

**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Application Ranking Summary
FY17 Pastureland - Central Sierra**

National Priorities Addressed

Issue Questions	Point(s)
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.	
1. a. Is the program application to support the development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP)? If answer is "Yes", do not answer any other national level questions. If answer is "No", proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.	250
Water Quality Degradation – Will the proposed project improve water quality by: (select all that apply)	
2. a. Implementing the practices in a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP)?	15
2. b. Implementing the practices in a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP)?	10
2. c. 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
2. d. Reducing the impacts from sediment, nutrients, salinity, or pesticides in a "non-impaired water body"?	10
2. e. Implementing practices that improve water quality through animal mortality and carcass management?	10
Water Conservation – Will the proposed project conserve water by: (select all that apply)	
3. a. Implementing irrigation practices that reduce aquifer overdraft.	15
3. b. Implementing irrigation practices that reduce on-farm water use?	10
3. c. Implementing practices in an area where the applicant participates in a geographically established or watershed-wide project?	10
3. d. 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
Air Quality - Will the proposed project improve air quality by: (select all that apply)	
4. a. Meeting on-farm regulatory requirements relating to air quality or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?	10
4. b. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm emissions of particulate matter (PM2.5, PM10)?	10
4. c. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm generated greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), and nitrous oxide (N2O)?	10
4. d. Implementing practices that increase on-farm carbon sequestration?	10
Soil Health:- Will the proposed project improve soil health by: (select all that apply)	
5. a. Reduce erosion to tolerable limits (Soil "T")?	10
5. b. Increasing organic matter and carbon content, and improving soil tilth and structure?	10
Wildlife Habitat – Will the proposed project improve wildlife habitat by: (select all that apply)	

6. a. Implementing practices benefitting threatened and endangered, at-risk, candidate, or species of concern.	10
6. b. Implementing practices that retain wildlife and plant habitat on land exiting the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or other set-aside program?	10
6. c. Implementing practices benefitting honey bee populations or other pollinators?	10
6. d. Implementing land-based practices that improve habitat for aquatic wildlife?	10
Plant and Animal Communities: Will the proposed project improve plant and animal communities by: (select all that apply)	
7. a. Implementing practices that result in the management control of noxious or invasive plant species on non-cropland?	10
7. b. Implementing practice in an Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM)?	10
Energy Conservation– Will the proposed project reduce energy use by: (select all that apply)	
8. a. Reducing on-farm energy consumption?	10
8. b. Implementing practice(s) identified in an approved AgEMP or energy audit, which meet ASABE S612 criteria?	10
Business Lines – Will the practices to be scheduled in the “EQIP Plan of Operations” result in:	
9. a. Enhancement of existing conservation practice(s) or conservation systems already in place at the time the application is received?	10
State Issues Addressed	
Issue Questions	Point(s)
State Category One Ranking Criteria – Conservation Activity Plan 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 state priority category.	
1. a. Is the program application to support the development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP)? If answer is “Yes”, do not answer any other state level questions. If answer is “No”, proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.	250
State Category Two Ranking Criteria – SOIL QUALITY DEGRADATION: Compaction (Select “Yes,” if applicable)	
2. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will reduce soil compaction from livestock on wet soils.	20
State Category Three Ranking Criteria – INSUFFICIENT WATER: Inefficient Use of Irrigation Water [California Irrigation Water Savings Tool found in the California eFOTG Section 1, Resource Assessment Tools.] Conservation treatment includes implementation of IWM and/or an irrigation system that results in an increase of: (Select “Yes” to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
3. a. 20 percent or greater annual water savings.	30
3. b. Less than 20 percent, but at least 10 percent, annual water savings.	10

