

Recommended Changes to the Urban Ag Ranking Pool Questions

- Andrew J. suggested just translating the urban ag priorities into ranking questions
 - o Priorities: serving/located in a low-income, low-access community; accepts SNAP/EBT; addresses natural resource concern
- Brittany H. suggested eliminating the Operation and Maintenance requirement, as it's too burdensome
- Multiple participants voiced the importance of adding a geospatial question to the "Applicability" section
 - o We can utilize the ERS and EPA EJ map layers, and ask- Is the organization located in a community that is low-income and low-access?
- Ali M. suggested adding a question about whether the community has transportation barriers (i.e. low vehicle access)
- Multiple participants noted that several of the resource questions may not be applicable- Tony said it was fine to go ahead and scrap many of these questions
 - o Multiple voices suggested removing the first 4 questions in the "Resource" section
 - o Andrew J indicated that these questions would prioritize larger farms that have more activities
- Multiple participants wanted to keep the "plant productivity" question. Participants also wanted to generally keep the rest of the question in the "Resource" section, as all of these can be in some way relevant for urban producers
 - o One participant suggested changing the points of some of the bottom questions
- Brittany suggested adding questions about whether the project will deliver energy and water conservation benefits
- Alex S. Suggested adding a question related to IPM and crop rotation
 - o One participant suggested looking at old high tunnel and organic ranking pool questions for wording
- Alex S. suggested adding a question about whether the project would address an excessive odor resource concern
- Mariam T. suggested adding a question about whether the project or the land provides a community resource or benefit
 - o We didn't know exactly how to phrase this question, but believed it is an important idea
- Tony J. Suggested looking at the urban ag ranking pool questions in New Jersey, and perhaps some other states with more experience in funding urban ag projects
- Ali suggested adding a question about whether the project adds growing space to a community- NRCS participants reminded that all projects need to address a natural resource concern
 - o Carrick G suggested altering the question to ask whether the project would provide growing space in otherwise contaminated soil
- Tony reminded the committee that as well as addressing natural resource concerns, the projects can address human resource concerns

Recommended Changes to the Urban Ag Scenarios List

- Alex S. clarified that all practices are eligible for urban ag, but the practices in 'Exhibit K' and the associated scenarios are ones that have been specifically chosen for urban ag, and the scenarios can ONLY be used in the urban ag ranking pool, with the exception of a few waivers
- One participant noted that these practices seem to include most relevant urban ag scenarios, and provide for enough flexibility for future practices- multiple voices indicated that it doesn't make sense to remove practices from this list, but perhaps we should consider adding some practices
- One participant mentioned that it is VERY hard to create new practices – we should instead always consider adopting practices from other states or National standards
- Brittany suggested making the practice selection part of the ranking pool- i.e. any urban ag project MUST include at least one of the practices in Exhibit K, but can also include any additional practices.
 - o One participant suggested taking off the scenarios, and keeping just the practices, to give producers more options
- Ali M suggested adding the following practices: Mulching (484); Tree/shrub establishment (612); Wildlife habitat planting (420); hedgerow planting (422); stormwater runoff control (570); structures for wildlife (649)
 - o Carrick G echoed that he thought these were good suggestions
- One participant suggested adding a funding limit, or an animal unit limit in the urban ag pool- Brittany responded that this is actually against NRCS policy