



**MN - GRASSLAND RESERVE PROGRAM
SCORING WORKSHEET**

July 2007

Participant: _____

Tract no. _____

Land being offered is privately owned and is currently being utilized as grass forage or meets the definition of eligible lands and is 40 contiguous acres or larger in size. **Yes**____ **No**____
If no, the application will be a lower priority for FY 2007 and will not be scored.

EXCEPTION: For Tribal, Limited Resource and Beginning Farmers only

- Existing grazing operations consisting of at least 25–39 contiguous acres of eligible land are eligible if they also have animal units currently utilizing the forage. Document the eligibility of all exceptions on this worksheet.

Evaluation Criteria

Circle the correct point value for each criteria

I. <u>Threats to Conversion Criteria</u>	<u>Points</u>
A. Potential to be converted from grassland to cropland.	
• predominant offered acres are in Land Capability Class 1 and 2	20
• predominant offered acres are in Land Capability Class 3, 4, and 6	15
• predominant offered acres are in Land Capability Class 7 and 8	5
 II. <u>Supporting Grazing Operations</u>	
A. Area offered is part of an Existing Grazing Operation	
• Managed Grazing	20
• Continuous Grazing	10
• Used for Hay or seed production	8
• No Grazing or Haying	0
 B. Water Quality Benefits	
• Area offered includes or is immediately adjacent to a perennial stream or permanent water body.	5
Area offered is within ¼ mile of a perennial stream or permanent water body	3
• All other offers	0
 III. <u>Maintaining and Preserving Biodiversity</u>	
A. Existing predominant vegetation on area offered (biodiversity)	
• Native grass or prairie remnant or plant community of high or outstanding quality based on the Natural Heritage Database	30
• Mixed Native grass stand that has been planted or restored	20
• Single species native stand that has been planted or restored	15
• Mixed Native grass that will be re-established without cost share	15
• Mixed stand of introduced grass and legumes	10
• Predominately non-native single species	3
• All other offers	0

B. Federal or State Threatened, Endangered or Species of Special Concern

- Plants listed on the Natural Heritage Database are found on the site **10**
- Plants listed on the Natural Heritage Database are found immediately adjacent to the site **7**
- Plants listed on the Natural Heritage Database are found within 1/2 mile to the site **5**
- All other offers **0**

C. Location Significance - area offered is within one mile of another open land protected area that is managed with the same biodiversity goals as GRP and that adjacent protected area is:

- > 200 acres in size **5**
- 150 – 200 acres in size **3**
- 100 – 150 acres **2**
- 40 – 100 acres **1**
- All other offers **0**
- **0**

IV. Applicant Eligibility Criteria

- **Applicant is of one of the following priority groups** **75**
 - Beginning Farmer
 - Limited Resource Farmer
 - Tribal
- **Applicant is not one of the above groups** **0**

Total Points – Section I (5-25) _____
Total Points – Section II (0-25) _____
Total Points – Section III (0-50) _____
Total Points – Section IV (0 or 75) _____
TOTAL POINTS FOR OFFER* _____
(maximum of 150)

If a tie breaker is required offers will be grouped first by length of agreement with priority given to longer term agreements. Within each length of agreement grouping, priority will be given to applications with lower cost per acre.

The following information is not used in the scoring but will be needed for approval purposes:

Type of GRP agreement offered (check one):

Rental Agreement ___10 year ___15 year ___20 year

Total Acres Offered _____

Acres are generally estimated first then finalized by FSA measurement service.

Enter to nearest whole dollar

Estimated total cost of rental agreement \$ _____ (Annual rental rate x total acres x length of contract)

Guidance for Ranking Criteria

GENERAL INFORMATION

Contiguous acres – On a tract basis - acres are considered to be contiguous if the grasslands are capable of being utilized by livestock on the entire tract regardless of existing fences, land uses or current management. This means that the acres do not need to be physically connected. **On a multiple tract basis** - when grassland acres will be offered on multiple tracts the offered acreage on the tracts must be physically connected together to be eligible.

CONVERSION CONSIDERATIONS

IA. Threat to conversion to cropland: Points under this category are assigned based on the classification of the predominant soil map units being converted to cropland. Information on Land Capability classifications can be found in Section 2 of the Field Office Technical Guide, which is available on line at www.mn.usda.gov.

SUPPORTING GRAZING OPERATIONS

IIA. Grazing operation: A grazing operation is defined as one that has livestock and/or animals which utilize the forage and where significant agricultural income is derived from the grazing operation. Small hobby farms and those operations with insignificant animal numbers (less than 10 animal units) will not be considered as a grazing operation.

IIB. Water Quality: Existing grazing operations using management that protects water quality benefits can score additional points.

MAINTAINING AND PRESEVING BIODIVERSITY

IIIA. Existing native grassland and biodiversity: Offers containing unique native prairie or restored native grassland are given priority over introduced grass/legume mixtures. The Natural Heritage Database can be used to identify existing native plant communities.

IIIB. Federal or State Threatened, Endangered or Species of Special concern: The Natural Heritage Database will be used to determine points for this category. Assign these points when the area offered is a known habitat (on site for plants and within one mile for animals) for at-risk species. The conservation plan will address habitat requirements for the identified animal or plant.

IIIC. Location significance: Protected areas for assigning these points are defined as: 1) public lands, such as refuges and wildlife management areas that are managed for an open landscape; 2) private lands that are under a permanent conservation easement such as WRP, CREP, RIM, and other GRP acres and are managed for an open landscape. Land enrolled in limited duration conservation programs and that is not under a permanent easement, does not qualify as protected areas under this category.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Assign 75 points to all the applicants meeting the following criteria:

- Beginning Farmers
- Limited Resource Farmers
- Tribal Farmers

All other applicants will be assigned 0 points.