

Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Signup 207 Ranking Factors

Overview

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) ranking factors have been updated from previous signups. Grassland CRP is a working lands program which helps landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, 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 grassland CRP signup is available in the FSA fact sheet, "Grassland Conservation Reserve Program – Fact Sheet."

Ranking Grassland CRP Offers

FSA will rank offers for Grassland CRP using grassland ranking factors developed by the agency. FSA assigns each 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 scoring results. For the current Grassland CRP sign-up, FSA will use the following factors to determine acceptability of the land offered:

- ♦ Existence of expiring CRP;
- ♦ Existing grassland;
- ♦ Existing multi-species cover and predominance of native species;
- ♦ State Focus Area (land-based) determined in consultation with State Technical Committee;
- ♦ Cost;
- ♦ Existing Small Livestock Operation;
- ♦ 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 or expiring Grassland CRP land using 2 sub factors. The formula for **F1 = F1a + F1b**.

- ♦ **F1a – Expiring CRP or GRP:**
(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.



Assign 20 points if over 50 percent of the offered acreage is currently expiring CRP in the last year of CRP-1 or expiring GRP. 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 – CRP Cover: (0 or 10 points)**

This factor provides additional points depending on the current CRP cover. Assign 10 points if over 50 percent of the offered acreages is currently CP2, CP10 or CP25. Otherwise, assign 0 points.



More Information

Grassland CRP signup is available in the FSA fact sheet, "Grassland Conservation Reserve Program – Fact Sheet."

For more information about FSA and its programs, visit fsa.usda.gov or your local FSA office.

To find your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/servicelocator.



F3 – Maximizing Grassland Preservation: (0 to 35 points)

Factor F3 targets land under the greatest threat of conversion, using 3 sub factors. The formula for **F3 = F3a + F3b + F3c**.

- ♦ F3a – Threat of Conversion: 0, 2.5, 5, 7.5 or 10 points

If over 50 percent of the offered acreage is in a county under threat of conversion as determined by FSA (0, 2.5, 5, 7.5 or 10 points).

- ♦ F3b – Threat of Conversion Geographic Information Systems (GIS): 0 or 20 points

If over 50 percent of the offered acreage is in the threat of conversion GIS Layer, assign 20 points (0 or 20 points).

- ♦ F3c – Longer Contract Length: 0 or 5 points

If the offer is for a 15-year contract, assign 5 points (0 or 5 points).

F4 – Vegetative Cover: (0 to 30 points)

This factor evaluates based on the covers on the acres offered. FSA or Technical Service Provider (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 45 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 or environmental sensitive areas under significant threat. The formula for **F5 = F5a + F5b + F5c**.

- ♦ F5a – Wildlife Priority Zones (0 or 15 points)

Grassland CRP will use the existing state wildlife priority zones identified for CRP general signup. For this factor assign 15 points if over 50 percent of the offered acreage is within an approved state wildlife priority zone. Otherwise, assign 0 points.

- ♦ F5b – State Grassland Priority Enrollment Criteria (0 or 15 points)

State Technical Committees 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 Grassland CRP practice and/or

components to the FSA Conservation Division for approval. For this factor assign 15 points if over 50 percent of the offered acreage is in a State Grassland CRP zone. Otherwise, assign 0 points.

- ♦ F5c – National Priority Zone: (0 or 15 points)

This factor is designed to help producers address acreages that are environmental sensitive areas under significant threat. For this factor assign 15 points if over 50 percent of the offered acreage is in National Grassland CRP Priority Zone. Otherwise, assign 0 points.

F6 – Small Scale Livestock Operation: (0 to 10 points)

This factor is designed to help producers' small-scale livestock operations. 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.

Table 1: Cover Values

Practice CP88	F4 Points
Permanent Introduced Grasses and Legumes	
Monoculture stand.	5
Existing stand of 2 or more species of an introduced grass species.	10
Existing stand (minimum of 4 species) of at least 3 introduced grasses and at least 1 forb or legume of species best suited for wildlife in the area.	20
Permanent Native Grasses and Legumes	
Monoculture stand.	10
Existing stand (minimum of 3 species) of at least 2 native grass species.	20
Existing stand (minimum of 5 species) of at least 3 native grasses.	30



F7 – Cost: (0 to 25 points)

Factor F7 is designed to optimize the environmental benefits per dollar for CRP rental payments. The maximum points for F7 is 25 points.

- ♦ F7a – Cost (0 to 15 points)

If the maximum grassland CRP rental rate for a county is less than or equal to \$15, the offer will get 15 points.

- ♦ F7b – 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 CRP signup, 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 signup.

Making Grassland CRP Offers More Competitive

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

Table 2: Offer Less Than The Maximum Payment Rate

Percent Below Maximum Payment Rate	F7 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