

Rhode Island Ranking System for FRPP Proposals (2013)

DRAFT DOCUMENT (NRCS Completes Parcel Ranking)

- National criteria is 50% of score
- State criteria is 50% of score
- National criteria score + State criteria score = Grand Total Score for ranking
- Ranking is scaled to a 100 point system
- Weights are given to further define importance and to achieve a possible point total of 100

National Criteria Factors (50% of total score or maximum of 50 points)

Use 1A or 1B for ranking, not both:

1A. **Percent of Parcel that Contains Prime, Statewide Important and Local Important Farmland Soils to be protected.** *20 points maximum*

OR

1B. **Does the Parcel Contain a Registered National or State Historic/Cultural Resource?** *20 points maximum*

Parcel is scored using either Part A or Part B – not both. Applications containing predominantly prime and statewide important soils or containing registered historic/ cultural resources will receive the highest scores. Protection of the best farmland soils and historic/cultural resources are major objectives of the program. The percent of prime and statewide important farmland in the parcel is the factor score used for ranking. Parcels containing < 50% prime and statewide important farmland receive a factor scale of 0.

2. **Percent of Cropland, Pastureland, or Grassland in Total Parcel Offered** *15 points maximum*

Applications that are predominantly cropland will receive a higher score than applications with components of forestland, wetland, and other land types. The sum of the percentages of cropland, hayland, and pastureland in the parcel is the factor scale used for ranking (e.g., if 84% of parcel is devoted to cropland, hayland, and pastureland = factor scale of 84). Parcels containing < 33% cropland, hayland, and pastureland are not a good fit for FRPP funding and will receive a factor scale of 0.

3. **Ratio of the Total Acres of Land in the Parcel Offered to the Average Farm Size in the County.** *1 point maximum*

Average farm size in a county is based on the most recent (2007) USDA Census of Agriculture. The table provided displays the average farm size by county. A factor scale of 100 is given for ratios of 2 and greater; a factor scale of 50 is given for ratios between 1 and 2; a factor scale of 0 is given for ratios of 1 or less.

4. **Decrease in the Percentage of Acreage of Farmland in the County in which the Parcel is Located Based on the Last Two USDA Censuses of Agriculture (2007- 2002).**

1 point maximum

The table provided displays the percent decrease in farmland acreage by county. A factor scale of 100 is given for greater than 10% decrease; a factor scale of 75 is given for greater than 5 to 10% decrease; a factor scale of 50 is given for 0 to 5% decrease; and a factor scale of 0 is given for no decrease in county farmland acreage.

5. **Percent Population Growth in the County as Documented by the 2007-2000 US Census.** *1 point maximum*

The average population growth for Rhode Island during this time was 1.8%. The table provided displays the percent population growth by county. The factor scale is proportional between 100 for 2.8% growth and 0 for 0.8% growth.

6. **Population Density as Documented by the 2010 US Census.** *1 point maximum*
The average population density for Rhode Island during this time was 1155 persons per square mile. The table provided displays the population density by county. The factor scale is proportional between 100 for 2064 persons/square mile and 0 for 386 persons per square mile.
7. **Proximity To and Amount of Protected Farmland/Other Land.** *4 points maximum*
The amount of compatible use, permanently protected land that is adjacent, within 1 mile and within 2 miles of the parcel is scored. The parcel is benefited by other public and/or private efforts aimed at protecting farmland and minimizing the potential for incompatible development in agricultural areas by use of conservation easements or purchases of other "open space" properties. Measured from the proposed parcel boundary, the highest score applicable in any one column is used.
8. **Active Farmland within a 2 Mile Radius.** *7 points maximum*
Acreage of active farmland within 2 miles of the parcel boundary. Farmland that is part of an agricultural community is more likely to be actively farmed.

State Criteria Factors (50% of total score or maximum of 50 points)

9. **Compatibility of Adjacent Land Uses for Agriculture.** *12 points maximum*
The percent land in compatible land uses adjacent to the parcel are measured along the parcel boundary. High density residential development is considered an incompatible use. Adjacent uses can directly impact many aspects of the farming operation.
10. **Multifunctional Benefits. Is the Parcel Part of an Area of Recognized Special Concern or Environmental Value?** *15 points maximum*
Parcel contains, borders, or directly influences environmentally sensitive areas or has important ecological functions and values. Points are assigned based on use of various resource maps, including active agriculture map, scenic road designation map, public water supply watershed or ground water recharge zone map, threatened and endangered species map, and other commonly recognized greenways and corridors. Municipalities that actively support agricultural communities by contributing the the easement purchase will also receive points.
11. **Degree of Leveraging Guaranteed by Entity (entity share including bargain sale).** *8 points maximum*
Minimum to participate in the Federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program is 50% and receives a factor scale of 0. Leveraging entity dollars and/or negotiating a bargain sale that reduces the percentage NRCS pays for an easement will receive incremental factor scaling.