

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE FY04 EQIP RANKING CRITERIA WEST PALOUSE LOCAL WORK GROUP

Ranking the Applications – Using the Worksheet

Important - Before granting points to an application for any resource modifier:

- 1) The modifier must apply to the area to be treated under the application.
- 2) The application must include a conservation practice eligible for EQIP cost share or incentive payments, that will address the resource modifier for which points are being awarded.
- 3) The total ranking score awarded for a given application category may not exceed the maximum score for that application category.

The Local Work Group will apply a Ratio system to all applications, as follows:

- 1) One application category scored – multiply the total category score by 1.0
- 2) Two application categories scored – multiply the total score for all categories by .50
- 3) Three application categories scored – multiply the total score for all categories by .33
- 4) Four application categories scored – multiply the total score for all categories by .25

DRY CROP APPLICATION CATEGORY (Maximum points = 225)

“The RKLS is > 40 on cropland” (100 points)

Values assigned by the Local Work Group target high potential sheet & rill erosion on cropland. For evaluation, use the predominant soil map unit for the cropland included in the application. Use the most current factors in the Field Office Technical Guide for R and K. The standard LS may be used if the actual LS has not been previously documented in the applicant’s case file.

“The CI is > 17 on cropland” (100 points)

Values assigned by the Local Work Group target high potential wind erosion on cropland. For evaluation, use the predominant soil map unit for the cropland included in the application. Use the most current factors in the Field Office Technical Guide for C and I.

“Ephemeral gullies on cropland need treatment” (50 points maximum)

Points are granted if there is sufficient indication that excessive erosion is occurring from one or more ephemeral gullies within the cropland included in the application. This may be based on case file information, aerial photo interpretation, topographic maps, and applicant interview. The LWG has assigned points based on the proposed treatment:

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Grassed Waterway | 50 pts |
| Stripcropping | 40 pts |
| Terracing | 30 pts |
| Grade Stabilization Structure | 20 pts |
| Other | 10 pts |

“Direct Seed will be used in a system” (125 points)

The intent is to discourage use of the No-Till or Direct Seed practices in a manner that does not teach a producer how to convert into a No-Till/Direct Seed system – such as Direct Seed winter wheat only on pea ground.

“A buffer practice will be installed” (50 points)

Grant points if the application includes a buffer practice that will provide a water quality benefit. Filter strips, field borders, grassed waterways, hedgerow plantings, field windbreaks, shelterbelts, contour grass strips, grass buffer strips, and riparian forest buffers are all examples of conservation buffers. Evaluation may be based on aerial photos, topographic maps, and applicant interview.

“Proposed contract area is within a contributing area to PM-10, dust” (75 points)

Grant points if the application is for land located within the Conservation Priority Area identified on the CRP Air Quality Map (2-CRP, WA Exhibit 12).

“Non Inversive Tillage will be used in a system” (45 points)

Grant points if system addresses a wind erosion concern in the low rainfall areas (<12 inches) on cropland. The management system will be a minimum tillage (herbicides and tillage) or a delayed minimum tillage (herbicides and delayed tillage) system on the summer fallow year of wheat – fallow rotation. All tillage treatments will be non inversion type operations and limited to a total of five or less. The LWG has defined the wide spaced chisel with straight points (> 30 inch shank spacing), undercutter with wide V- blades (> 30 inch shank spacing) and rodweeder as non inversion type tillage operations.

IRRIGATED CROP APPLICATION CATEGORY (Maximum points = 225)

“50% of the field is equal to or greater than 3% slope on irrigated cropland” (100 points)

This will be determined by using a topographical map.

“Direct Seed will be used in a system” (90 points)

The intent is to discourage use of the No-Till or Direct Seed practices in a manner that does not teach a producer how to convert into a No-Till/Direct Seed system – such as Direct Seed winter wheat only on pea ground.

“A buffer practice will be installed” (50 points)

Grant points if the application includes a buffer practice that will provide a water quality benefit. Filter strips, field borders, grassed waterways, hedgerow plantings, field windbreaks, shelterbelts, contour grass strips, grass buffer strips, and riparian forest buffers are all examples of conservation buffers. Evaluation may be based on aerial photos, topographic maps, and applicant interview.

“Proposed contract area is adjacent to a 303(d) listed stream or drains into it via a defined tributary” (10 points)

Grant points if the application has a 303(d) listed stream running through it, or is adjacent to such a stream, and the proposed treatment will address one or more identified water quality concerns of that listed stream. The 1998 list of 303(d) streams can be found at the following website:

http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/303d/1998/wrias/1998_water_segs.pdf

If the application area is not adjacent to a listed stream, grant points if it is upstream and adjacent to a tributary (perennial or intermittent) of that stream as identified on a USGS quadrangle map, and the proposed treatment will address one or more identified water quality concerns of the listed stream.

“Irrigation System will be improved &/ or IWM will be applied” (125 points)

Points will be awarded if the current irrigation system will be improved and irrigation water management will be applied; or if irrigation water management will be applied. This includes replacing an open delivery system with pipeline, replacing a leaky delivery pipeline, converting from wheel lines to a center pivot system, & converting from overhead sprinklers to a micro system.

Irrigation Water Management is defined as the process of determining and controlling the volume, frequency, and application rate of irrigation in a planned, efficient manner. The purposes of IWM include managing soil moisture to promote desired crop response; optimizing use of available water supplies; decreasing non-point source pollution of surface and groundwater resources; and to minimize irrigation induced soil erosion. It includes the use of devices such as tensiometers, watermarks, or neutron probes to determine moisture levels in the soil.

GRAZING LAND APPLICATION CATEGORY (Maximum points = 225)

“There is an excessive invasion of weeds or woody vegetation” (75 points)

Grant points if there is sufficient indication that there are adverse impacts to plant production, condition, and quality goals as a result of invasive weeds or woody vegetation. Evaluation may be based on aerial photography and applicant interview.

“Water Development is a factor for proper grazing distribution” (125 points)

Grant points if there is sufficient indication that lack of adequate water quantity or availability are limiting factors for achieving proper grazing distribution. Evaluation may be based on aerial photos, case file information, the National Range and Pasture Handbook, and applicant interview.

“Livestock have uncontrolled access to riparian areas” (50 points)

Grant points if there are riparian areas that are not fenced and there is sufficient indication that grazing of domestic animals occur within these areas. Evaluation may be based on aerial photos, case file information, and applicant interview.

“Practices will be applied to benefit Range Management” (100 points)

Applies to practices that will benefit grazing distribution, rehabilitation of declining grasslands.

“Relocation of feeding facilities” (45 points)

Grant points if applicant agrees to move feeding operation away from affected stream and installs an approved buffer practice with fenced livestock exclusion. Buffer may be grazed with an approved prescribed grazing plan. Points may also be awarded when the feeding operation is adjacent to an intermittent stream if there is likelihood that manure and/or sediment from the feeding activity will be readily transported to a perennial stream, lake or water body. Feeding areas will be relocated no less than the minimum buffer width specified in the NRCS Riparian Forest Buffer practice standard 391.

LIVESTOCK APPLICATION CATEGORY (Maximum points = 225)

“A CNMP will be included (livestock operations)” (50 points)

Grant points if the application is a livestock operation with lands where animal manure is applied, and will include the development and implementation of a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan that meets NRCS criteria. Evaluation may be based on case file information and applicant interview.

“Odors from animal waste will be treated” (80 points)

Grant points for treatment and/or application of animal waste that reduces odors in the farm vicinity. Evaluation may be based on case file information or applicant interview. Treatment of the problem will include the development and implementation of a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan that meets NRCS criteria.

“Dairy – AFO/CAFO” (50 points)

Points will be awarded if the applicant's operation meets the current definition of an Animal Feeding Operation (AFO) or a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO)

“Relocation of feeding facilities” (45 points)

Grant points if applicant agrees to move feeding operation away from affected stream and installs an approved buffer practice with fenced livestock exclusion. Buffer may be grazed with an approved prescribed grazing plan. Points may also be awarded when the feeding operation is adjacent to an intermittent stream if there is likelihood that manure and/or sediment from the feeding activity will be readily transported to a perennial stream, lake or water body. Feeding areas will be relocated no less than the minimum buffer width specified in the NRCS Riparian Forest Buffer practice standard 391.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS (Maximum points = 100)

“There are instream structures known to be barriers to upstream passage of salmonid fish on forest land” (40 points)

Grant points if there is sufficient indication that instream structures, including road culverts, on forestland (private, non-industrial) are impairing upstream passage of salmonid fish. Evaluation may be based on the applicant's Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan, aerial photography, topographic maps, and applicant interview. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) definition for stream Types 1, 2, or 3 shall be the basis for determining if the stream is salmonid bearing. Use either DNR Typing Maps or fish presence maps developed locally through the Limiting Factors Analysis.

“Habitat improvement of more than 10 acres or ¼ mile of fish stream passage” (30 points)

Points will be awarded if the applicant agrees to create, restore, or enhance greater than 10 acres of upland habitat or more than 600 feet of fish stream (at least one side of a stream if ownership boundaries lie along the stream channel). The purposes are to: (1) provide a variety of food, cover types, and water for upland habitat; or (2) provide a source of detritus, large woody debris, suitable habitat, channel morphology, and riparian characteristics important to desired aquatic species and wildlife along fish bearing streams. Tools used to determine whether there will be a benefit that meets NRCS Quality Criteria include Washington State NRCS Technical Note 14 Wildlife Habitat Suitability Guide and/or the Stream Visual Assessment Protocol; National Water and Climate Center Technical Note 99-1.

“Under regulatory or industry deadline of less than 2 years” (30 points)

It is a higher priority to award points and dollars to those who are faced with legal action or industry sanctions if they do not perform those practices. Such as a dairy under DOE deadline to complete all practices by Dec. 31, 2003 or a landowner who will not get an industry contract if eligible conservation practices are not performed within a deadline.