

**Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Program and AMA-RMA Ranking Guidance**

1. Authorized States must establish separate ranking pools, using National Ranking Template “AMA-General” or “AMA-RMA.”
2. States have the option to establish the High Tunnel System (practice code 325) through a State initiative ranking pool or as part of their State’s general ranking pool.
3. States have the option to establish beginning farmer or rancher (BFR), socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher (SDFR) or limited resource farmer or rancher (LRFR) as separate ranking pools or as part of their state’s general ranking pool.
4. Ranking Questions –
  - States should develop the program questions and resource questions using the following national priorities –
    - a. Reductions of nonpoint source pollutions, such as nutrients, sediment, pesticides, or excess salinity in impaired watersheds consistent with total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) where available, as well as the reduction of surface and ground water contamination.
    - b. Conservation of ground and surface water resources.
    - c. Reduction of emissions, such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxides (NOx), volatile organic compounds, and ozone precursors and depleters that contribute to air quality impairment violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards.
    - d. Reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation from unacceptable high levels on agricultural land.
    - e. Promotion of at-risk species habitat conservation.
  - States must not exceed 200 total points total for each category—program questions and resource questions.
5. Tie Breaker – States must use the efficiency score calculated in the CART ranking when a tie breaker is needed between one or more AMA applications. When using the tie breaker, NRCS will select the application with the highest efficiency score first.