



United States Department of Agriculture

# NRCS High Tunnels and More

Liz Camps

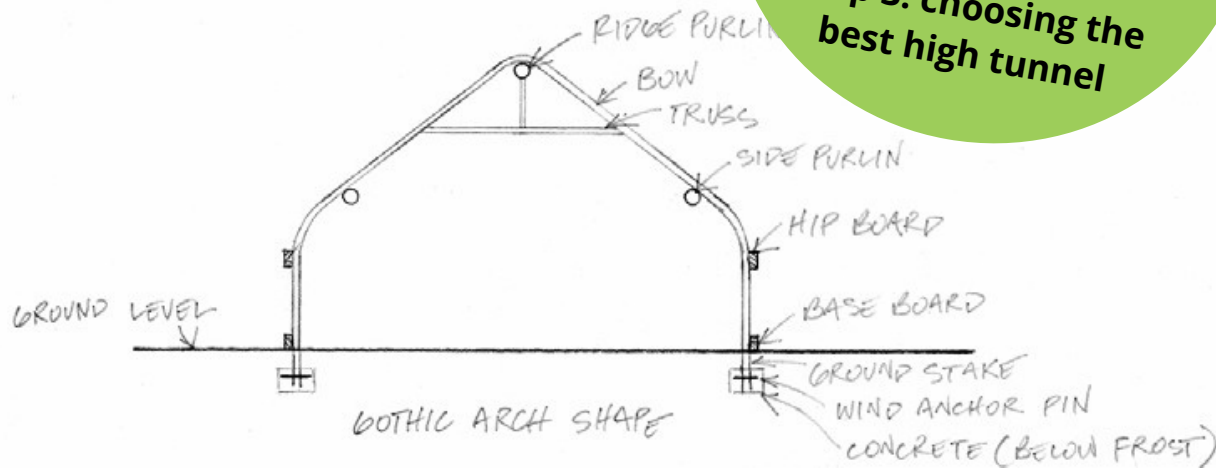
District Conservationist

**NRCS: Natural Resources Conservation Service, the primary federal agency that helps plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns or opportunities to help save energy, improve soil, water, plant, air, animal and related resources on agricultural lands.**

# Site Considerations

- Gothic Style **Best for snow!**
- 2,880 sqft. max **basically 30'x96'**
- 0-5% slope
- 6ft minimum peak of structure
- 15 -25ft on all sides and ends
- 6 mil plastic, UV resistance **Plastic should last at least 4 years**
- 12-14 gauge end post (depends on manufacture's recommendations)
- Crops on natural soil profile only **no benches, raised beds ok!**

High tunnels as a conservation practice  
 Step 1: site visit  
 Step 2: what resource concerns (erosion, etc.) can be addressed?  
 Step 3: choosing the best high tunnel



[Link to High Tunnel System Conservation Practice Standard](#) Standard, also on next slide!



HIGH TUNNEL SYSTEM

CODE 325

(sf)

Every conservation practice (there are over 200!) has a "standard" like this one. It lays out all the requirements to meet the practice.

**DEFINITION**

An enclosed polyethylene, polycarbonate, plastic, or fabric covered structure that is used to cover and protect crops from sun, wind, excessive rainfall, or cold, to extend the growing season in an environmentally safe manner.

**PURPOSE**

This practice is used to accomplish the following purpose:

- Improve plant health and vigor

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

This practice applies to land capable of producing crops. This practice applies where sun or wind intensity may damage crops, or where an extension of the growing season is needed due to climatic conditions.

The practice does not apply to crops not grown in the natural soil profile (i.e. tables/benches, portable pots, hydroponically, etc.).

**CRITERIA**

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

Plan supportive conservation practices to address all environmental concerns associated with the installation and use of the high tunnel systems such as erosion, irrigation, and runoff.

Crops must be grown in the natural soil profile. Raised beds may be installed to improve soil condition, fertility, and access. Raised beds are a maximum of 12 inches in depth.

The practice does not include greenhouses or low tunnel systems.

The practice cannot be used to provide shelter or housing for any livestock, or to store supplies or equipment.

Locate structures to avoid buried public utilities.

Locate the structure near a viable water source for irrigation.

The high tunnel structure must be planned, designed, and constructed from a manufactured kit in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations. The high tunnel frame must be constructed of metal, wood, or durable plastic; and be at least 6 feet in height at the peak of the structure. If required for enclosure, end wall covering may be greenhouse-grade plastic, polycarbonate, wood, or other. Use structures with the entry/exit point sized to facilitate movement of equipment and supplies needed for the production of planned crops.

