

ACEP-ALE Ranking Criteria (2018 Farm Bill)

Total Points	Criteria #	Ranking Question	Response	Points Awarded
200	National 1	What percent of the parcel to be protected is prime, unique, and other important farmland soils?	Greater than 80%	15
			Greater than 70% and less than or equal to 80%	11
			Greater than 60% and less than or equal to 70%	8
			Greater than 50% and less than or equal to 60%	3
			Less than or equal to 50%	0
	National 2	What percent of the parcel to be protected is cropland, rangeland, grassland, historic grassland, pastureland, or nonindustrial private forest land?	Greater than 50%	14
			Greater than 40% and less than or equal to 50%	9
			Greater than 33% and less than or equal to 40%	4
			Less than or equal to 33%	0
	National 3	What is the ratio of the total acres of the land in the parcel to be protected to average farm size in the county according to the most recent USDA Census of Agriculture?	Greater than 2:1	14
			Greater than 1:1 and less than or equal to 2:1	7
			Less than 1:1	0
	National 4	How much has the percentage of acreage of farm and ranch land in the county in which the parcel is located decreased between the last two USDA Censuses of Agriculture?	More than 15%	14
			More than 10% and less than or equal to 15%	11
			More than 5% and less than or equal to 10%	8
			More than 0% and less than or equal to 5%	3
			0% or less	0
	National 5	The percent population growth in the county is _____ the State growth rate as documented by the United States Census.	More than 3x	14
			More than 2x	7
			More than 1x	4
1x or less			0	

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	National 6	The population density (population per square mile) in the county is _____ the State population as documented by the most recent United States Census.	More than 3x	14
			More than 2x	7
			More than 1x	4
			1x or less	0
	National 7	Does the farm or ranch have a succession plan or similar plan established covering the parcel to be protected that addresses agricultural viability for future generations?	Parcel has a plan completed by an industry professional.	14
			Parcel has a plan not developed by an industry professional.	7
			Parcel has no plan documented.	0
	National 8	What is the proximity of the parcel to be protected to other protected land, such as (1) military installations; (2) 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 (3) land that is already subject to an easement or deed restriction that limits the conversion of the land to non-agricultural uses or protects grazing uses and related conservation values?	Parcel boundary adjoins a protected land boundary.	21
			Parcel is within one (1) mile of a protected land boundary.	14
			Parcel is within three (3) miles of a protected land boundary.	7
			Parcel is greater than three (3) miles from a protected land boundary.	0
	National 9	What is the proximity of the parcel to be protected to other agricultural operations and agricultural infrastructure?	Parcel boundary adjoins the boundary of an agricultural operation or other agricultural infrastructure.	21
			Parcel is within one (1) mile of an agricultural operation or other agricultural infrastructure.	14
			Parcel is within three (3) miles of an agricultural operation or other agricultural infrastructure.	7
			Parcel is greater than three (3) miles from an agricultural operation or other agricultural infrastructure.	0

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	National 10	How does the parcel to be protected maximize the protection of contiguous or proximal acres devoted to agricultural use?	Parcel links two noncontiguous corridors of protected agricultural land.	15
			Parcel is contiguous to or within one (1) mile of a cluster of protected agricultural land.	6
			Parcel does not increase a protected agricultural area.	0
	National 11	Is any part of the parcel to be protected currently enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in a contract that is set to expire within one (1) year AND is grassland that would benefit from protection under a long-term easement?	Yes	10
			No	0
	National 12	Is the parcel to be protected grassland of special environmental significance (GSS) that would benefit from protection under a long-term easement? Note: See definition of GSS.	Yes	10
			No	0
	National 13	How much has the percentage of acreage of permanent grassland, pasture, and rangeland, other than cropland and woodland pasture, in the county in which the parcel to be protected is located decreased between the last two USDA Censuses of Agriculture?	More than 15%	15
			More than 10% and less than or equal to 15%	8
			More than 5% and less than or equal to 10%	5
			More than 0% and less than or equal to 5%	3
			0% or less	0

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	National 14	What percent of the fair market value is the eligible entity's own cash resources for payment of easement compensation to the landowner AND comes from sources other than the landowner? Note: Does not include contributions to acquisition and stewardship costs.	General: Entity is contributing greater than 50% of its own cash resources. GSS: Entity is contributing greater than 25% of its own cash resources.	9
			General: Entity is contributing equal to or less than 50% but greater than 30% of its own cash resources. GSS: Entity is contributing equal to or less than 25% but greater than 15% of its own cash resources.	6
			General: Entity is contributing equal to or less than 30% but greater than 10% of its own cash resources. GSS: Entity is contributing equal to or less than 15% but greater than 10% of its own cash resources.	3
			Both: Entity is contributing less than 10% of its own cash resources.	0
190	State 1	Is at least 50% of the parcel to be protected located in an area zoned for agricultural use, zoning consistent with agriculture, or similar classification in government units without zoning? Note: Must answer "NO" if more than 50% of the parcel is zoned industrial, commercial, residential, or similar classification in government units without zoning.	Yes.	15
			No.	0

