

National Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative

Background: Through the EQIP Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative, NRCS will assist producers to extend the growing season for high value crops in an environmentally safe manner. The initiative has the potential to assist producers in addressing a resource concern by improving plant quality, improving soil quality, reducing nutrient and pesticide transport, improving air quality through reduced transportation inputs, and reducing energy use by providing consumers with a local source of fresh produce.

Approved land uses: This initiative is only applicable to Cropland land use.

Application Periods: Although applications for EQIP are accepted year-round, the following ranking period have been announced for Organic Initiative for FY2012:

- A. Period 1: Application cut-off is February 3, 2012. All eligible applications received to this date will be ranked and pre-approved for funding. Deadline to change application status to pre-approved is February 13, 2012.
- B. Period 2: Application cut-off is March 30, 2012. All eligible applications received to this date will be ranked and pre-approved for funding. Deadline to change application status to pre-approved is April 9, 2012.
- C. Period 3: Application cut-off is June 1, 2012. All eligible applications received to this date will be ranked and pre-approved for funding. Deadline to change application status to pre-approved is June 11, 2012.

Conservation Practices Eligible For Payment:

<u>Practice Code</u>	<u>Practice</u>
104	Nutrient Management Plan
114	Integrated Pest Management Plan
118	Irrigation Water Management Plan – Written
138	Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition
328	Conservation Crop Rotation
329	Residue Management
340	Cover Crop
342	Critical Area Stabilization
362	Diversion
412	Grassed Waterway
441	Irrigation System, Microirrigation
449	Irrigation Water Management
590	Nutrient Management
595	Pest Management
607	Surface Drainage, Field Ditch
798*	Seasonal High Tunnel System for Crops

*798 Structures cannot exceed 5% of one acre per operation roughly 2178 sq. ft. **Participant must construct a “kit” type structure and other required components.** (Only metal framed structures are eligible for financial assistance.) Maintain receipts on these projects to determine the total costs and the manufacturer’s instructions for installing the high tunnels. Payment will be limited to the 2178 sq. ft. per landowner/farmer/farm whichever is more restrictive to allow as many farmers as possible to participate.

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.

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The following is the rate of compensation for practices associated with 798. For practices less than $\frac{1}{2}$ acres, use $\frac{1}{2}$ acre payment rate. If area is $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1.0 acre, use 1 acre payment rate. For example: For a critical area stabilization of $\frac{2}{3}$ 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.