NRCS reviews and periodically updates conservation practice standards. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact your Natural Resources Conservation Service State office or visit the Field Office Technical Guide online by going to the NRCS website at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/> and type FOTG in the search field.

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NRCS, NY  
November 2017



For 3-season  
high tunnels,  
you have to  
remove plastic  
in winter

# 3 Season HT

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# 3 Season HT

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4 Season HT –snow load

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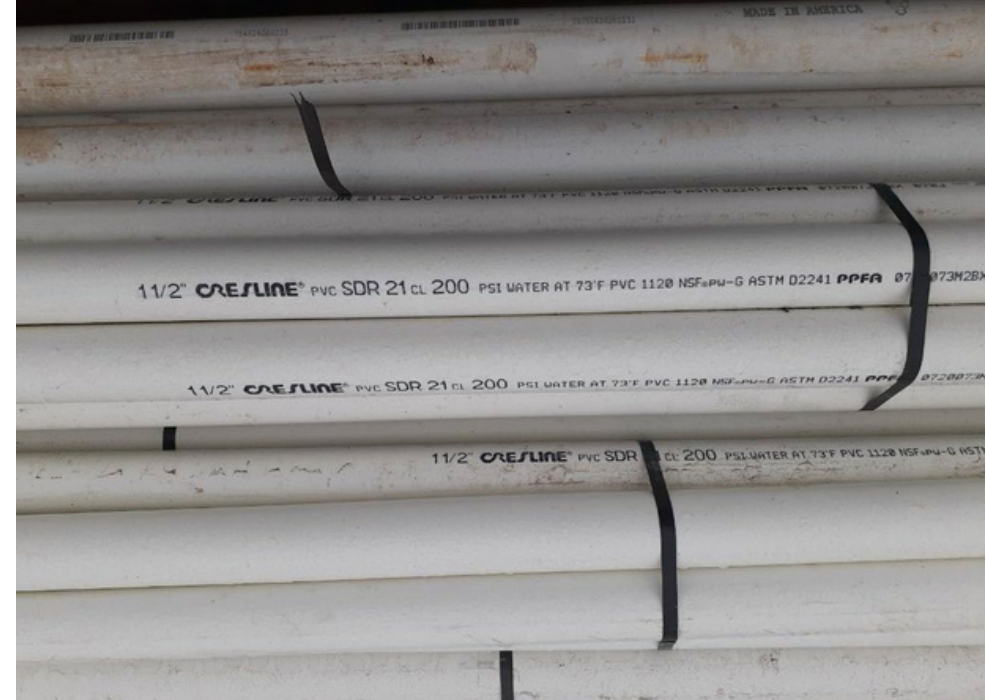
**Another  
conservation  
practice!**

# Cover Crops

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And another  
conservation  
practice!

# Irrigation







**NRCS will cost-share for these conservation practices at these rates**

# NRCS Funding (AMA & EQIP)

Practice Name	Component	Unit	Program/ Payment Rate	Unit Payment	Extent	Years in Contract	Total Payment	Notes	Practice Scenario Look UP
High Tunnel System	High Tunnel	Square Feet	AMA	\$3.43	2880	1	\$9,878.40	30x96	#16 - High Tunnel
High Tunnel System	High Tunnel	Square Feet	AMA-HU	\$4.11	2880	1	\$11,836.80	30x96	#16 - High Tunnel
High Tunnel System	Small High Tunnel, Snow and Wind	Square Feet	AMA	\$7.60	600	1	\$4,560.00	600sq or less (20X30)	#69 - Small High Tunnel, Snow and Wind
High Tunnel System	Small High Tunnel, Snow and Wind	Square Feet	AMA-HU	\$9.12	600	1	\$5,472.00	600sq or less (20X30)	#69 - Small High Tunnel, Snow and Wind
Cover Crop	Cover Crop - 1 acre or less	Acres	AMA	\$429.22	0.1	1	\$42.92		#58 - Cover Crop - 1 acre or less
Cover Crop	Cover Crop - 1 acre or less	Acres	AMA-HU	\$515.06	0.1	1	\$51.51		#58 - Cover Crop - 1 acre or less
Critical Area Planting	Small Scale or Urban Field Permanent Cover	1,000 Square Foot	AMA	\$14.01	1	1	\$14.01		#68 - Small Scale or Urban Field Permanent Cover
Critical Area Planting	Small Scale or Urban Field Permanent Cover	1,000 Square Foot	AMA-HU	\$16.82	1	1	\$16.82		#68 - Small Scale or Urban Field Permanent Cover
Irrigation Pipeline	PVC (Iron Pipe Size), 4 inches or less	Feet	AMA	\$5.77	100	1	\$577.00		#1 - PVC (Iron Pipe Size), 4 inches or less
Irrigation Pipeline	PVC (Iron Pipe Size), 4 inches or less	Feet	AMA-HU	\$6.92	100	1	\$692.00		#1 - PVC (Iron Pipe Size), 4 inches or less
Irrigation System, Microirrigation	Seasonal High Tunnel Micro Irrigation System	Square Feet	AMA	\$0.08	600	1	\$48.00		#12 - Seasonal High Tunnel Micro Irrigation System
Irrigation System, Microirrigation	Seasonal High Tunnel Micro Irrigation System	Square Feet	AMA-HU	\$0.10	600	1	\$60.00		#12 - Seasonal High Tunnel Micro Irrigation System
Irrigation System, Microirrigation	Small Microirrigation System	Square Feet	AMA	\$0.66	800	1	\$528.00		#48 - Small Microirrigation System
Irrigation System, Microirrigation	Small Microirrigation System	Square Feet	AMA-HU	\$0.79	800	1	\$632.00		#48 - Small Microirrigation System
Mulching	Natural Material - Full Coverage	Acres	AMA	\$396.38	0.1	1	\$39.64		#1 - Natural Material - Full Coverage
Mulching	Natural Material - Full Coverage	Acres	AMA-HU	\$475.66	0.1	1	\$47.57		#1 - Natural Material - Full Coverage

**HU: Historically Underserved**  
Payment rates are higher for farmers who are BIPOC, veteran,  
limited income, or beginning farmers (less than 10 years)



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FSA: Farm Service Agency,  
processes all eligibility  
paperwork

# NRCS & FSA Eligibility

- NRCS Application –CPA-1200
- Customer Data Worksheet AD-2047
- Members information CCC-901/902
- Average Adjusted Gross Income CCC-941
- For non-for-profits <https://www.guidestar.org/>

Tax-exempt Organization – the adjusted gross income is the unrelated business taxable income excluding any income from non-commercial activities as reported to the IRS.

- Highly Erodible Land Conservation & Wetland Conservation Certification (HELC) AD-1026
- Landowner Concurrence Form CPA-1247
- Direct Deposit Form SF1199A

[Link to Service Center Agencies eForms](#)

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**Businesses that make  
over \$900k not eligible**



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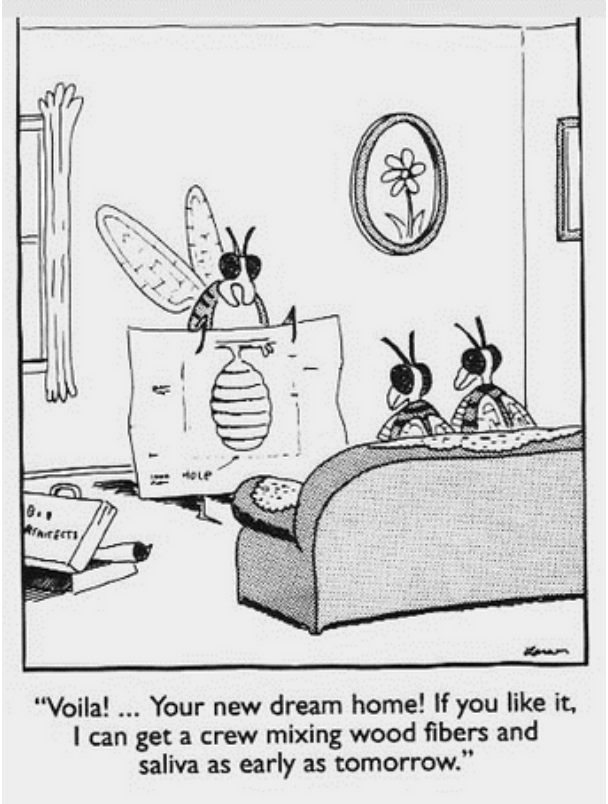
# Contact

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FSA





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