

**Vermont NRCS 2017 Financial Assistance Program - EQIP Statewide and Watershed Fund Pools Screening Criteria Worksheet**

Applications that are eligible in the participant information screen in ProTracts and who agreed to place their application in an EQIP watershed/statewide category fund pool must be evaluated using this worksheet. Eligible Applications for National Initiative fund pools (On-Farm Energy, Organic, National Water Quality Initiative, and any others released during FY 2017) are screened using the screening worksheet specific to the Initiative.

**Instructions:**

This screening worksheet must be completed for each eligible application applying for funding consideration in any EQIP watershed/statewide funding pool. Applications are not eligible until they are labeled as such in the application information screen in ProTracts. The goal of this screening tool is to prioritize ranking workload. Completion of this worksheet and documentation thereof does not constitute agreement to provide NRCS FA program benefits nor approval of a FA program contract. This screening worksheet will be filed in the applicant's case file and the screening priority (High, Medium, or Low) will be recorded in ProTracts. This worksheet will be reviewed and updated for each unfunded contract upon change in ranking period. Upon request, a copy of the screening worksheet will be provided to the applicant.

**Screening Criteria Worksheet - Complete for each eligible EQIP applicant**

Applicant Name:	County:
Application Number:	Field Office:
Evaluator Name:	Date:

**Step 1 - Reminders**

Participants must be eligible in ProTracts before they are screened using this screening tool. You must complete the EQIP Eligibility Documentation Checklist in full first to determine eligibility. Only after eligibility is determined can you screen an application. Participants must have a resource concern in order to be eligible. The practices that the participants wants to complete through their proposed contract must meet the practice standard in order for the application to be determined eligible.

**Participants who have self certified as a Veteran Farmer on their application form, and the application is in a Historically Underserved subaccount are screened high priority, regardless of their past D&M, violations, contract termination, or the status of their CNMP. All other participants in the Beginning Farmer pool are automatically screened medium priority until further notice.**

Step 2 - Evaluation of all eligible applications	Yes?	Action	No?	Action
A ↓ B ↓ C	Has the applicant failed to properly operate and maintain practices installed with program assistance that resulted in the re-emergence of the resource concern originally addressed when there have been no other substantial changes in the operation?	Yes: STOP - the application is Low Priority - proceed to Step 2 - do not answer any additional screening questions - do not rank		No: keep going and proceed to B
	Has the applicant been notified of a contract violation for reasons within their control? NRCS cannot screen a producer as lower priority for a contract violation if NRCS has not taken appropriate contract administration action to enforce the contract.	Yes: STOP - the application is Low Priority - proceed to Step 2 - do not answer any additional screening questions - do not rank		No: keep going and proceed to C
	Has the applicant had a previous contract terminated within the past 3 years for reasons within their control?	Yes: STOP - the application is Low Priority - proceed to Step 2 - do not answer any additional screening questions - do not rank.		No: If the application includes animal waste storage or treatment facility practices on an animal feeding operation (AFO), proceed to D. If the application is in any of the forestry or wildlife pools, proceed to G. If the application does not include animal waste storage or treatment facility practices on an animal feeding operation (AFO), and it is not in any of the forestry and wildlife pools the application is high priority. Proceed to step 2.

Comment in Each Section A -C: Applicants who meet the criteria in A-C, but who have otherwise proven to the satisfaction of the planner that there is a high likelihood that the applicant will implement their contract and maintain the installed practices in a manner that achieves the purpose of the program, the planner can choose to say no to A-C, however, there must be documentation in the file that supports this. This documentation must satisfy the planner that the applicant will go through with their contract. Likewise, if the applicant meets the criteria in A-C, but who has otherwise proven to the satisfaction of the planner that there is NOT a high likelihood that the applicant will either sign a contract or implement the practices in their contract if they do sign, the planner can choose to say yes to either A-C, however, there must be documentation in the file that supports this.

**D-F is for applications that include animal waste storage or treatment facility on an animal feeding operation (AFO):**

D	Does the applicant only have the NMP and/or LTP portions of the CNMP completed?	Yes: STOP - the application is Low Priority - proceed to Step 2 - do not answer any additional screening questions - do not rank.		No, proceed to E
E	Does the applicant only have the MWHP and LTP portion of the CNMP completed?	Yes: STOP - the application is Medium Priority - proceed to Step 2 - do not answer any additional screening questions.		No, proceed to F
F	Is the full CNMP completed?	Yes: STOP - the application is High Priority - proceed to Step 2.		Yes, Proceed with Ranking

**G-H is for applications in any of the forestry and wildlife funding pools:**

G	Will the treatment result in less than a minimum level of improvement as identified in the State Questions in the Forestry and Wildlife Ranking tool?	Yes: STOP - the application is Low Priority - proceed to Step 2 - do not answer any additional screening questions - do not rank.		No, proceed to H
H	Will the treatment result in a Significant, Moderate, or Minimum level of improvement as identified in the State Questions in the Forestry and Wildlife Ranking tool?	Yes: STOP - the application is High Priority - proceed to Step 2.		Yes, Proceed with Ranking

**Step 2 - Priority determination in ProTracts**

The priority of this application is: (Select High, Medium, or Low for the Priority in ProTracts. Place a copy of this completed screening document in the customer file)

**High Priority:** Applications must be ranked by the applicable ranking Deadlines and include an estimated cost.  
**Medium Priority:** You will be notified at a later date when to rank and enter an estimated cost for these applications.  
**Low Priority:** applications do not need to be ranked unless the State Office indicates otherwise.  
 All eligible applications must have this form completed and uploaded to the Document Management System (DMS) regardless of ranking priority. Designated Conservationists are to inform the State Office of the reasons for any application not being High priority by the ranking deadline.  
 515.72B(1) If screening factors are used to designate a higher priority for ranking, all eligible applications with a higher priority and that address an eligible resource concern are ranked and considered for funding before ranking or considering for funding applications that are a lower priority.

Soil Conservationist Signature and Date:	Notes:
	Notes: