

## EQIP 2013 National Issues Definitions and Scoring

November 26, 2012

### National Issue #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. 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.

**Ranking points may be earned if** the application is for a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) only.

### National Issue #2:

Clean and Abundant Water: Water Quality – Will the proposed project assist the producer to:

2a. Meet regulatory requirements relating to animal feeding operations, or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?

**Ranking points may be earned** if the application is competing in the Confined Livestock funding pool.

*Ranking points may be earned for general and grazing applications only when documentation shows that a specific regulatory measure will be met or avoided with the practices to be installed through the EQIP contract.*

2b. Reduce sediment, nutrients or pesticides from agricultural operations located within a field that adjoins a designated "impaired water body" (TMDL, 303d, etc.)?

**Ranking points may be earned if** all of the following apply:

- the practice(s) to be installed in the EQIP contract has an "x" in Table 1, **AND**
- the practice will be implemented in a field adjoining a water body, **AND**
- the practice will be implemented in an impaired watershed identified on Map #2.

*Note: A water body is defined as a stream shown as a solid blue or dashed line on the USGS Topographic Quadrangle Map, a fresh water surface impoundment, a wetland, or a point of concentration to one of the mentioned water bodies.*

2c. Reduce sediment, nutrients or pesticides from agricultural operations located within a field that adjoins a "non-impaired water body"?

**Ranking points may be earned if ALL** of the following apply:

- the practice(s) to be installed in the EQIP contract has an "x" in Table 1, **AND**
- the practice will be implemented in a field adjoining a water body, **AND**
- the practice will be implemented in a watershed **NOT** identified as impaired on Map #2.

*Note: A water body is defined as a stream shown as a solid blue or dashed line on the USGS Topographic Quadrangle Map, a fresh water surface impoundment, a wetland, or a point of concentration to one of the mentioned water bodies.*

### National Issue #3:

Clean and Abundant Water: Water Conservation – Will the proposed project assist the producer implement conservation practices which:

3a. Decrease aquifer overdraft?

**Ranking points may be earned if** the EQIP contract includes one or more of the following practices:

- Irrigation Water Management (449)
- Vertical Drain (630)
- Water Well Decommissioning (351)

<p>3b. Conserve water from irrigation system improvements and saved water will be available for other beneficial uses?  <u><b>Ranking points may be earned if</b></u> the EQIP contract includes Irrigation Water Management (449) and the beneficial uses are documented.</p>
<p>3c. Conserve water in an area where the applicant participates in a geographically established or watershed-wide project?  <u><b>Ranking points may be earned if ALL</b></u> of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the practice(s) to be installed in the EQIP contract has an “x” in Table 1, <b>AND</b></li> <li>• the application area is within a watershed (geographic) plan area, as designated on Map #3, <b>AND</b></li> <li>• The watershed plan must have “water quantity” as an identified resource concern.</li> </ul>

**National Issue #4:**

Clean Air: Treatment of Air Quality from Agricultural Sources – Will the proposed project assist the producer implement conservation practice(s) which:

<p>4a. Meet on-farm regulatory requirements relating to air quality or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?  <u><b>Ranking points may be earned if</b></u> the practice(s) to be installed in the EQIP contract has an “x” in Table 1</p>
<p>4b. Reduce on-farm generated green house gases such as CO2 (Carbon Dioxide), CH4 (Methane), and N2O (Nitrous Oxide)?  <u><b>Ranking points may be earned if</b></u> the practice(s) to be installed in the EQIP contract has an “x” in Table 1.</p>
<p>4c. Increase on-farm carbon sequestration?  <u><b>Ranking points may be earned if</b></u> the practice(s) to be installed in the EQIP contract has an “x” in Table 1.</p>

**National Issue #5:**

Soil Health: Will the proposed project assist the producer to implement practice(s) which:

<p>5a. Reduce erosion to tolerable limits (Soil “T”)?  <u><b>Ranking points may be earned if</b></u> the practice(s) to be installed in the EQIP contract result in the soil loss level of the entire application area being reduced to “T” when at least part of the application area is currently above “T” for sheet and rill erosion. <i>(Before and after conditions must be documented)</i></p>
<p>5b. Improve soil tilth, organic matter, structure, health, etc.?  <u><b>Ranking points may be earned if</b></u> the practice(s) to be installed in the EQIP contract has an “x” in Table 1.</p>

**National Issue #6:**

Healthy Plant and Animal Communities Wildlife Habitat Conservation – Will the proposed project assist the producer to implement practice(s) which:

6a. Benefit on-farm habitat associated with threatened and endangered, at-risk, candidate, or species of concern as identified in a State wildlife plan?  
**Ranking points may be earned** if the EQIP contract includes one or more of the following practices, as outlined in 1-5 below.

1. 5 or more acres of Conservation Cover (327) and/or Tree/Shrub Establishment (612) for the purpose of establishing prairie or savanna OR
2. 5 or more acres of Wetland Restoration (657) OR
3. At least 100 feet of Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395).  
*Each of the practices listed in 1-3 above, must be on a site located in the EcoCAT buffer area of an endangered or threatened species being benefited by the practice.*
4. 5 or more acres of a Field Border (386) of one or more crop fields established and managed for the purpose of wildlife food and cover for the benefit of grassland nesting songbirds and/or quail. OR
5. Management of a suitable grassland field (greater than 10 acres) using Early Successional Habitat Development/Management (647) or Prescribed Burning (338).  
**and**  
Following the management requirements of the Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) standard, for the benefit of grassland nesting songbirds and/or quail  
(Early Successional Habitat Development/Management practice must be receiving EQIP dollars).

6b. Help retain wildlife and plant habitat on land exiting the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)?  
**Ranking points may be earned** if practice(s) to be installed in the EQIP contract will be on land that is exiting the CRP program but at application time is still in permanent cover and will remain in permanent cover.

**National Issue #7:**

High Quality, Productive Soils, Healthy Plant and Animal Communities: Will the proposed project assist the producer implement practices which:

7a. Help manage or control noxious or invasive plant species on non-cropland?  
**Ranking points may be earned if** the practice(s) to be installed in the EQIP contract include one or more of the following:

- Brush Management (314); or
- Herbaceous Weed Control (315).

7b. Increase, or improve habitat to benefit pollinator or other targeted wildlife species? Increase, improve or establish pollinator habitat?  
**Ranking points may be earned if** the practice(s) to be installed in the EQIP contract include one or more of the following:

- Conservation Cover (327) Pollinator Habitat scenario only;
- Contour Buffer Strips (332) Pollinator Habitat scenario only;
- Field Border (386) Pollinator Habitat scenario only;
- Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390) Pollinator scenario only.

7c. Properly dispose of livestock carcasses?  
**Ranking points may be earned if** the EQIP contract includes Animal Mortality Facility (316).

7d. Are identified in an Integrated Pest Management plan?  
**Ranking points may be earned if** all of the following apply:

- a Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) has been developed, **AND**
- the practice(s) to be installed in the EQIP contract are identified in the Integrated Pest Management plan as documented practices and decisions to address a resource concern.

<p>7e. Are identified in a Nutrient Management plan?  <b>Ranking points may be earned if</b> all of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a Nutrient Management Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) has been developed, <b>AND</b></li> <li>• the practice(s) to be installed in the EQIP contract are identified in the Nutrient Management plan as documented practices and decisions to address a resource concern.</li> </ul>
<p>7f. Apply principles of adaptive nutrient management?  <b>Ranking points may be earned if</b> the EQIP contract includes Nutrient Management (590) <b>AND</b> an adaptive nutrient management strategy will be applied.</p>

**National Issue #8:**

Energy Conservation - Will the proposed project assist the producer to implement practices which:

<p>8a. Reduce energy consumption on the agricultural operations?  <b>Ranking points may be earned if</b> the practice(s) to be installed in the EQIP contract has an “x” in Table 1.</p>
<p>8b. Increase on-farm energy efficiency with practices and improvements identified in an approved energy audit equivalent to criteria required in Ag EMP (122,124)?  <b>Ranking points may be earned if</b> the practice(s) to be installed in the EQIP contract improve the on-farm energy <b>AND</b> are recommended in the Ag EMP (122 or 124) or a comprehensive on-farm energy audit meeting ASABE S612 Type 2 standard.</p>
<p>8c. Assist in implementing energy conservation measures that also reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants?  <b>Ranking points may be earned if</b> the practice(s) to be installed in the EQIP contract include one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anaerobic Digester (366)</li> <li>• Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till/Strip Till/Direct Seed (329)</li> <li>• Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (380)</li> </ul>

**National Issue #9:**

Business Lines - Conservation Implementation Additional Ranking Considerations - Will the proposed project result in:

<p>9a. Implementation of all conservation practices scheduled in the contract on the CPA-1155 within three years of date of obligation?</p>
<p>9b. Improvement of existing conservation practices or conservation systems already in place at the time the application is accepted, or will complete an existing conservation system?</p>
<p>9c. Implementation of practice(s) which will complete an existing conservation system or suite of practices?</p>

**Table 1: Practice List for National Issue Questions**

Practice	Code	Q#2b-2c	Q#3c	Q#4a	Q#4b	Q#4c	Q#5b	Q#8a
Alley Cropping	311	x		x		x	x	
Anaerobic Digester	366				x			x
Brush Management	314		x					
Conservation Cover	327	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Constructed Wetland	656	x						
Contour Buffer Strips	332	x	x			x		
Cover Crop	340	x	x	x				
Critical Area Planting	342	x		x			x	
Diversion	362		x					

*Table continues on next page*

Practice	Code	Q#2b-2c	Q#3c	Q#4a	Q#4b	Q#4c	Q#5b	Q#8a
Drainage Water Management	554			x				x
Filter Strip	393	x						
Forage and Biomass Planting	512	x	x		x	x	x	
Forest Stand Improvement	666		x		x	x		
Grassed Waterway	412	x						
Herbaceous Weed Control	315		x					
Nutrient Management	590	x		x	x			
Pond	378		x					
Prescribed Burning	338				x			
Prescribed Grazing	528	x	x	x			x	
Pumping Plant	533							x
Residue and Tillage Management No-Till/ Strip Till	329	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Riparian Forest Buffer	391	x			x	x	x	
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	390	x				x	x	
Streambank and Shoreline Protection	580	x						
Solid/Liquid Waste Separation Facility	632			x				
Subsurface Drain	606		x					
Terrace	600	x	x					
Tree/Shrub Establishment	612	x	x		x	x	x	
Water and Sediment Control Basins	638	x						
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment	380	x	x	x	x	x	x	