



Natural Resources Conservation Service
6200 Jefferson NE, Room 305
Albuquerque, NM 87109
Phone: (505) 761-4400 Fax: (505) 761-4463
Website: www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov

November 2, 2010

NEW MEXICO BULLETIN NO. 190-11-02

SUBJECT: ECS – SEASONAL HIGH TUNNEL SYSTEMS FOR CROPS

Required Annual Report for Interim Practice Standard
Seasonal High Tunnel System for Crops (798)
DUE DATE: DECEMBER 13, 2010

TO: All Field Offices

Purpose. To provide guidance on EQIP implementation of interim practice standard 798 – Seasonal High Tunnel Systems for Crops

Expiration Date. September 30, 2011

Background: A Seasonal High Tunnel is a polyethylene covered structure, at least 6 feet in height, which modifies the climate to create more favorable growing conditions for vegetable and other specialty crops grown in the natural soil beneath it. The High Tunnels are typically constructed of bow frames that are covered with a single layer of polyethylene. Ventilation is achieved by means of a combination of roll-up side vents and end vents. Generally, the end walls are framed in, to create door and ventilation areas. The High Tunnel structure covers several crop rows, is wide enough to allow crop growth to full maturity under the tunnel, and is tall enough to allow spraying, cultivation and harvest to occur with the tunnel intact. The tunnel cover is removed in the winter, unless the manufacturer's warrants the structure for snow loads.

This Interim Standard has been approved for use in NM under the EQIP National Organic Initiative as outlined in NB-190-10-10, Interim Practice Standard 798. This Interim practice standard is being used to field test a new technology. NM NRCS is participating in a national 3-year pilot to test the validity of potential conservation benefits of the Seasonal High Tunnel System through EQIP.

The purposes of this interim practices are: improve plant quality, improve soil quality, reduce nutrient and pesticide transport, improve air quality through reduced transportation inputs, and reduce energy use through local consumption.

During FY-2010 through FY-2012 the Seasonal High Tunnel structure must use only manufactured kits and be planned, designed, and constructed in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.

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Explanation: Interim Practice Standard Seasonal High Tunnel Systems for Crops (798) will require that the NM NRCS prepare an annual written evaluation of the interim conservation practice to National Headquarters. Participating producers should be made aware of this annual reporting requirement (annual reporting required for three years) and assist the Field Office in completing the attached NM NRCS Annual Report Form.

Reporting items, as per attached NM NRCS Annual Report Form, includes: Actual cost of seasonal high tunnel systems; maintenance requirements; reduction in use of nutrients and pesticides, compared to cropping history prior to installation; improvements in crop yield and growing season, compared to cropping history prior to installation; addressing water, soil and plants resource concerns and any additional recommendations and observations by producers.

Field Offices are to work with participating producers to complete the attached NM NRCS Annual Report Form for Seasonal Hoop Houses contracted and certified under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and submit your report to Rudy Garcia, State Agronomist, by **December 13, 2010, 2011 and 2012**. If no Seasonal High Houses were certified during the year, submit a negative report. During FY-2010 practice number 798, Seasonal High Tunnel, was planned in Bernalillo, Cibola, Dona Ana, Grant, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe, Sierra and Taos Counties.

If you have any technical questions, please contact Rudy Garcia, State Agronomist, at (505) 761-4424 or by e-mail at rudy.garcia@nm.usda.gov



DENNIS L. ALEXANDER
State Conservationist

Attachment:
NM Seasonal High Tunnel System for Crops 798 – Field Office ANNUAL REPORT Form