

## **Cliff Kinnibrugh, NRCS Conservation Agronomist San Angelo Zone Office**

### **Kinnibrugh Podcast Cut # 1**

#### **The benefits of high tunnels are listed.**

The benefits for a high tunnel for crops is the increase in plant health and vigor. Primarily what we are trying to do is to extend the growing season. For most people it's going to be for starting or establishing crops earlier in the growing season. And you can possibly take them further on into fall. Protect them from the first frost of the year. The other thing that it helps with is keeping the rain and sun from damaging the crops. One of the biggest benefits for a high tunnel as well as improving plant health and vigor is being able to have a market, or an earlier market for any type of product that they want to produce within the high tunnel itself.

### **Kinnibrugh Podcast Cut # 2**

#### **The differences between a high tunnel and a greenhouse are explained.**

The biggest difference between a tunnel and a greenhouse and is that seasonal high tunnels all the crops must be grown in the natural soil in comparison to a greenhouse where most of the time they have a concrete floor or they are grown on tables or benches or pots unlike a high tunnel which is covered for only a portion of the year and also a greenhouse is typically covered year round. So a high tunnel is more aimed toward producers who would only have it up for a set time of year say for the springtime or later on into the fall.

### **Kinnibrugh Podcast Cut # 3**

#### **Site selection is key to a successful high tunnel.**

Site selection is a key factor when number one planting. How big the high tunnel will be, you need to know where your irrigation sources are going to be. You need to know what your planned rotation is or what crop you are going to be growing. Whether that is an annually planted crop or a perennial crop such as an orchard of some type. The irrigation needs to be close to some sort irrigation source. You also need to look and see how big you are wanting to make them. Is it going to be a multibay system or just a single bay system you need to know what row direction if it's going to be facing and east and west or north and south? You need to know about your prevailing winds and how you are going to ventilate the system.

#### **Kinnibrugh Podcast Cut # 4**

##### **The distance between high tunnels is explained.**

The distance between the high tunnel systems can vary depending on the light transmission that you would like to have in it. Basically what you want to have is to have the structure far enough away from tall buildings or trees normally two times the height of the nearest structures. So if you have a 30 foot tree you would want to have it at least 60 feet away from that. That way you provide for the most sunlight transmission for the crops underneath the high tunnel.

#### **Kinnibrugh Podcast Cut # 5**

##### **Soils are important to a successful high tunnel system.**

The soils have a major effect as to where site selection is. Typically you would want to pick your most productive soils that you have on your property. Basically we are limited to anywhere we can grow crops in the natural ground.

#### **Kinnibrugh Podcast Cut # 6**

##### **Ventilation and wind direction are key elements as to where to place a high tunnel.**

When selecting a site and a direction to put the high tunnel you need to know what structure you are going to have for ventilation, whether it is a side roll up or if it is going to be ventilated from the end. This has a big effect on what type of structure you want to purchase. Generally the winds here in central Texas are typically from the south. The further west you go they tend to be more southwest, further east they become southeast. So a south facing structure, if it's ventilated from the ends the structure needs to facing north and south for proper ventilation. It all depends on what structure you select for installation.

#### **Kinnibrugh Podcast Cut # 7**

##### **The two types of high tunnels are discussed.**

The two primary types of high tunnels are the Gothic style and the Quonset style the big difference between the Quonset and the Gothic style is typically the Gothic will give a little more space towards the edge allowing for a space towards the edge allowing for a taller person to walk closer to the edge and grow crops closer towards the edge more so than a Quonset style structure.

#### **Kinnibrugh Podcast Cut # 8**

##### **Requirements for funding under EQIP are given.**

If a producer is selected for funding through our EQIP program some of the things that must be completed during the installation or are required during installation is a manufactured kit be purchased. All crops must be grown in the natural soil profile, a guttering system and/or some runoff control prevention structure must be implemented and the structure must be at least six feet tall to allow for normal farming practices to be done within the high tunnel system. If you're interested in high tunnels please contact your NRCS office for additional information.