

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Seasonal High Tunnels

- Funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- EQIP is a voluntary program
- EQIP offers financial assistance to producers to address resource concerns
- Only eligible on cropland
- Participants must successfully complete the project and are reimbursed
- Applications are ranked to determine funding selections
- Programs are under continuous sign-up
- Cut-off dates are announced to establish funding periods

Eligibility for EQIP Funds

- Must be engaged in agricultural production
- Must own the land or have control of the land for the length of the contract
- Comply with wetland and highly erodible land provisions of the Farm Bill
- Meet U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) adjusted gross income (AGI) limits
- Must be established as an eligible producer within the USDA record system before applying for EQIP—visit your local USDA Service Center



Financial Assistance to Build A Seasonal High Tunnel

- Payment rates can be found at www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip and Practice Payment Schedule
- Historically underserved producers receive higher rates
- The NRCS maximum payment is for a total of 2,178 square feet of seasonal high tunnels per ag operation, regardless of the number of seasonal high tunnels installed

Seasonal High Tunnel Requirements

- Producer buys a seasonal high tunnel kit from a commercial manufacturer
- Producer constructs the seasonal high tunnel according to the maker's instructions and NRCS practice standard and specifications
- Must build on cropland
- Prepare the site including considerations for runoff and erosion control
- Crops must be planted directly into the soil
- Use a minimum of 6 mil greenhouse ultraviolet light resistant polyethylene cover
- Maintain for 4 years—farmer is responsible for maintenance costs
- Cannot be used for housing livestock



Basics of Seasonal High Tunnel Production



Seasonal High Tunnels

- Use a separate intense technology that allows crops to be planted several weeks earlier and later and eliminates considerable risk from weather and pests
- Structures that resemble some greenhouses in appearance only
- Plants are grown in the ground
- Many shapes and sizes

Advantages of Seasonal High Tunnels

- Greater plant yield potential
- Crop mix diversity
- Cost effective
- Reduced reliance on pesticides
- Compatible with organic production practices
- 4-8 weeks earlier production in the spring
- 2-5 weeks later possible production in the fall
- Grow crops not usually grown in the area
- Better disease control
- Water control
- Reduce cull fruit



Concerns of Seasonal High Tunnels

- Cost involved
- Education
- Time
- Planning
- Management



Yield Potential and Nutrient Need

- Yields in a seasonal high tunnel can be 3-4 times the yield obtained in the field
- Seasonal high tunnel yields will require more nutrients, but knowing how much to apply is a challenge

Common Mistakes Beginning Growers Make

- Tunnels get too hot—greater than 130° Fahrenheit
- Lack of weed control inside and out
- Poor water management
- Not pruning and trellising



For more information visit
<http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/>

NRCS is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