<p>State Category Four Ranking Criteria – WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excess Nutrients in Surface Water</p> <p>The Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List is found at the State Water Resources Control Board website: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/integrated2010.shtml</p> <p>Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will control livestock access, if needed, and reduce transport of nutrients to surface water, where an existing pathway exists, and, the waterbody is: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)</p>	
4. a. Listed on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category 'Nutrients'.	20
4. b. A ditch, canal or tributary that flows directly into a surface water body listed on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category 'Nutrients'.	15
4. c. A perennial stream not on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category "Nutrients".	10
4. d. A ditch or canal or tributary that flows directly into a perennial or intermittent stream not on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category, "Nutrients".	5
4. e. An intermittent stream or ephemeral creek that flows for more than a month per year, but not year-round.	5
4. f. An ephemeral creek that flows for less than a month per year.	3
<p>State Category Five Ranking Criteria – WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Pathogens and Chemicals from Manure, Bio-Solids, or Compost Applications Transported to Surface Water</p> <p>The Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List is found at the State Water Resources Control Board website: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/integrated2010.shtml</p> <p>Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will control livestock access, if needed, and reduce transport of pathogens to surface water, where an existing pathway exists, and, the waterbody is: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)</p>	
5. a. listed on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category "Pathogens"	20
5. b. A ditch, canal or tributary that flows directly into a surface water body listed on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category 'Pathogens'.	15
5. c. A perennial stream not on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category "Pathogens"	10
5. d. A ditch, canal or tributary that flows directly into a perennial or intermittent stream not on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category "Pathogens".	5
5. e. An intermittent stream or ephemeral creek that flows for more than a month per year, but not year-round.	5
5. f. An ephemeral creek that flows for less than a month per year.	3
<p>State Category Six Ranking Criteria – WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excessive Sediment in Surface Water</p> <p>The Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List is found at the State Water Resources Control Board website: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/integrated2010.shtml</p> <p>Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will control livestock access, if needed, and reduce transport of sediments to surface water, where an existing pathway exists, and, the waterbody is: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)</p>	
6. a. Listed on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category 'Sediments'.	20
6. b. A ditch, canal or tributary that flows directly into a surface water body listed on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category 'Sediments'.	15
6. c. A perennial stream not on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category 'Sediments'.	10

6. d. A ditch, canal or tributary that flows directly into a perennial or intermittent stream not on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category 'Sediments'.	5
6. e. An intermittent stream or ephemeral creek that flows for more than a month per year, but not year-round.	5
6. f. An ephemeral creek that flows for less than a month per year.	3
State Category Seven Ranking Criteria – DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Undesirable Productivity and Health (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
7. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations manages livestock distribution according to an approved prescribed grazing plan to control access, duration and timing of livestock grazing in each field for improved productivity, health and vigor of key forage species. CPS 528 – Prescribed Grazing is scheduled in the EQIP schedule of operations.	50
7. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations improves plant productivity health and vigor by implementation of vegetative or structural practices.	25
State Category Eight Ranking Criteria – DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Inadequate Structure and Composition (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
8. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in implementation of NRCS conservation management practice, CPS 528 - Prescribed Grazing, which is included in the EQIP application schedule of operations. Prescribed grazing will result in livestock distribution for uniform forage use and adequate rest of pastures.	20
State Category Nine Ranking Criteria – DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Excessive Plant Pest Pressure (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
9. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will address noxious or invasive weed species through any combination of herbicide, biological, targeted grazing, and/or mechanical treatments.	20
State Category Ten - INADEQUATE HABITAT FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE: Habitat Degradation Food, Water, Cover/Shelter, Habitat Continuity/Space is evaluated using either the Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG) or Pollinator Habitat Assessment (PHA). The 'planned' assessment score must be greater than or equal to 0.5 (≥ 0.5) for the WHEG or greater than or equal to 90 points (≥ 90 points) for the PHA. (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
10. a. Fish or wildlife habitat improvements in the EQIP schedule of operations directly benefit Federal or State threatened, endangered, rare, proposed, candidate, fully protected and selected species (selected species included: Tricolored blackbird, Western burrowing owl, Foothill yellow-legged frog, Steelhead, Western pond turtle and pollinators) and the WHEG or PHA the 'planned assessment score is met.	20
10. b. Fish or wildlife habitat improvements in the EQIP schedule of operations directly benefit habitat for Species of Special Concern (as identified in Section II under Special Environmental Concerns) animals and the WHEG or PHA the 'planned assessment score is met.	15
State Category Eleven Ranking Criteria – LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION LIMITATION: Inadequate Livestock Water (Select "Yes," if applicable)	

11. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in reliable, clean livestock water where access to off-stream water was previously limited. The livestock be available to livestock through a tank/trough system not creeks, ponds, springs or wetlands.	22
State Category Twelve Ranking Criteria – INEFFICIENT ENERGY USE: Farming/Ranching and Field Operations (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
12. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in implementation of farming, ranching, and field operations practices that reduce energy use.	3
Local Issues Addressed	
Issue Questions	Point(s)
Local Category One – EXCESS WATER: Ponding or Flooding (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
1. a. Currently, irrigation runoff or tailwater is not reused beneficially and portions of the treatment unit are observed to become inundated during irrigation events; structural conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will result in irrigation runoff or tail water to be reused beneficially and land use restrictions are eliminated.	50
Local Category Two – INSUFFICIENT WATER: Inefficient Use of Irrigation Water California Irrigation Water Savings Tool found in the California eFOTG Section 1, Resource Assessment Tools. Conservation treatment includes implementation of IWM and/or an irrigation system improvement (does not include water conveyances to the field) that results in a water savings of: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
2. a. Greater than 15 acre inch/acre	40
2. b. 10.1 to 15 acre inch/acre	20
2. c. 5.1 to 10 acre inch/acre	15
2. d. 5 acre inch/acre or less	5
Local Category Three – ATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excess Nutrients in Surface Water Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes management practices that minimize the amount of nutrients material leaving the treated area; management practices may include NRCS conservation practice, 590 - Nutrient Management and/or 449 - Irrigation Water Management. The hydrologic soil group for the treatment unit is predominately: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
3. a. C, soils with slow infiltration rates, and/or D, soils with very slow infiltration rates.	40
3. b. B, soils with moderate infiltration rates.	25
3. c. A, soils with high infiltration rates.	10
Local Category Four – WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Pathogens and Chemicals from Manure, Bio-Solids, or Compost Applications Transported to Surface Water Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes structural, vegetative and/or management practices minimize animal waste in surface water runoff to: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
4. a. A perennial creek or an intermittent creek that flows for greater than one month.	40
4. b. An intermittent or ephemeral creek that flows for less than a month.	25

Local Category Five – WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excessive Sediment in Surface Water Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes structural, vegetative and/or management practices minimize sediment in surface water runoff to: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
5. a. A perennial creek or an intermittent creek that flows for greater than one month.	40
5. b. An intermittent or ephemeral creek that flows for less than a month.	25
Local Category Six – DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
6. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in implementation of NRCS conservation management practice, 528 – Prescribed Grazing which includes the design and implementation of a grazing system that will enhance pastureland health and ecosystem function as well as optimize efficiency and economic return through monitoring and record keeping. (e.g. photo points, stubble height after grazing, etc); if needed to support the grazing management plan, treatment also includes structural and/or vegetative practices.	40
6. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations on pastureland results in implementation of structural and/or vegetative practices to manage livestock grazing.	20
Local Category Seven – DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Excessive Plant Pest Pressure (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
7. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will manage critical state-listed (A,B, or C) or noxious weeds identified by the County Agricultural Commissioner or Weed Management Group using chemical, biological, or mechanical control methods or a combination thereof to effectively treat the weed populations within the treatment unit.	40
Local Category Eight – INADEQUATE HABITAT FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE: Habitat Degradation Food, Water, Cover/Shelter, Habitat Continuity/Space Habitat is evaluated using the Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG) or Pollinator Habitat Assessment (PHA). (Select "Yes" to All Applicable Answers)	
8. a. Riparian Zone: As documented in the Conservation Plan, the conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will improve the riparian zone that directly benefits fish or wildlife, where the riparian WHEG 'planned' worksheet is greater or equal to 0.5 (≥ 0.5).	20
8. b. Multiple Habitat Types: As documented in the Conservation Plan, the conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will improve multiple habitat types that directly benefits fish or wildlife, improving habitat elements for both upland/riparian, based on the appropriate WHEG that benefit both terrestrial and aquatic habitats and species. The score on the WHEG worksheet for the Land Use/Cover Type is greater than or equal to 0.5 (≥ 0.5)	20
Local Category Nine – LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION LIMITATION: Inadequate Livestock Water (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
9. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in reliable year round water available for livestock and wildlife (including adequate storage) where access to water was previously limited and caused declining pasture health conditions due to inability to properly manage grazing. Water must be available to livestock through a tank/ trough system not through creeks or ponds.	50
Local Category Ten – INEFFICIENT ENERGY USE: Farming/Ranching Practices and Field Operations Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes conservation practices that will result in: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	

