

## Seasonal High Tunnel System for Crops

### FY 2011 Mississippi Program General Guidelines

**Participant must install a Seasonal High Tunnel System and agree to apply associated practices (if required) to be ranked in this funding pool.**

**Eligible crops:** vegetables, ornamentals, and fruit trees

**Eligible land:** This practice applies where crops have been grown for at least 2 out of the last 5 years. Basically land MUST be capable of being tilled at the time of application.

- ü The maximum size for financial assistance is 2,178 sq. ft. (Example size - 30 X70)
- ü Participants must be on record with the Farm Service Agency and meet all eligibility requirements including producer and land eligibilities.
- ü The tunnel side frame must be at least 6 feet in height with a minimum 6-mil UV resistant polyethylene cover.
- ü When at all possible, the structure should be installed in a North-South direction.
- ü Additional practices such as grassed waterway and critical area treatment may need to be planned to address potential erosion issues.
- ü **Adequate** water source must be present at the time of application.
- ü Operation and management will include control of internal temperatures during growing season, removal of plastic covers in the event of inclement weather which may compromise structure, and the account of cost associated with the high tunnel lifespan including replacement of covers and disposal of removed covers.
- ü Check out of the seasonal high tunnel system will be required before reimbursement is made to the participant.
- ü Participant agrees to maintain the structure for a period of at least 4 years and maintain a record system on at least an annual basis to document
  - o How long the structure extended the growing season?
  - o Was there an increase in production and by how much?
  - o What were the before and after rates of nutrient inputs applied prior to and following construction of the High Tunnel?
  - o What were the before and after rates of pesticide inputs applied prior to and following construction of the High Tunnel?
  - o Any other pertinent observations and evaluations.

#### **Eligible Conservation Practices:**

798 – Seasonal High tunnel

**Associated practices** - These are other cost-shared practices that can be planned to support the High tunnel practice as determined by the planner. They must be part of the conservation PLAN but not required in the contract.

328- Crop Rotation (Organic Only)      329- Crop Residue Management

441- Irrigation Water System (Micro)      340- Cover Crops                      342-Critical Area Stabilization

412-Grassed Waterway      590- Nutrient Management (Organic Only)                      595- Pest Management

**WELLS ARE NOT an eligible practice- Participant may apply for assistance under other ranking pools.**

**Other requirements:**

Structures cannot exceed 5% of one acre per operation roughly 2178 sq. ft (\$5,880 BASE cost cap / \$7,187 HU cost cap). **Participant must construct a “kit” type structure and other required components.**

Site selection is critical to prevent soil erosion from occurring. Crops must be planted into natural soil bed (not raised bed or pots). This includes field-grown ornamentals. This practice does not include greenhouses or low tunnel systems that may cover single crop rows. Note: These structures should not be referred to as greenhouses.

The following is the rate of compensation for practices associated with 798. For practices less than ½ acre, use ½ acre payment rate. If area is 1/2 to 1.0 acre, use 1 acre payment rate. For example- A critical area stabilization of 2/3 acre the planner would use 1 acre in the contract and plan. In most cases, light grading and shaping and vegetation only should be planned.

**Note: Since Seasonal High Tunnels are a pilot project, we are required to provide an annual report. Maintain receipts on these projects to determine the total costs and the manufacturer's instructions for installing the high tunnels.**

Participant must purchase a “kit” type structure and other required components. (**Metal framed and durable plastics** structures are eligible for financial assistance.)

Participant agrees to attending and completing required Educational training on Seasonal High Tunnel management.

**Participant must provide a copy of the manufacturer's design specifications of the house to the NRCS local District Conservationist to file in the office case file.**