

Part 518 – Conservation Security Program

518.155 Technical Reference Document

D. Sign-Up 06-01, Tier III – Grazing Lands Monitoring Plans

The CSP 06-01 sign-up notice revised Tier III conservation standards – minimum level of treatment for grazing lands monitoring plans.

The 2006 CSP sign-up notice identifies that the applicant must demonstrate the agricultural operation is implementing a monitoring plan on their grazing lands to be eligible for a Tier III contract. The minimum components identified in the notice are:

- Grazing use records outlining grazing periods and numbers of animals in each grazing unit.
- Assessment, such as trend studies, similarity indices or rangeland health assessments, as well as photographs of resource conditions, and documentation of the condition of stream-banks and other sensitive areas.
- Target and actual utilization levels.

The grazing use records (referenced in bullets one and three above) identifying numbers of animals, grazing periods, utilization levels, and condition of stream-banks and other sensitive areas is information that is currently being collected as part of the benchmark inventory. Documentation for these components of the monitoring plan should be contained within the benchmark inventory.

In regards to the assessment/monitoring requirement (referenced in bullet two above), the applicant must demonstrate that they have some type of plan implemented. The Prescribed Grazing practice standard identifies development of a monitoring plan as a component of a grazing management plan. The CSP criteria now require that the monitoring plan be implemented.

During previous sign-ups, some states had implemented procedures to document the monitoring activities of applicants. This information will be sufficient to demonstrate the implementation of a monitoring plan. For those states that have not implemented any procedures, following is an example document for collecting this information. Any format can be utilized as long as the information collected demonstrates the applicant is implementing an assessment/monitoring plan.

The notice identifies a few assessment/monitoring activities. These were listed only as examples. Techniques can range from simple methods, such as identification and monitoring of key grazing areas and key grazing plants, photo monitoring, pace transects to monitor bare ground, grazing exclosures to monitor utilization, etc. to more detailed techniques such as line point transects, belt transects, soil tests for nutrient status, etc.

The methods do not have to be extremely precise. Utilizing the same methods and consistency over time is more important.

Any method that provides information for the applicant in assessing the impacts of current management and disturbances is acceptable. The information should be utilized by the applicant in making management decisions

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Monitoring/Assessment Locations

Provide the following information about the monitoring/assessment locations on your operation.

Management Unit	Monitoring Location (Sec T R , UTM, location identified on map)	Monitoring Method	Frequency of Monitoring

Paddock Identification:		Size:	Forage Species:			
Fertilizer Amount:		Type:	Date:			
Livestock		Date In	Forage Height	Date Out	Forage Height	Notes:
Number	Class					(Milk production, weather, etc.)