

**2025 ACEP - AGRICULTURAL LAND EASEMENT  
GRASSLAND of SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE (ALE-GSS)  
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%  
50 to 79%  
0 to 49%

- 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  
90% and greater but less than 99%  
Less than 90%

- 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  
.8 and greater but less than 1  
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%  
Otherwise

- 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%  
Less than 5%

- 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  
50 and greater but less than 96.3  
Less than 50

- 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 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  
Greater than 1 mile and less than 3 miles  
Greater than 3 miles

- 10. Proximity of the parcel to other agricultural operations and agricultural infrastructure: What percent of the parcel is surrounded by land in agricultural production or agricultural infrastructure.**

85 to 100%  
50 to 84%  
Less than 50%

- 11. Is the parcel adjacent to lands permanently devoted to agricultural uses such as 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. Eligible entity contributes at least 10% of the fair market value of the agricultural land easement from the eligible entity's own cash resources for payment of easement compensation to the landowner and comes from sources other than the landowner.**

Yes  
No

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

Yes  
No

**16. In the previous 5 fiscal years, the lead eligible entity has demonstrated performance in managing and enforcing easements by monitoring 100% of its NRCS easements every year AND has provided landowner change information to NRCS.**

Yes  
No

**17. In the previous 5 fiscal years, has the lead eligible entity demonstrated efficiency in completing NRCS easement transactions by closing enrollments within the initial term of the parcel contract or ALE-Agreement attachment?**

Yes  
No

**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 rangeland, pastureland, land that contains forbs, or shrublands to be protected that is currently devoted to grazing uses.**

80% or greater  
65% to 79%  
50% to 64%  
Less than 50%

**20. Extent to which the grassland devoted to grazing uses 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).**

Documented Occurrence  
Critical Habitat  
Suitable Habitat  
None

**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