

**NRCS - Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
Application Evaluation Ranking Tool (AERT)
National Ranking Criteria**

EQIP National Ranking Criteria	Points
1. If the application is for development of a Conservation activity plan (CAP), the agency will assign significant ranking priority and conservation benefit by answering “Yes” to the following question. Answering “Yes” to question 1a will result in the application being awarded the maximum amount of points that can be earned for the national priority category.	
1a. the program application to support the development of a conservation activity plan (CAP)? <u>If answer is “Yes,” do not answer any other national level questions.</u> If answer is “No,” proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.	250
2. Water Quality Degradation – Will the proposed project improve water quality by (select all that apply):	
2a. Implementing the practices in a comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP)??	15
2b. Implementing the practices in a nutrient management plan (NMP)?	10
2c. Reducing impacts from sediment, nutrients, salinity, or pesticides on land adjoining a designated “impaired water body” (TMDL, 303d listed waterbody, or other State designation)?	10
2d. Reducing the impacts from sediment, nutrients, salinity, or pesticides in a “nonimpaired water body”?	10
2e. Implementing practices that improve water quality through animal mortality and carcass management?	10
3. Water Conservation – Will the proposed project conserve water by (select all that apply):	
3a. Implementing irrigation practices that reduce aquifer overdraft?	15
3b. Implementing irrigation practices that reduce on-farm water use?	10
3c. Implementing practices in an area where the applicant participates in a geographically established or watershed wide project?	10
3d. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm water use as a result of changing to crops with lower water consumptive use, the rotation of crops, or the modification of cultural operations?	10
4. Air Quality - Will the proposed project improve air quality by (select all that apply):	
4a. Meeting on-farm regulatory requirements relating to air quality or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?	10
4b. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm emissions of particulate matter (PM2.5, PM10)?	10

**NRCS - Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
Application Evaluation Ranking Tool (AERT)
National Ranking Criteria**

4c. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm generated greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO ₂), methane (CH ₄), and nitrous oxide (N ₂ O)?	10
4d. Implementing practices that increase on-farm carbon sequestration?	10
5. Soil Health – Will the proposed project improve soil health by (select all that apply):	
5a. Reduce erosion to tolerable limits (Soil “T”)?	10
5b. Increasing organic matter and carbon content, and improving soil tilth and structure?	10
6. Wildlife Habitat – Will the proposed project improve wildlife habitat by (select all that apply):	
6a. Implementing practices benefitting threatened and endangered, at-risk, candidate, or species of concern?	10
6b. Implementing practices that retain wildlife and plant habitat on land exiting the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or other set-aside program?	10
6c. Implementing practices benefitting honey bee populations or other pollinators?	10
6d. Implementing land-based practices that improve habitat for aquatic wildlife?	10
7. Plant and Animal Communities - Will the proposed project improve plant and animal communities by (select all that apply):	
7a. Implementing practices that result in the management control of noxious or invasive plant species on noncropland?	10
7b. Implementing practice in an integrated pest management plan (IPM)?	10
8. Energy Conservation – Will the proposed project reduce energy use by (select all that apply):	
8a. Reducing on-farm energy consumption?	10
8b. Implementing practices identified in an approved AgEMP or energy audit that meets ASABE S612 criteria?	10
9. Business Lines – Will the practices to be scheduled in the “EQIP Plan of Operations” result in:	
9a. Enhancement of existing conservation practices or conservation systems already in place at the time the application is received?	10
Total Maximum Points	250

FY16 State Level Ranking Questions	Points
Answer all of the following questions that apply regarding the project's impact on addressing resource concerns. Maximum points 400	
The Schedule of Operations includes a Seasonal High Tunnel which will assist the producer to improve plant productivity, health and vigor.	40
The Schedule of Operations includes a Seasonal High Tunnel and Conservation Crop Rotation (328) or supports an existing conservation crop rotation which meets FOTG quality criteria.	60
The Schedule of Operation includes a Seasonal High Tunnel and the use of cover crops (340), adding perennial crops to a rotation that will reduce soil erosion and improve soil health.	60
The Schedule of Operations includes a Seasonal High Tunnel and the use of high residue practices (mulches, residue management, or residue tillage management) which will result in a positive Soil Condition Index (SCI) score as determined by RUSLE II.	60
The Schedule of Operations includes a Seasonal High Tunnel and Nutrient Management (590) or supports an existing Nutrient Management plan which meets FOTG quality criteria to reduce the risk of nutrients moving offsite.	60
The Schedule of Operations includes a Seasonal High Tunnel and Integrated Pest Management (595) or supports an existing pest management plan which meets FOTG quality criteria to reduce the risk of pesticides moving offsite or other risks associated with cultural or biological pest suppressions.	60
The Schedule of Operations includes a Seasonal High Tunnel which will assist the producer to reduce excess nutrients, pesticides and/or sediment in surface water on a field that adjoins a water body.	60
Total	400

FY2015 Local Seasonal High Tunnel Questions		Points
1	Applicant has a sustainable certification (ie. Salmon Safe or other a third-party certification program) addressing water quality and/or other resource concern on the farm or ranch.	60
2 Growing Degree Days to provide the opportunity to extend the growing season for fresh produce required for thriving local food systems		
2a	Areas of the state with growing degree days between 140 - 900	120
2b	Areas of the state with growing degree days between 910 - 1800	100
2c	Areas of the state with growing degree days between 1810 - 2300	50
2d	Areas of the state with growing degree days between 2310 - 2800	25
4 Producers who are currently marketing their products through local food systems (schools, restaurants, farmer's markets, road-side stands, Community-Supported Agriculture markets, etc.)		
4	Producers who are currently marketing their products through local food systems (schools, restaurants, farmer's markets, road-side stands, Community-Supported Agriculture markets, etc.)	40
5 Applicant is compliant with other financial assistance programs and has never had a previous financial assistance contract cancelled or terminated <u>OR</u> this is the applicants first EQIP contract.		
5	Applicant is compliant with other financial assistance programs and has never had a previous financial assistance contract cancelled or terminated <u>OR</u> this is the applicants first EQIP contract.	30
Total Points		250

|