

Seasonal High Tunnels or “Hoop Houses”



What is a seasonal high tunnel?

A seasonal high tunnel is a polyethylene-covered structure, at least six feet in height, which modifies the climate inside to create more favorable growing conditions for vegetable and other specialty crops grown in the natural soil beneath it. These structures can be particularly beneficial in the north where it can add valuable weeks and even months to the growing season by protecting produce from chilly temperatures.

These tunnels are environmentally friendly, reducing the need for pesticides, herbicides and the cost of fertilizer while improving soil health and water quality. The extended growing period helps meet the increasing demand for local and sustainable foods, while increasing the profit margin for the grower.

NRCS can help!

NRCS has a Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative that is available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Assistance is available to plan and fund the construction of these hoop houses and supporting conservation practices.

Eligible producers may submit an application at any time. There are specified times throughout the year when these applications are ranked for funding. Check with your local NRCS office for these ranking periods.

Eligible applicants must be agricultural producers and in control of the land for the length of the contract period, typically two years.

Requirements:

Payment is limited to 2,178 sq.ft. at a rate of \$3.76/sq.ft. or if historically underserved groups the rate is \$4.51/sq.ft.

- Plantings directly into the soil or in raised beds of on-site soils
- NO planting in pots, on racks or growing media or utilizing hydroponics
- The tunnel frame needs to be at least 6 feet in height
- UV resistant cover - at a minimum, a 6 mil greenhouse grade polyethylene
- Electricity is allowed
- Irrigation systems allowed where needed
- Structure can be moved annually to a new location or cover crops can be used to maintain soils
- Producer repairs damages to maintain structure for the 4-year lifespan of the practice

List of Conservation Practices

- Critical Area Planting
- Diversion
- Grassed Waterway
- Irrigation System, Microirrigation
- Subsurface Drain
- Underground Outlet

For more information contact the NRCS office in your local USDA Service Center or visit www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov

