



**Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
Fiscal Year 2014 EQIP Program Description
California Drought Response Initiative for Grazing Lands**

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The purpose of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is to promote agricultural production, forest management, and environmental quality as compatible goals; optimize environmental benefits; and help farmers and ranchers meet Federal, State, Tribal, and local environmental regulations.

EQIP is a continuous sign-up, voluntary, conservation program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that provides financial and technical assistance for approved conservation practices based on a current conservation plan.

In order to be considered eligible for EQIP the applicant must have a vested interest in production agricultural or non-industrial private forest land and meet other program eligibility requirements.

How EQIP Works

EQIP initiatives are funding opportunities created to assure funds are available to resource priorities across various land use types, for special emphasis resource needs and to assure that underserved groups have access to assistance.

An EQIP initiative is a ranking and funding pool where similar applications are evaluated. Applications for an EQIP initiative will be evaluated based on screening and ranking criteria that consider the environmental benefits of planned conservation practices as identified by local, state and national priorities. The basis for an EQIP application is a conservation plan.

Requesting Conservation Planning Assistance

Interested applicants are encouraged to request conservation planning and technical assistance from a local NRCS field office to help with the development of a conservation plan; the basis for any EQIP application is a conservation plan.

Some of the benefits of developing a customized conservation plan include: helping you to comply with environmental regulations; preparing you for various conservation programs opportunities and identifying immediate or potential resource problems that could hurt your production.

About the California Drought Response Initiative for Grazing Lands

The purpose of the California Drought Initiative for Grazing Lands is for agricultural producers to address drought-related resource concerns on their farms and ranches.

In areas of impacted by severe and/or extreme drought, assistance is available for livestock operations on grazed lands to protect plant communities from over-grazing during drought conditions and to help grazed pastured operations stretch limited irrigation water supplies where irrigation water delivery is reduced due to drought.

Interested owners and/or operators of land managed for agricultural production in California may be eligible for the California Drought Response Initiative for Grazing Lands.

Approved NRCS Land Uses

Only approved NRCS land uses are eligible for the California Drought Response Initiative for Grazing Lands. Approved land uses are –

- **Grazed* Cropland:** Land used primarily for the production and harvest of annual or perennial field, forage, food, fiber, horticultural, orchard, vineyard, or energy crops where grazing animals impact how the land is managed.
- **Pastureland:** Land composed of introduced or domesticated native forage species that is used primarily for the production of livestock. Pastures receive periodic renovation and cultural treatments, such as tillage, fertilization, mowing, weed control, and may be irrigated. Pastures are not in rotation with crops.
- **Rangeland:** Land used primarily for the production of grazing animals. Includes native plant communities and those seeded to native or introduced species, or naturalized by introduced species that are ecologically managed using range management principles.
- **Farmstead:** Land used for facilities and supporting infrastructure where farming, forestry, animal husbandry, and ranching activities are often initiated. This may include dwellings, equipment storage, plus farm input and output storage and handling facilities.
- **Associated Agricultural Lands:** Land associated with farms and ranches that are not purposefully managed for food, forage, or fiber and are typically associated with nearby production or conservation lands. This could include incidental areas, such as idle center pivot corners, odd areas, ditches and watercourses, riparian areas, field edges, seasonal and permanent wetlands, and other similar areas.

Approved NRCS Resource Concerns

Only approved NRCS resource concerns are eligible for the California Drought Response Initiative for Grazing Lands.

SOIL EROSION

- Sheet, Rill and Wind Erosion – Sheet and Rill
- Sheet, Rill and Wind – Wind
- Concentrated Flow Erosion – Classic Gullies
- Excessive Bank Erosion From Streams, Shorelines or Water Conveyance Channels

INSUFFICIENT WATER

- Inefficient Use of Irrigation Water

DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION

- Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health
- Inadequate Structure and Composition

LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION LIMITATION

- Inadequate Livestock Water



**Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
Fiscal Year 2014 EQIP Program Description
California Drought Response Initiative for Grazing Lands**

Approved NRCS Conservation Practices

Only approved NRCS conservation practices are eligible for financial assistance through the California Drought Response Initiative for Grazing Lands. The following tables list the eligible conservation practices approved for the initiative.