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10	State 2A	In the previous five (5) fiscal years, the eligible entity has demonstrated efficiency in completing NRCS easement transactions by expending all funds in an agreement within two (2) years of attachment or cost-share contract execution date OR has demonstrated expenditures/actions toward closings of easements in the third year.	Yes.	10
			No.	0
	State 2B	How will the eligible entity address the ALE minimum deed terms?	The ALE minimum deed terms will be appended as written to the easement deed OR an existing ALE deed template approved by NRCS for use specifically by the entity applicant will be used.	5
			The minimum deed terms will be incorporated into the body of the easement deed OR the entity applicant is using another entity's NRCS-approved ALE deed template.	0
	State 2C	In the previous five (5) fiscal years, the eligible entity has demonstrated the ability to monitor NRCS easements by conducting monitoring events annually, providing monitoring reports to NRCS annually and on time, and provide sufficient information for NRCS to document each monitoring event. Note: This question will be judged by the entity who currently holds the easement, which may be different than the original agreement holder.	Yes.	10
			No.	0

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	State 2D	In the previous five (5) fiscal years, the eligible entity has demonstrated the ability to meet the terms of the NRCS agreements on existing or closed Farmland Protection Program (FPP), Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP), or ACEP-ALE agreements and easement deeds, including enforcement. Note: This question will be judged by the entity who currently holds the easement, which may be different than the original agreement holder.	Yes.	10
			No.	0
	State 3	How many of the following multifunctional benefits of farm and ranch land protection will be addressed on the parcel to be protected? (i) Social, economic, historic, and archaeological benefits; (ii) Enhancing carbon sequestration; (iii) Improving climate change resiliency; (iv) At-risk species protection; (v) Reducing nutrient runoff and improving water quality; (vi) Other related conservation benefits.	The protection of the parcel addresses four (4) or more multifunctional benefits.	20
			The protection of the parcel addresses three (3) or more multifunctional benefits.	15
			The protection of the parcel addresses two(2) or more multifunctional benefits.	10
			The protection of the parcel addresses one (1) or more multifunctional benefits.	5
			The protection of the parcel addresses zero (0) multifunctional benefits.	0

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	State 4	Is the parcel to be protected is located in a geographic region where the enrollment may help achieve national, State, and regional agricultural or conservation goals and objectives, or enhance existing government or private conservation projects? Note: Select all applicable answers; MAX POINTS = 50.	The parcel is located in the Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI) or Lesser Prairie Chicken focus areas AND the conservation easement will directly address protection of the species.	16
			The parcel is located within the range of a Federally-listed threatened or endangered species AND the conservation easement will directly address protection of the species.	13
			The parcel is located within the range of a State-listed threatened or endangered species or species of concerns AND the conservation easement will directly address protection of the species.	10
			The parcel is located within one of the Natural Heritage Program's Network of Conservation Areas.	7
			The parcel is furthering one or more landscape or regional agricultural or conservation goals and objectives, including existing government or private conservation project.	4
			The protection of the parcel is not achieving any additional agricultural or conservation goals.	0

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Total Points	Criteria #	Ranking Question	Response	Points Awarded
	State 5	Does the parcel to be protected directly protect or improve natural resources as determined by NRCS?	Protection will directly address five (5) or more NRCS resource concerns.	25
			Protection will directly address four (4) NRCS resource concerns.	20
			Protection will directly address three (3) NRCS resource concerns.	15
			Protection will directly address two (2) NRCS resource concerns.	10
			Protection will directly address one (1) NRCS resource concern.	5
			Protection will not directly address any NRCS resource concerns.	0
	State 6	Does the parcel to be protected demonstrate agricultural viability with appropriate access to agricultural infrastructure, operations, markets, labor, and other support services?	Yes.	25
			No.	0
	State 7	Will one or more of the following measures be used to maintain or increase agricultural viability on the parcel to be protected? Note: Select all applicable answers; MAX POINTS = 30.	One or more of the following plans will be completed before closing: (1) basic ALE plan, (2) grasslands management plan, or (3) forest management plan.	10
			A formal succession plan will be completed before closing.	10
			Entity deed terms that specifically address long-term agricultural viability will be included in the recorded easement deed.	10
			None of these measures will be used to maintain or increase agricultural viability.	0