USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Farm Service Agency

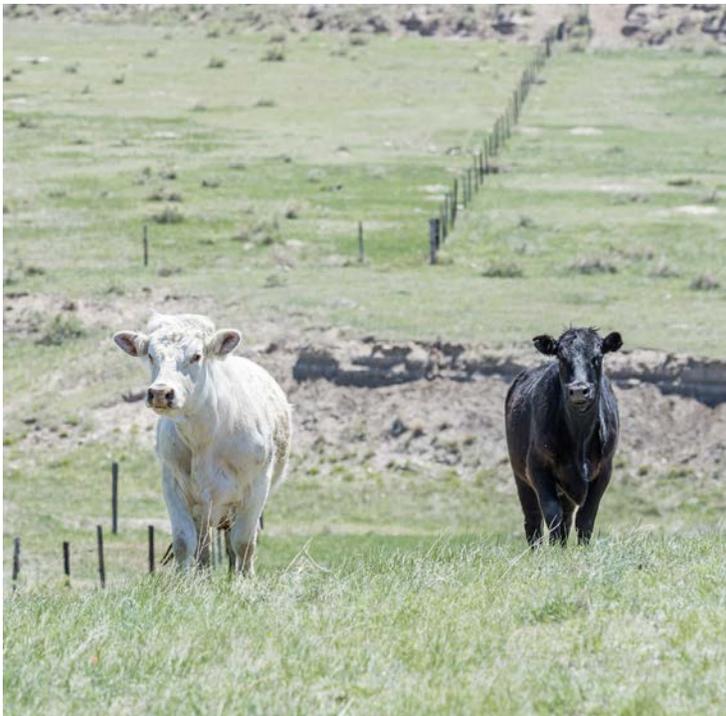# Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) – GRASSLANDS 201 SIGNUP RANKING FACTORS

Overview

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands is offering a sign-up that began on June 4, 2018. Ranking factors have been updated from previous signups.

CRP Grasslands helps landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, and pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. The program emphasizes support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity, and eligible land containing shrubs and forbs under the greatest threat of conversion.

More information on CRP Grassland sign-up is available in the FSA fact sheet, "Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) - Grasslands"

Ranking CRP Grassland Offers

FSA will rank offers for CRP grasslands using grassland ranking factors developed by the agency.

Rankings are unique for each tract of land offered.

FSA assigns each grasslands offer a point score based on the offer's relative ranking factors, with each offer competing against all other offers.

FSA determines offer acceptability based on the ranking results.

For the current CRP grasslands batching FSA will use the following ranking factors to determine acceptability of the land offered:

- Existence of expiring CRP;
- Existing Small Livestock Operation;
- Existing Grassland;
- Existing Multi-species cover and predominance of native species;
- State Focus Area (land-based) determined in consultation with State Technical Committee;
- Applicant is an eligible Beginning, Veteran or Socially Disadvantaged farmer or rancher;
- Cost;
- Other factors as determined by FSA

F1 – Current and Future Use: (0 to 30 points)

Factor F1 encourages continued usage of the land, and retains the benefits of expiring CRP land using 2 sub factors the formula for **F1 = F1a + F1b**.

• F1a – Expiring CRP: (0 to 20 points)

This sub factor rewards owners who continue to maintain and use land that is currently in CRP general signup in an environmentally sustainable way. Keeping these acreages in grass covers will help preserve a majority of the benefits established under general CRP.

Assign 20 points if over 50 percent of the offered acreage is currently expiring general CRP in the last year of CCC CRP-1. If the offer has less than 50 percent of the offer, prorate the 20 points based on the percentage of the offer that is expiring CRP.

• F1b – Small Scale Livestock Operation: (0 or 10 points)

Assign 10 points if the producer certifies on the CRP-2G-1 that they meet eligibility as a Small Scale Livestock operation. Otherwise, assign 0 points.

F2 – Beginning, Socially Disadvantaged, Veteran Farmers and Ranchers: (0 to 10 points)

For this factor assign 10 points if at least 50 percent of the CRP-1 shares are earned by a producer(s) meeting the requirements of the CCC-860. Otherwise, assign 0 points.

