

**Guidance Information**  
**New Hampshire EQIP Rating Form - January 6, 2006**

**General**

**NOTE: Changes on ranking sheets and guidance for FY 2006 are noted in bold print and underlined.**

These Rating Sheets were developed to rate EQIP applicants within certain primary areas of Environmental Concern as identified by the Local Work Groups for FY2003. Based on conservation needs, an applicant applies for assistance under one of the five categories below. These are: Farmstead Environmental Concerns, Cropland Environmental Concerns, Grazing Land Environmental Concerns, Forestland Environmental Concerns, and Water Conservation.

Rating Elements within each category are based on NRCS Quality Criteria and address the primary threats to each resource concern. Some Rating Elements affect all five categories of Environmental Concerns and are the same on all five rating sheets.

Funding for each category will be based on the percent of dollars requested for conservation practices within a category as compared to the total dollars requested for all categories **subject to EQIP policy stating that 60% of EQIP funds must go to livestock producers.**

Only applications receiving a positive score will be funded. **Minimum scores to be eligible for funding may be set for each ranking cutoff.** Ratings will be based only on resource concerns located on the Environmental Concerns selected by the producer. For example, for a Farmstead Resource Concern applicant, points for soil erosion will only be awarded for soil erosion on the Farmstead. Soil erosion points will not be earned for soil erosion on cropland. However, points will be awarded for practices towards an RMS that addresses cropland erosion. For example, contour stripcropping planted on the eroding cropland would earn 5 points (see below).

**Criteria Common to all Environmental Concerns**

**1. Additional Practices Toward RMS: Points are given for practices that will complete a Resource Management System and for practices from the approved practice list that will improve the treatment level in other primary land uses** (Headquarters or Farmstead, Cropland, Hayland, Pastureland, Forestland, or Wildlife Land). **Do not count practices that are minor components of a resource management system and that are used, essentially, as components of other practices, e.g., pipeline used in a microirrigation system or subsurface drainage under a waste storage structure.**

**2. Social Considerations:** Cultural resources points are only awarded if applicant is working or will work with a Cultural Resource Specialist to install specific practices to protect identified National Register Eligible Sites in addition to practices addressing the Primary Environmental Concern, i.e., Farmstead, Cropland, etc. **Storm Damage points are only awarded where it is determined that funds from EQIP cost overrun accounts are not available to repair damage or emergency programs are not applicable. Land protection points are awarded where deeded easements allow agricultural production and protect land from development for 10 or more years. These points may be awarded for land where an easement is imminent.**

**3. Animal Management (T & E Species):** Points are only awarded for actions planned that will protect T&E Species according to a plan developed with a biologist. Points can be awarded for State or Federally Listed Species or "At Risk Species".

**4. Animal Habitat (Wetland Loss, Invasive Species control, and Wildlife Habitat Improvement)** Negative Points are assigned based on the amount of wetland area affected by activities that are consistent with Food Security Act policy and State Wetlands regulations. Points are assigned for controlling invasive species and improving wildlife habitat according to NRCS Specifications.

**5. Innovative Conservation Practices:** Points assigned for using one of NH's current interim conservation practice standards.

**6. Soil Erosion (Sheet & Rill and Ephemeral Gully):** Points are assigned based on the tons per acre of soil saved on the treatment area (field or sub field area where treatment is needed). RUSLE2 must be used for Sheet and Rill on current conditions and the planned system to calculate the tons of soil saved per acre.

**7. Soil Condition (Cropland Environmental Concerns and Water Conservation):** Points are assigned based on the cropland that is planted to a cover crop, mulched, or farmed with conservation tillage to improve soil condition.

**8. Innovative Conservation Practices:** Points are assigned for applying interim conservation practice standards where standards and specifications for state interim practices are available.

### **Farmstead Environmental Concerns:**

1. **Water Quality:** Nutrient Management Applied according to approved plan uses a factor for the type of manure by livestock class (dairy cattle, chickens, etc.) acres of land application, and number of Animal Units producing the waste.
2. **Water Quality:** Sediment (tons) Delivered to Surface Water including wetlands. Evidence of sediment delivery must be visible. **Tons of sediment for sheet and rill should be calculated using RUSLE2 on current conditions and the planned system.** Points per ton are doubled if the waterbody is a Public Water Supply or if it is a feeder stream that is immediately upstream of a Public Water Supply or listed as an impaired watershed.
3. **Water Quality:** Manure Storage points are based on type of manure by livestock class, distance to surface water body, and points if non-stackable manure. Distance Factor Points are doubled if within the protection zone of a Public Water Supply or a feeder stream within 2 miles upstream of a Public Water Supply or is State listed as an impaired watershed. The distance to the water body is measured as the flow path not a straight line distance.
4. **Water Quality:** Confinement area of animals that are not under a roof is computed based on livestock class, number of animals units per 1000 sq. ft. of area, and distance to surface water body. Distance Factor Points are doubled if in the protection zone of a Public Water Supply or within 2 miles upstream of a feeder stream to a Public Water Supply or is State listed as impaired waters. The distance is measured as the flow path to the water body.
5. **Water Quality:** Runoff from Roof Areas and Farmstead areas (non-animal usage areas) contributing to potential water quality problems. Points based on distance to the water body.
6. **Water Quality:** Milkhouse Waste Disposal points are based on Gallons per day/Animal Unit and the distance to the water body. Points are doubled if the water body is in the protection zone of a Public Water Supply or within 2 miles upstream of a feeder stream to a Public Water Supply or is State listed as impaired waters.
7. **Water Quality:** Silage Leachate points are based on the distance to the water body. Points are doubled if the water body is in the protection zone of a Public Water Supply or within 2 miles upstream of a feeder stream to the Public Water Supply or is State listed as impaired waters.
8. **Water Quality:** Buffer Area points are based on the width of the buffer adjacent to the water body planned to be installed. Width Factor points are increased by 1.5 if the water body is in the protection zone of a Public Water Supply or within 2 miles upstream of a feeder stream to a Public Water Supply or is State listed as impaired waters. Double points (2X) if a Forested Riparian Buffer is used. Can accumulate factors to maximum of **3.5 x** if both apply.
9. **Air Quality:** Points assigned for practices used to minimize or reduce odors.

### **Cropland Health**

1. **Water Quality:** Buffer Area points are based on the width of the buffer adjacent to the water body planned to be installed. Points are increased by **1.5 x** if the water body is in the protection zone of a Public Water Supply or within 2 miles upstream of a feeder stream to a Public Water Supply or is State listed as impaired waters. Double points (**2x**) if a Forested Riparian Buffer is used. (Maximum of **3.5 x** if both apply)
2. **Water Quality:** Sediment (tons) Delivered to Surface Water, including wetlands, as **visually** detected in the waterbody. **Tons of sediment for sheet and rill should be calculated using RUSLE2 on current conditions and the planned system.**
3. **Water Quality:** Nutrient Management Applied based on plan.
4. **Water Quality:** Pest Management to be Applied based on a plan the meets NH NRCS 595 standard.
5. **Water Quality:** Points assigned for the installation of a Pesticide Mixing and Storage Facility per NRCS
6. **Water Quantity:** Points applied based on the reduction of surface runoff from cropland by the application of approved practices. The difference in the RCN before and after are used to compute the appropriate points.
7. **Air Quality/Plant Condition:** Points assigned based on windbreaks installed or renovated.

## **Grazing Land Environmental Concerns**

1. **Soil Condition/Plant Condition & Management** Points assigned for Prescribed Grazing according to NRCS Standards and Specifications.
2. **Water Quality:** Buffer Area points are based on the width of the buffer adjacent to the water body planned to be installed. Points are increased by **1.5 x** if the water body is a Public Water Supply or if a feeder stream immediately upstream of a Public Water Supply or impaired waters. Double points(**2 X**) if a Forested Riparian Buffer is used. (Maximum of **3.5 x** if both apply)
3. **Water Quality:** Feet of Surface Water (including wetlands) that are fenced to exclude animals based on amount of damaged stream length in relation to the total access amount of the water body and the type of animals having access to the water body.
4. **Water Quality:** Nutrient Management points are based on the same criteria as for the Farmstead Environmental concerns. Pest Management points are based on pest management applied according to NRCS Standards.
5. **Water Quality:** Winter Confinement Area and/or Manure Stacking Area points based on type of animals and distance to water bodies. Points are doubled if the water body is a Public Water Supply or if a feeder stream immediately upstream of a Public Water Supply or impaired waters.
6. **Water Quality:** Runoff from Roof Areas and Farmstead Areas (non-animal usage areas) contributing to potential water quality problems. Points based on distance to the water body.
7. **Plant Suitability:** Points based on the application of Establishment or Enhancement of Preferred Grasses and Legumes where needed to promote Prescribed Grazing.
8. **Surface Water (including wetland and riparian acres) require protection from grazing animals (Grazing Land Health Environmental Concern):**  
Slight - Animals are accessing water but vegetation is intact.  
Moderate - Animals are accessing water but some bare soil exposed.  
Significant - Animals are accessing water but much bare soil exposed, bank is unstable.  
Extreme - Animals are accessing water but streambank nearly denuded, bank is eroding.

## **Forestland Environmental Concerns**

1. **Water Quality:** Buffer Area points are based on the width of the Riparian Buffer adjacent to the water body planned to be installed. Points are doubled if the water body is in the protection zone of a Public Water Supply or within 2 miles upstream of a feeder stream to a Public Water Supply or State listed impaired waters.
2. **Water Quality:** Sediment (tons) Delivered to Surface Water including wetlands as visually detected in the waterbody. **Tons of sediment for sheet and rill should be calculated using RUSLE2 on current conditions and the planned system.** Points per ton are doubled if the waterbody is in the protection zone of a Public Water Supply or within 2 miles upstream of a feeder stream to a Public Water Supply or State listed impaired waters.
3. **Water Quality:** Points for disturbed areas of soil protected such as Road Surface, Landings, Borrow Areas, and Cut Banks on **existing sites**.
4. **Water Quality:** Points assigned for Feet of Road and Trails installed to NRCS Standards for new roads. (Maximum of 75 feet of road per acres of woodland). Also assigning points based on overall land slope to give importance to installing good roads on steeper land.
5. **Water Quality:** Points assigned for Forest Stand Improvement practice that helps produce high quality water.
6. **Air Quality & Condition, Soil Condition, Plant Condition & Management:** Points assigned for treatment with approved forestry practices meeting NRCS Standards for regeneration and establishment of tree species.
7. **Air Quality & Condition, Soil Condition, Plant Condition and Management** Forest Management planning acres are not considered Treated Acres in the calculation of a ranking final score.

## **Water Conservation**

1. **Water Quantity:** Points assigned for reducing irrigation water usage by using proper water management based on percent reduction of irrigation water.
2. **Water Quantity:** Points assigned for a planned irrigation tailwater recovery system to be installed.
3. **Water Quantity:** Points assigned for the construction of a reuse system to conserve water for irrigated areas.
4. **Water Quality:** Pest Management to be applied that meets NRCS standards and specifications.
5. **Water Quality:** Nutrient Management to be applied that meets NRCS standards and specifications.
6. **Water Quality:** Buffer Area points are based on the width of the buffer adjacent to a water body planned to be installed.
7. **Plant Condition:** Points are assigned for activities to efficiently sustain plant vigor and ability to survive in an irrigation system.