

## Maintaining Your High Tunnel

Your high tunnel will require maintenance, especially in the winter. Snow needs to be removed to prevent collapse. Those that have collapsed near Homer have not been from plastic rips but from poles bending. You may remove plastic for the winter. Maintenance is required for 4 years. Soil tests, fertilizing, lime, and pest control (insects and weeds) are necessary for the 4 years. You are responsible for repairs to your high tunnel.

Heat and electricity are now allowed in your high tunnel regardless of the year you signed up.



# USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

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## USDA HIGH TUNNELS



Homer NRCS

Telephone: 907-235-8177 ext. 3

## Before You Apply

The High Tunnel program is a 3 year pilot program. 2012 will be the final year of funding unless it becomes a permanent part of the EQIP program. It is designed to extend the producer's growing season by up to 3 weeks in cold climates. It is not a program to put non-producers in the business of growing produce.

- You must have control of the land for the life of the contract (5 years) through a deed of ownership or a lease
- You must certify as a producer, having produced \$1000 worth of food 2 of the last 5 years. You could have consumed it, given it away or sold it
- The high tunnel location must cover land that is currently in agricultural production, cropland, hay or pasture. You cannot place it on a treed area that you cleared for the high tunnel. The ground must be plowed up and ready to plant when you sign the application. No more than 3% slope

## Applying For A High Tunnel

Fill out, sign and date the:

- \* application
- \* direct deposit form
- \* highly erodible sheet
- \* ag self-certification form
- \* average adjusted income statement
- \* lease information

Must be submitted to our office by June 15, 2011.

## Getting Funded

The High Tunnel Program is very popular and there may not be enough money to fund all the applications. Applications are randomly selected as money becomes available to fund them. You are not funded until a contract is signed. Once signed you have one year to commence (start) the practice.



## Payment For Your High Tunnel

Paid on a square foot basis. \$4.86 per square foot to a maximum of \$ 10,585. High tunnel kits

may cost upwards of \$10,000. Advance payment of 30% is available. Some companies will allow delayed payment or assignment of payment.

## Selecting A High Tunnel

You must purchase your high tunnel as a kit. You may not build your own. An internet search for "high tunnel" will give you many options.

### High Tunnel Kit:

Polyethylene 6 mil thick. min.

Poles spaced 4 ft. max.

Center height is 6 ft. min.

Be sure and bring the info on the kit to the NRCS office to have it looked over and ensure it will meet the specifications. If not, you will not be reimbursed for it.

The plastic must be made of polyethylene (specifically not polycarbonate.) It must be a minimum of 6 mil thick. The poles must be no more than 4 feet apart. The tunnel must have a 6 foot minimum center (many are over 12'). End caps are required, either from the kit or you may construct them with polycarbonate or the flexible polyethylene.