Beginning Farmers that served as a member of the armed forces can also check the "Veterans" block on the CRP-2G.

F3 – Maximizing Grassland Preservation: (0, 5, 10, 15 or 20 points)

For this factor assign 0, 5, 10, 15 or 20 points. If over 50 percent of the offered acreage is in a county under threat of conversion as determined by DAFP.

F4 - Vegetative Cover: (0 to 30 points)

This factor evaluates based on the covers on the acres offered. FSA or TSP shall only allow covers that are suitable for the site designated for the offer.

F4 values are determined by calculating the weighted average score for all practices in Table 1.

F5 - Environmental Factors: (0 to 10 points)

This factor is designed to help producers address acreages that are known to be in areas of designated candidate, threatened, or endangered species or critical habit. The formula for **F5 = F5a + F5b**.

• F5a – Wildlife Priority Zones (0 or 5 points)

CRP grassland will use the existing State wildlife priority zones identified for CRP general signup. For this factor assign 5 points if over 50 percent of the offered acreage is within an approved State wildlife priority zone. Otherwise, assign 0 points.

• F5b - State Priority Enrollment Criteria (0 or 5 points)

State Technical Committee's shall submit geographic areas (whole counties) to address the specific conservation practices and the species of concern or specific habitat restoration; such as tall grass prairie, that would be addressed by CRP grassland practice and/or components to CEPD for approval.

For this factor assign 5 points if over 50 percent of the offered acreage is in a State CRP grassland zone. Otherwise, assign 0 points.

F6 – Cost: (0 or 25 points)

Factor F6 is designed to optimize the environmental benefits per dollar for CRP rental payments. The formula for F6 = F6a + F6b. The maximum points for F6 is 25 points.

• F6a – Cost

If the maximum CRP Grassland rental rate for a county is $15 or less, then the offer will receive 15 points. Otherwise, assign 0 points.

• F6b – Offer Less Than Maximum Payment Rate (0 to 25 points)

Offers submitted with a rental rate equal to the maximum payment rate will receive 0 points. Offers submitted below the maximum payment rate will receive points according to the corresponding value in Table 2.

Ranking Factors Threshold for Acceptance

After the close of the each CRP grassland batching period, FSA will rank all eligible offers based on their total point score for that offer. The Secretary of Agriculture will then determine the ranking point threshold used to accept offers for the batching period.

Making CRP Grassland Offers More Competitive

Offer competition is expected to be significant and only CRP grassland offers ranking high enough to be accepted will move forward toward enrollment.

To make offers more competitive, producers should consider all the ranking factors as well as the existing cover for the acreage offered.

FSA also encourages producers to consult NRCS or authorized TSP regarding steps to take to maximize their offers ranking factor points to increase the likelihood that the offer will be accepted.

For More Information

This fact sheet is for informational purposes only; other restrictions may apply. To find more information about CRP Grasslands, visit **www.fsa.usda.gov/crp**. For more details on FSA conservation programs, visit **www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation** or contact your local FSA office. To locate the nearest FSA office or USDA service center, visit **http://offices.usda.gov**.

TABLE 1: COVER VALUES

PRACTICE	ASSIGNED POINT SCORE
CP87 and CP87A, Permanent Introduced Grasses and Legumes	
Monoculture stand.	5
Existing stand of 2 or more species of an introduced grass species.	10
Existing stand of at least 3 introduced grasses and at least 1 forb or legume species best suited for wildlife in the area.	20
CP88 and CP88A, Permanent Native Grasses, Forbs, or Legumes	
Monoculture stand.	10
Existing stand (minimum of 2 species) of at least 2 native grass species.	20
Existing stand of at least 3 native grasses.	30

TABLE 2: OFFER LESS THAN THE MAXIMUM PAYMENT RATE

PERCENT BELOW MAXIMUM PAYMENT RATE	F6b POINTS
1	2
2	4
3	6
4	8
5	10
6	12
7	14
8	16
9	18
10	20
11	21
12	22
13	23
14	24
> = 15	25