Table 1. Eligible Conservation Practices for Irrigated Pasture Agricultural Operations

Practice Code	Conservation Practice Name	Units	Lifespan
472	Access Control	ac	10
575	Animal Trails and Walkways	ft	10
342	Critical Area Planting	ac	10
382	Fence	ft	20
512	Forage and Biomass Planting	ac	5
561	Heavy Use Area Protection	ac	10
603	Herbaceous Wind Barriers	ft	5
320	Irrigation Canal or Lateral	ft	15
428	Irrigation Ditch Lining	ft	20
388	Irrigation Field Ditch	ft	15
464	Irrigation Land Leveling	ac	15
430	Irrigation Pipeline	ft	20
436	Irrigation Reservoir ¹	ac-ft	15
441	Irrigation System, Microirrigation	ac	15
442	Irrigation System, Sprinkler	ac	15
443	Irrigation System, Surface and Subsurface	ac	15
447	Irrigation System, Tailwater Recovery ²	no	15
449	Irrigation Water Management	ac	1
516	Livestock Pipeline	ft	20
484	Mulching	ac	1
521C	Pond Sealing or Lining, Bentonite Sealant	no	15
521D	Pond Sealing or Lining, Compacted Clay Treatment	no	15
521A	Pond Sealing or Lining, Flexible Membrane	no	20
521B	Pond Sealing or Lining, Soil Dispersant	no	20
528	Prescribed Grazing	ac	1
533	Pumping Plant	no	15
587	Structure for Water Control	no	20
620	Underground Outlet	ft	20
642	Water Well ³	no	20
614	Watering Facility	no	20

Table 2. Eligible Conservation Practices for Grazed Range Agricultural Operations

Practice Code	Conservation Practice Name	Units	Lifespan
472	Access Control	ac	10
560	Access Road	ft	10
314	Brush Management	ac	10
575	Animal Trails and Walkways	ft	10
375	Dust Control from Animal Activity on Open Lot Surfaces	ac	1
382	Fence	ft	20
561	Heavy Use Area Protection	ac	10
603	Herbaceous Wind Barriers	ft	5
516	Livestock Pipeline	ft	20
484	Mulching	ac	1
521C	Pond Sealing or Lining, Bentonite Sealant	no	15
521D	Pond Sealing or Lining, Compacted Clay Treatment	no	15
521A	Pond Sealing or Lining, Flexible Membrane	no	20
521B	Pond Sealing or Lining, Soil Dispersant	no	20
528	Prescribed Grazing	ac	1
533	Pumping Plant	no	15
550	Range Planting	ac	5
574	Spring Development ⁴	no	20
587	Structure for Water Control	no	20
642	Water Well ⁵	no	20
614	Watering Facility	no	20

Table 3. Eligible Conservation Practices for Grazed Cropland Agricultural Operations

Practice Code	Conservation Practice Name	Units	Lifespan
472	Access Control	ac	10
575	Animal Trails and Walkways	ft	10
375	Dust Control from Animal Activity on Open Lot Surfaces	ac	1
382	Fence	ft	20
561	Heavy Use Area Protection	ac	10
516	Livestock Pipeline	ft	20
484	Mulching	ac	1
528	Prescribed Grazing	ac	1
533	Pumping Plant	no	15
587	Structure for Water Control	no	20
642	Water Well ⁶	no	20
614	Watering Facility	no	20

¹ Conservation practice, 436 – Irrigation Reservoir, practice payment scenarios, earthen or lined-earthen reservoirs are not to be used to facilitate establishment of a new stormwater runoff or groundwater sources.

² Conservation practice, 447 – Irrigation System, Tailwater Recovery, is an irrigation tailwater recovery system based on eligible component practices. Practice payment rates for conservation practice, 447 – Irrigation System, Tailwater Recovery, will be based on eligible practice components listed in Table 1.

³ Conservation practice, 642 – Water Well, is only eligible as part of a livestock water system and is only eligible where sufficient forage is available for livestock within the field where water will be supplied.

⁴ Conservation practice, 574 – Spring Development, is only eligible where sufficient water exists to sustain wetland features of the spring area and where sufficient forage is available for livestock if the spring is developed as part of a livestock water system.

⁵ Conservation practice, 642 – Water Well, is only eligible as part of a livestock water system and is only eligible where sufficient forage is available for livestock within the field where water will be supplied.

⁶ Conservation practice, 642 – Water Well, is only eligible as part of a livestock water system and is only eligible where sufficient forage is available for livestock within the field where water will be supplied.

For more information about NRCS conservation practices visit http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/technical/?cid=NRCSDEV11_001020 the website link for all NRCS conservation practice standards.

Application Screening Criteria

The purpose of screening criteria is to prioritize applications into ‘High’, ‘Medium’ or ‘Low’ categories prior to application ranking. All eligible applications for the California Drought Response Initiative for Grazing Lands will be screened and applications in the ‘High’ priority category will be ranked. ‘Medium’ priority applications will be ranked only if funding is available. An application screening worksheet will be used by NRCS to screen applications submitted for the California Drought Response Initiative for Grazing Lands; the following is for reference.

High Priority Category:

Application screening priority is ‘High’ if question 1 and 2 are true.

1. One of the bulleted criteria below is true:
 - Applicant will follow a grazing management plan that has already been completed.
 - If no current grazing plan exists then applicant will implement drought contingency measures* to manage livestock to ensure protection of the forage plant communities during drought conditions.
Applicant will document steps taken to implement drought contingency measures.

 2. At least one of the following is true:
 - a. If livestock have uncontrolled access to riparian areas then the EQIP application schedule of operations will result in *managed access to riparian areas to protect sensitive plant communities during drought conditions.*

 - b. If livestock water is needed *to support drought contingency measures** then the EQIP application schedule of operations *includes conservation practices that will provide adequate livestock water.*

 - c. If there is sufficient water to irrigate pastureland then the EQIP application schedule of operations includes *irrigation water management supported by moisture sensors or other IWM measures* that can monitor plant needs based on soil moisture and ET rates.
- * *Drought contingency measures are actions taken by a livestock operator to deal with lack of forage or water* such as reducing animal numbers – i.e. culling, feeding hay or other supplements, dry lot cattle to get them off the range, combining herds to more intensively manage livestock, move cattle to locations with more forage, etc.

Medium Priority Category:

Application screening priority is 'Medium' if question 1 and 2 are true.

1. One of the bulleted criteria below is true:
 - Applicant will follow a grazing management plan that has already been completed.
 - If no current grazing plan exists then applicant will implement drought contingency measures* to manage livestock to ensure protection of the forage plant communities during drought conditions.
Applicant will document steps taken to implement drought contingency measures.

 2. At least one of the following is true:
 - a. If livestock have uncontrolled access to all rangelands and/or pasturelands on the ranch then the EQIP application schedule of operation will result in *managed access by creating at least one small field to be used for drylot feeding to protect plant communities.*

 - b. On pastureland, applicant will implement conservation practices intended to address the immediate impacts of the drought and *scheduled practices are intended for implementation this irrigation season to use and manage irrigation water more efficiently* (i.e. irrigation system conversion or retrofit, tailwater recovery, irrigation water management that will reduce overall water use); and, any irrigation system improvements do not require the installation of a new irrigation well.
- * *Drought contingency measures are actions taken by a livestock operator to deal with lack of forage or water* such as reducing animal numbers – i.e. culling, feeding hay or other supplements, dry lot cattle to get them off the range, combining herds to more intensively manage livestock, move cattle to locations with more forage, etc.

Low Priority Category:

Application screening priority is 'Low' if the following is true.

1. Applicant does not have adequate forage base to support current stocking rate of the livestock operation and no drought contingency measures will be implemented.

Application Ranking Criteria

The purpose of the California Drought Response Initiative for Grazing Lands ranking criteria is to evaluate the environmental benefits of conservation treatments included in an EQIP application, i.e. the EQIP schedule of operations and conservation plan.

An application ranking score is based on national, state and local ranking criteria and the cost-efficiency of conservation practices in the EQIP application. The cost-efficiency score is based upon broad averages of the cost and environmental benefits of each practice in the EQIP application.

The following sections list the national, state and local ranking criteria for the California Drought Response Initiative for Grazing Lands and are provided for reference; applications will be evaluated electronically by NRCS using the Application Evaluation and Ranking Tool (AERT).

National Ranking Criteria

Only questions 5 and 9 applicable to the California Drought Response Initiative for Grazing Lands; all other questions will be answered “No” in the AERT.

- 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.
 - 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.

- 2) **Clean and Abundant Water: Water Quality** - Will the proposed project assist the producer to:
 - a. Meet regulatory requirements relating to animal feeding operations, or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?
 - b. Reduce sediment, nutrients or pesticides from agricultural operations located within a field that adjoins a designated "impaired water body" (TMDL, 303d, etc.)?
 - c. Reduce sediment, nutrients or pesticides from agricultural operations located within a field that adjoins a "non-impaired water body"?

- 3) **Clean and Abundant Water: Water Conservation** - Will the proposed project assist the producer implement conservation practices which:
 - a. Decrease aquifer overdraft?
 - b. Conserve water from irrigation system improvements and saved water will be available for other beneficial uses?
 - c. Conserve water in an area where the applicant participates in a geographically established or watershed-wide project?

- 4) **Clean Air: Treatment of air quality from agricultural sources** - Will the proposed project assist the producer to implement practice(s) which:
 - a. Meet on-farm regulatory requirements relating to air quality or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?
 - b. Reduce on-farm generated green house gases such as CO₂ (Carbon Dioxide), CH₄ (Methane), and N₂O (Nitrous Oxide)?
 - c. Increase on-farm carbon sequestration?

- 5) **Soil Health**: Will the proposed project assist the producer to implement practice(s) which:
 - a. Reduce erosion to tolerable limits (Soil "T")?
 - b. Improve soil tilth, organic matter, structure, health, etc.?

- 6) **Healthy Plant and Animal Communities Wildlife Habitat Conservation** - Will the proposed project assist the producer to implement practice(s) which:
 - a. Benefit on-farm habitat associated with threatened and endangered, at-risk, candidate, or species of concern as identified in a State wildlife plan?
 - b. Help retain wildlife and plant habitat on land exiting the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)?

- 7) **High Quality, Productive Soils, Healthy Plant and Animal Communities**: Will the proposed project assist the producer implement practices which:
 - a. Help manage or control noxious or invasive plant species on non-cropland?
 - b. Increase, or improve habitat to benefit pollinator or other targeted wildlife species?
 - c. Properly dispose of livestock carcasses?
 - d. Are identified in an Integrated Pest Management plan?
 - e. Are identified in a Nutrient Management plan?
 - f. Apply principles of adaptive nutrient management?

- 8) **Energy Conservation** - Will the proposed project assist the producer to implement practices which:
 - a. Reduce energy consumption on the agricultural operation?
 - b. Increase on-farm energy efficiency with practices and improvements identified in an approved energy audit equivalent to criteria required in Ag EMP (122,124)?
 - c. Assist in implementing energy conservation measures that also reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants?

- 9) **Business Lines - Conservation Implementation Additional Ranking Considerations** - Will the proposed project result in:
 - a. Implementation of all conservation practices scheduled in the contract on the CPA-1155 within three years of date of obligation?
 - b. Improvement of existing conservation practices or conservation systems already in place at the time the application is accepted?
 - c. Implementation of practice(s) which will complete an existing conservation system or suite of practices?

State Ranking Criteria

The state ranking criteria for the California Drought Response Initiative for Grazing Lands is an assessment of the benchmark condition for a resource priority.

1) State Category One – Forage Base and Livestock Water on Grazing Lands

(Select “Yes” to Only One Answer, if applicable)

- a. Applicant has inadequate water distribution that is prohibiting uniform use of grazing lands; water development will increase access to forage that was limited due to inadequate water distribution.
- b. Applicant does not have an adequate forage base to support current stocking rate of the livestock operation and will implement drought contingency measures* to deal with the lack of forage.

* *Drought contingency measures are actions taken by a livestock operator to deal with lack of forage or water* such as reducing animal numbers – i.e. culling, feeding hay or other supplements, dry lot cattle to get them off the range, combining herds to more intensively manage livestock, move cattle to locations with more forage, etc.

