

SEASONAL HIGH TUNNEL ASSISTANCE

Overview

NRCS provides assistance through the Seasonal High Tunnel initiative to extend the growing season for high value crops in an environmentally safe manner. The initiative improves plant quality, improves soil quality, reduces nutrient and pesticide transport, improves air quality through reducing transportation inputs, and reduces energy use by providing consumers with a local source of fresh produce.

High tunnels (also known as hoop houses) are structures that modify the growing climate, allowing for tender, sensitive, and specialty crops like certain varieties of vegetables, herbs, berries, and others to grow where they otherwise may not. High tunnels are constructed of metal bow frames with wood framed ends, at least six feet in height, and are covered with one or two layers of polyethylene.



NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

NRCS works with farmers and other people that own land to help them protect our natural resources – soil, water, wildlife, plants, and air. We help farmers develop a conservation plan for their farm and use conservation programs that protect these natural resources. NRCS helps Indiana farmers provide food and shelter for wildlife, reduce soil from eroding from their farm fields, and improve air and water quality.



HIGH TUNNEL CONSIDERATIONS

- * The land must currently be in agricultural production.
- * Approved applicants will receive financial assistance for a high tunnel and related additional conservation practices.
- * Electrical, heating or ventilation systems may be added to the high tunnel at the applicant's own expense.

- * The SHT must be planned, designed and constructed in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations, and any new resource issues created by the SHT must also be addressed.
- * Participating growers must help evaluate the effects of high tunnels on natural resources. You must complete a short questionnaire annually about nutrients and pesticides used, crop yields and crop season dates.

WHO CAN APPLY?

To qualify for the Natural Resources Conservation Service High Tunnel Cost-share program, you must:

- Be an agricultural producer.
- Install the high tunnel on existing cultivated land.



HOW DO I APPLY?

Contact your local USDA Service Center to speak to one of our District Conservationists to begin the program application process.

Information and application forms are available on our website:

www.in.nrcs.usda.gov



WHEN SHOULD I APPLY?

Applications may be submitted anytime.

- All applications will be evaluated periodically in a competitive ranking process as funding becomes available. Ranking criteria for each program is available on our website.
- Please call your local NRCS field office or visit us online to learn more.



WHAT WILL EQUIP PAY FOR?

NRCS provides financial assistance for high tunnels up to a maximum of five percent of one acre, or a total of 2,178 square feet. Landowners can purchase and install larger high tunnels, but NRCS will only pay for the first 2,178 square feet. Though payment is limited to 2,178 square feet, participants may install more high tunnels at their expense, or may already have high tunnels installed.

Plants must be planted in the ground or in permanent raised beds, not containerized. High tunnels may be planned to be in a fixed location or planned to be portable meaning rotated within or among eligible land under control of the participant.

Since water runoff from high tunnels can cause erosion, pooling and other environmental concerns, additional conservation practices may be installed as a condition for the installation of a high tunnel. These include:

- runoff management
- filter strips
- drain structures for water control
- critical area planting

Additional practices that might be considered as part of your conservation plan include nutrient management and integrated pest management, cover crop, and conservation crop rotation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.in.nrcs.usda.gov

