource concerns. The conservation plan accurately reflects the current ag operation/management of the parcel	YES	20
	NO	0