2) State Category Two – Residual Dry Matter (RDM) on Annual Grasslands and Grazed Dryland Cropland

(Select “Yes” to Only One Answer, if applicable)

On annual grasslands, managing RDM protects the soil surface from erosive forces and provides a mulch layer that creates a microclimate for seed germination and growth.

- a. On annual grasslands, heavy grazing results in low RDM levels with slicked-off and no visual appearance of vegetation; and, *the predominant RDM levels for the planned land unit can be described as ‘low’ RDM.*
- b. On annual grasslands, moderate grazing results in moderate RDM levels with areas of, high and low, patchy, vegetation; and, *the predominant RDM levels for the planned land unit can be described as ‘moderate’ RDM.*
- c. On annual grasslands, light grazing results in high RDM levels with the appearance of no grazing use and seed heads and vegetation intact; and, *the predominant RDM levels for the planned land unit can be described as ‘high’ RDM.*

3) State Category Three – Perennial Plant Communities on Grasslands, Pasture and Grazed Irrigated Cropland

(Select “Yes” to Only One Answer, if applicable)

On perennial grasslands, pasture and grazed irrigated cropland, canopy cover and basal area protects the soil surface from erosive forces and assists in maintaining healthy root to shoot ratio for carbohydrate reserves and photosynthetic area.

- a. On perennial grassland or pasture, *the predominant stubble height for key forage species on the planned land unit is greater than 4 inches.*
- b. On perennial grassland or pasture, *the predominant stubble height for key forage species on the planned land unit is between 2 to 4 inches.*
- c. On perennial grassland or pasture, *the predominant stubble height for key forage species on the planned land unit is less than 2 inches.*

4) **State Category Four – Benchmark Erosion Potential on Rangelands and Grazed Dryland Cropland**

(Select “Yes” to All Applicable Answers)

- a. Soils of the planned land unit have – *rills, common and greater than 2 inches long*
- b. Soils of the planned land unit have – *bare ground, common and generally connected*
- c. Soils of the planned land unit have – *wind scour or blowout areas, visible and common*
- d. Average slope of the planned land unit – *is greater than 25 percent*
- e. Average slope of the planned land unit – *is 15 to 25 percent*
- f. Average slope of the planned land unit – *is less than 15 percent.*
- g. Gullies on the planned treatment unit can be classified as – *‘actively eroding’*.
(Vertical banks, active head-cutting, little or no vegetation in channel bottom)
- h. Gullies on the planned treatment unit can be classified as – *‘at risk’*.
(Active headcuts, stable channel bed with some bank erosion).
- i. Gullies on the planned treatment unit can be classified as *‘stable’*
(Rounded banks, stable headcuts)
- j. Livestock have – *uncontrolled access to riparian areas.*

5) **State Category Five – Benchmark Erosion Potential on Pastureland and Grazed Irrigated Cropland**

The benchmark erosion potential will be based on evaluation of pasture indicators. Each indicator can be assigned a score of 1-5 rating based on the [Pasture Condition Score Sheet](#) (May 2011).

(Select “Yes” to All Applicable Answers)

The benchmark Pasture Condition Score is 3 or less for:

- a. Plant cover
- b. Plant residue
- c. Uniformity of use
- d. Livestock concentration areas
- e. Erosion – Sheet and rill
- f. Erosion – Wind
- g. Erosion – Streambank or shoreline
- h. Erosion – Gully

The benchmark Pasture Condition Score is either 4 or greater for:

- i. Plant cover
- j. Plant residue
- k. Uniformity of use
- l. Livestock concentration areas
- m. Erosion – Sheet and rill
- n. Erosion – Wind
- o. Erosion – Streambank or shoreline
- p. Erosion – Gully

- 6) **State Category Six – Pastureland Irrigation Water Management (IWM)**
(Select “Yes” to Only One Answer, only applicable if applicant has a water source this irrigation season)
- Applicant’s *irrigation water use scheduling* is supported by moisture sensors or other IWM measures.
 - Applicant’s *irrigation water use scheduling* is not supported by moisture sensors or other IWM measures.
- 7) **State Category Seven – Pastureland Irrigation Water Source**
(Select “Yes” to Only One Answer, only applicable if applicant has a water source this irrigation season)
- Applicant’s *irrigation water source* is surface water only.
 - Applicant’s *irrigation water source* is a combination of surface and ground sources.
 - Applicant’s *irrigation water source* is groundwater only.

Local Ranking Criteria

The local ranking criteria for the California Drought Response Initiative for Grazing Lands consider the environmental benefit of the conservation treatment on the identified resource concern.

1) **Local Category One – SOIL EROSION: Sheet, Rill and Wind Erosion – Sheet and Rill**
(Select "Yes" to All Applicable Questions)

Under drought conditions the risk of sheet and rill erosion is exacerbated due to lack of vegetative cover. Managing RDM, in California annual grasslands and grazed dryland cropland, and canopy cover and basal area, on perennial grasslands, pastureland or grazed irrigated cropland, protects the soil surface from erosive forces. With lack of vegetation the potential for sheet and rill erosion exists once rainfall hits the soil surface.

- Conservation treatment will result in *managed access control and/or exclusion* of livestock from areas at risk for soil erosion until adequate vegetation is established.
- Conservation treatment will result in *adequate livestock water on grazed land* to facilitate rotational use and management of grazing lands according to a grazing management plan.
- Conservation treatment includes range or pasture planting* *to increase perennial species diversity* for improved range or pasture forage plant community resiliency during drought.
 - On pasture, planting will only be done if there is adequate irrigation water to establish and support plant growth.
 - On rangelands, planting will only be implemented when known precipitation events in the forecast are likely that rain will occur for germination.

2) **Local Category Two – SOIL EROSION: Sheet, Rill and Wind Erosion – Wind**
(Select "Yes" to All Applicable Questions)

Under drought conditions the risk of wind erosion is exacerbated due to lack of vegetative cover and dry soils. Exposed soils with lack of vegetation will be subject to blowing, especially those that have high contents of silt or where livestock activity has destroyed the soil structure in the surface layer. In California annual grasslands and grazed dryland cropland, managing RDM protects the soil surface from erosive forces. On perennial grasslands, canopy cover and basal area protects the soil surface from wind erosion.

- a. Conservation treatment will result in *managed access control and/or exclusion* of livestock from areas at risk for soil erosion until adequate vegetation is established.
- b. Conservation treatment will result in *adequate livestock water on grazed land* to facilitate rotational use and management of grazing lands according to a grazing management plan.
- d. Conservation treatment includes range or pasture planting* *to increase perennial species diversity* for improved range or pasture forage plant community resiliency during drought.

- * On pasture, planting will only be done if there is adequate irrigation water to establish and support plant growth.
- * On rangelands, planting will only be implemented when known precipitation events in the forecast are likely that rain will occur for germination.

3) **Local Category Three – SOIL EROSION: Concentrated Flow Erosion – Classic Gullies**
(Select "Yes" to All Applicable Questions)

Under drought conditions gullies are dry, but these low areas on the landscape are where the last green vegetation may have been present. These areas can be subject to over grazing and trampling. If these conditions exist, gullies banks may be denuded and the soil loose which will lead to erosion once runoff events occur.

- a. Conservation treatment will result in *managed access control and/or exclusion* of livestock from areas at risk for gully erosion until adequate vegetation is established.
- b. Conservation treatment will result in *adequate livestock water* to facilitate rotational use and management of grazed land according to a *grazing management plan* where exacerbating gully erosion by livestock will occur.

4) **Local Category Four – SOIL EROSION: Excessive Bank Erosion from Streams, Shorelines or Water Conveyance Channels**
(Select "Yes" to All Applicable Questions)

During drought riparian areas can be impacted by livestock and wildlife use. These areas are the last location where green vegetation exists. Livestock and wildlife will tend to congregate in these areas during hot weather and will forage there due to the green, high protein content of that vegetation. Measures should be taken to protect these areas during drought. Those measures can be fencing for access control, grazing to limit season of use and utilization or other measures to ensure protection of these resource values.

- a. Conservation treatment will result in *managed access control and/or exclusion* to riparian areas to protect sensitive plant communities and to minimize erosion on banks, shorelines, or conveyance channels where livestock presently have uncontrolled access.
- b. Conservation treatment will result in *adequate livestock water* to facilitate rotational use and management of riparian areas according to a grazing management plan to protect sensitive plant communities of riparian areas.

5) **Local Category Five – INSUFFICIENT WATER: Inefficient Use of Irrigation Water**
(Select "Yes" to All Applicable Questions - only applicable to irrigated pastureland)

Irrigated pastures can provide high protein forage during the drought. Many irrigated pastures utilize flood and sprinkler systems to provide water to the fields. Many of these systems are leaky, or fields are uneven and irrigation water unevenly spread across the field. Water may be ponded in some areas and run off the field in others.

- a. Conservation treatment results in *conversion* from a less efficient to a more efficient irrigation system.
- b. Conservation treatment results in a *retrofit* of an existing irrigation system to improve irrigation system efficiency.
- c. Conservation treatment results in implementation of a *tailwater recovery system* to manage irrigation water runoff during irrigation events.
- d. Conservation treatment results in *improve irrigation water storage capacity* to manage availability of limited water supplies.

6) **Local Category Six – INSUFFICIENT WATER: Inefficient Use of Irrigation Water**
California Irrigation Water Savings Tool found in the California eFOTG Section 1, Resource Assessment Tools.

(Select "Yes" to Only One Answer – only applicable to irrigated pastureland)

Conservation treatment results in:

- a. Greater than 15 acre inch/acre annual water savings.
- b. Between 10 and 15 acre inch/acre annual water savings.
- c. Less than 10 acre inch/acre annual water savings.

- 7) **Local Category Seven – INSUFFICIENT WATER: Inefficient Use of Irrigation Water**
Level I = Basic Irrigation Water Management (IWM); Level 2 = Intermediate IWM;
Level III = Advanced IWM

(Select “Yes” to Only One Answer – only applicable to irrigated pastureland)

Conservation treatment results in attainment of 449 – Irrigation Water Management:

- a. Level III.
- b. Level II, but not Level III.
- c. Level I, but not Level II or III.

- 8) **Local Category Eight – DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health**

(Select “Yes” to All Applicable Questions)

Under drought conditions plant productivity is compromised. Plants depend on precipitation or irrigation for biomass production, productivity and health. Over use in perennial systems can cause root carbohydrate reserves to be reduced and reproductive capability of the plants to be compromised. On annual grasslands and grazed dryland cropland, with inadequate forage, livestock should be removed entirely or placed in dry lot fields and fed hay to protect rangeland health.

- a. Conservation treatments on *perennial grasslands, pastureland or grazed irrigated cropland, will result in grazing management to allow rest period* for plants during part of the growing season that allow the health and vigor of perennial grasses.
 - For many of our perennial grasses this is when vegetation is 6-7" in height and boots are mostly formed, but heads have not emerged.
- b. Conservation treatment will result in *grazing management that will allow for rest periods of annual grasslands, or grazed dryland cropland*, until vegetation is established next fall or prior to grazing vegetation range readiness* conditions must be met.
 - * **Range readiness** is when soils are firm enough that livestock will not cause trampling damage to soil and vegetation, for plants, readiness is determined by phenological stage of plant development.
 - For annual grasses this is when vegetation is 4-5" in height and boots are beginning to form. (The boot stage of grasses is when the inflorescence is enclosed by the sheath of the uppermost leaf.)

9) **Local Category Nine – DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Inadequate Structure and Composition**

(Select "Yes" to All Applicable Questions)

Under drought conditions the structure and composition of plant species may change. Stress from lack of water will favor those species that can proliferate under those conditions, often times those are invasive species. Grazing management to maintain plant structure and composition will help assure long-term viability of the species composition.

- a. Conservation treatment on irrigated pasture will *facilitate a rotational grazing system* to allow for rest periods and maintain stubble height of key forage species, if adequate water for plant growth exists. If no water for irrigation exists, rest should occur on irrigated pasture after stubble height has been met and continue until water can be provided.
- b. Conservation treatment will result in implementation of a *grazing management* that will allow for rest periods during part of the growing season to protect plant diversity, forage quality and to assure long-term viability of the species composition of rangelands.

10) **Local Category Ten – Livestock Production Limitation: Inadequate Livestock Water**
(Select "Yes" to All Applicable Questions)

When adequate forage exists on rangelands but where inadequate water distribution is prohibiting even use of rangelands, then water developments that will improve livestock forage utilization on areas not previously accessed will be given priority. Where water is limiting and forage is limiting, then additional water developments may only exacerbate the problem.

- a. Conservation treatment will result in *managed access control and/or small holding fields* with adequate off-stream water sources to protect soil resources, plant health and species diversity.
- b. Conservation treatment will result in *off-stream water sources* that will facilitate rotational use and management of grazing lands according to a grazing management plan.
- c. Conservation treatment results in reliable year-round water available for livestock and wildlife (including adequate storage) *where access to water was previously limited* and caused declining rangeland health conditions due to inability to properly manage grazing. Water must be available to livestock through a tank/ trough system not solely through creeks or ponds.



**Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
Fiscal Year 2014 EQIP Program Description
California Drought Response Initiative for Grazing Lands**

Submitting an EQIP Application

Interested applicants may apply for EQIP by completing the application, Form NRCS-CPA-1200, Conservation Program Application, and submitting the application to the NRCS field office in person, by phone, email, or fax in the county which you own land or have an agricultural operation.

Table 3. NRCS Field Office Contact Information

NRCS Office	Phone Number	NRCS Office	Phone Number
Alturas Service Center	(530) 233-4137	Merced Service Center	(209) 722-4119
Auburn Service Center	(530) 885-6505	Modesto Service Center	(209) 491-9320
Bakersfield Service Center	(530) 336-0967	Napa Field Office	(707) 252-4189
Bishop Field Office	(760) 872-6111	Oroville Service Center	(530) 534-0112
Blythe Field Office	(760) 922-3446	Oxnard Field Office	(805) 984-2358
Capitola LPO	(831) 475-1967	Petaluma Service Center	(707) 794-1242
Colusa Service Center	(530) 458-2931	Placerville Field Office	(530) 295-5630
Concord Service Center	(925) 672-4577	Quincy LPO	(530) 283-7511
Dixon Service Center	(707) 678-1655	Red Bluff Service Center	(530) 527-3013
Del Norte LPO	(707) 487-7630	Redding Service Center	(530) 226-2560
El Centro Service Center	(760) 352-7886	Redlands Field Office	(909) 799-7407
Elk Grove Service Center	(916) 714-1104	Salinas Service Center	(831) 424-1036
Escondido Field Office	(760) 745-2061	San Jacinto LPO	(951) 654-7139
Eureka Service Center	(707) 442-6058	Santa Maria Service Center	(805) 928-9269
Fallbrook LPO	(760) 723-2529	Sonoma LPO	(209) 984-0500
Fresno Service Center	(559) 276-7494	So. Lake Tahoe Field Office	(530) 543-1501
Grass Valley Field Office	(530) 272-3417	Stockton Service Center	(209) 472-7127
Half Moon Bay LPO	(650) 726-4660	Susanville Service Center	(530) 257-7272
Hanford Service Center	(559) 584-9209	Templeton Service Center	(805) 434-0396
Hollister Service Center	(831) 637-4360	Tulelake Basin Project Office	(530) 667-4247
Hoopa Local Partnership	(707) 486-7439	Ukiah Service Center	(707) 468-9223
Indio Service Center	(760) 347-3675	Victorville Service Center	(760) 843-6882
Jackson LPO	(209) 223-6535	Visalia Service Center	(559) 734-8732
Lakeport LPO	(707) 263-4180	Weaverville Service Center	(530) 623-3991
Lancaster Service Center	(661) 945-2604	Willows Service Center	(530) 934-4601
Livermore LPO	(925) 371-0154	Woodland Service Center	(530) 662-2037
Madera Service Center	(559) 674-2108	Yreka Service Center	(530) 842-6123
Mariposa LPO	(209) 966-3431	Yuba City Service Center	(530) 674-1461
McArthur LPO	(530) 336-5604		