



Conservation Programs & Practices for: Seasonal High Tunnels

About NRCS

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works with agricultural and forest producers to protect and conserve natural resources on our nation's private lands.

NRCS administers conservation programs funded primarily through the current Farm Bill (Agricultural Act of 2014), and offers financial and technical assistance to landowners to address high priority resource concerns through the implementation of conservation practices. Contact your local NRCS field office for assistance.

The 2014 Farm Bill

The 2014 Farm Bill, enacted on February 7, 2014, offers voluntary conservation programs that benefit both agricultural and forest producers and the environment.

The conservation provisions in the 2014 Farm Bill continue to build on the conservation gains made by U.S. citizens over the past decades and previous farm bills.

Contact NRCS:

Dover State Office:
603-868-7581

NH USDA Service Centers:

Concord: 603-223-6021
Conway: 603-447-2771
Epping: 603-679-1587
Lancaster: 603-788-4651
Milford: 603-673-2409
Orford: 603-353-4651
Walpole: 603-756-2988

Overview

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in New Hampshire is providing financial assistance for high tunnels through the EQIP and AMA programs. Seasonal high tunnels help farmers increase the availability of locally grown produce by extending the growing season. The FY16 payment rate for historically underserved farmers is \$4.55 per sq. ft., and \$3.80 per sq. ft. for all other applicants. For more information, check with USDA-NRCS or Conservation District Offices in your county.

Requirements

- Multiple tunnels and various sizes are permitted, providing that the width does not exceed 30 ft. There is no restriction on the length or total size of the tunnel.
- All tunnels must be gothic-shaped and be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions. All designs must be approved by NRCS using the criteria listed on NH 798 Job Sheet.
- Vegetables and fruits should be grown in the natural soil profile or in raised beds. Container crops are not permitted.
- Tunnels shall be installed on cropland with **suitable, natural soils**. Tunnels shall not be installed on steep slopes (>8%) or when shallow soil depth to ledge/bedrock or other extreme soil conditions do not allow posts to be embedded to the appropriate depth.
- Soil may be amended with artificial media (<10%), but shall not consist entirely of an artificial medium.
- Tunnel must be maintained according to NRCS specifications for a period of 4 years.
- Electricity, mechanical ventilation, and heating is allowed, but NRCS will not provide financial assistance for these items.
- The tunnel shall not be used to house livestock or farm equipment (e.g. tractors, field equipment).



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Why high tunnels?

Seasonal high tunnels provide conservation benefits, such as improved plant, water and soil quality, as well as reduced disease pressure.

High tunnels can lengthen the season for marketing local produce, which increases sustainability while lowering energy and transportation inputs.

An extended growing season and steady income can help small, limited resource, and organic farmers, and assist producers transitioning to specialty crops.

A seasonal high tunnel may help you address a natural resource concern by:

- improving plant quality
- improving soil quality
- reducing nutrient and pesticide transportation
- improving air quality through reduced transportation inputs
- reducing energy use by providing consumers with a local source of fresh produce

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP helps promote farm and forest production by enhancing the environmental quality of soil, water, air, plants and animals.

Who can apply?

- You must have control of the land (i.e., own the land or have a lease or rental agreement).
- You must have cropland for the high tunnel (includes hayland, pasture, vineyards and orchards). High tunnels shall not be installed on lawns, gravel pits, wetland, parking lots, brushy areas, forested or recently cleared areas.

How and when do I apply?

- Applications may be submitted anytime. All applications will be evaluated periodically in a competitive ranking process as funding becomes available. Ranking criteria is available on our website.
- To apply, you will need to file the following forms (also on our website):
 - Conservation Program Application (CCC-1200)
 - Adjusted Gross Income Certification (CCC-926)
 - Highly Erodible Land & Wetland Conservation Certification (AD-1026)
- A DUNS number, and registration and yearly renewal in the System for Award Management (SAM) will be required before contracts can be obligated and for payment eligibility determination.
- If your application is funded, you will be required to install and maintain your conservation practices according to NRCS standards.

Conservation Plans & Conservation Activity Plans

Your program application must be supported by an NRCS approved conservation plan, which provides documentation of the practices that could be used to address your natural resource concerns. We will work with you to develop an approved conservation plan.

You may also apply for financial assistance to hire Technical Service Providers (TSP) to develop a specialty plans called Conservation Activity Plans (CAP) to address certain land use activities or specific resource needs on your land.

Call your local NRCS field office or visit us online for more information.

Agriculture Management Assistance (AMA)

AMA helps mitigate risk through installing and maintaining conservation practices on the farm.

www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov