

NRCS EQIP High Tunnel Review and Update

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2013 EQIP High Tunnel Offering

- 2013 was the fourth year of the USDA/NRCS Seasonal High Tunnel Program!
- An EQIP offering targeted to small farms, beginning, limited resource, organic, and historically underserved producers
- “to increase the availability of locally grown produce in a conservation-friendly way”

What is EQIP?

- Environmental Quality Incentive Program
- Provides financial assistance to eligible producers to try “new” conservation practices on their land
- Continuous sign-up with a cut-off date
- Competitive process (applicants are ranked)
- **MUST FOLLOW NRCS PRACTICE STANDARDS and PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

Financial Assistance

Through EQIP, in 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013 USDA provided financial assistance to producers to purchase a Seasonal High Tunnel!!!

EQIP High Tunnel Payments

- Payments based upon average costs of the kit
- Payments made off a “Payment Schedule” based on a value per square foot
- Maximum size paid on is 5% of an acre (2178 square feet)

2013 Recap--Iowa

Total High Tunnels Obligated

53

(31 in 2010, 63 in 2011, 86 in 2012)

all 53 non-organic

2013 Recap--Kansas

Total High Tunnels Obligated **58**
(50 in 2010, 42 in 2011, 19 in 2012)
All 58 non-organic

2013 Recap--Missouri

Total High Tunnels Obligated
161

(152 in 2010, 122 in 2011, 184 in 2012)
Certified Organic **2**
Transitioning to Organic **3**
Non-organic **156**

2013 Recap--Nebraska

Total High Tunnels Obligated

22

(3 in 2011, 16 in 2012)

All 22 SHT were non-organic

2013 Recap—South Dakota

Total High Tunnels Obligated

27

(3 in 2011, 24 in 2012)

All 27 non-organic

EQIP Organic Initiative - Producers

- Certified organic **producers** must provide NRCS with a copy of their Organic System Plan (OSP) and Organic certification must be maintained for the life of the contract.

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EQIP Organic Initiative - Producers

- Transitioning to Organic must self-certify that they agree to develop and implement an OSP and provide NRCS the contact information of the applicant's USDA accredited organic certifying agent before an EQIP contract can be approved.
- Organic producers selling less than \$5,000 a year in organic agricultural products are exempt from organic certification. Exempt organic producers are eligible for the EQIP Organic Initiative. Applications will be ranked with certified organic producers provided that they self-certify that they agree to develop and implement an OSP.

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2014 Requirements

- **Must be constructed using manufactured kits**
- Minimum 6 mil UV-resistant greenhouse grade plastic
- Minimum height of 6 feet
- Crop must be grown in the soil profile (no pots, benches, etc)
- Must be on land eligible for Farm Bill Programs (FSA)
- Must be installed on eligible “cropland”

2014 Requirements

- Must be an edible crop
- Electricity, permanent heating, and mechanical ventilations systems are allowed
- Production doesn't have to sold, can be for home consumption

Life Span Requirement

Each EQIP Practice has a life span. The life span for Standard 798 is 4 years. Therefore, **the High Tunnel must be maintained to the standard for 4 years.**

BIG SNOWS

About 20" fell on February 2-3, 2011 in Central Missouri!

About 12" fell over most of the rest of the state
excluding the bootheel

44 were completed, 2 collapsed

What did we learn?

- Snow accumulation pronounced in protected areas
- Be prepared to brace ribs
- Be prepared to "loosen" snow from inside
- Supplemental heat could help
- Obtain advice from the manufacturer

How Do I Apply?

- Go to your local USDA Service Center and tell them you want to apply for a high tunnel in the EQIP program
- Phone Book (US Government) or <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>
- Complete the application form NRCS-CPA-1200
- After completing the application, if you have never participated in Farm Bill Programs, you will go to the Farm Service Agency (FSA)

The deadline to apply for the current ranking period is:

Missouri and Iowa
February 21, 2014

The deadline to apply for the next ranking period is:

Kansas

February 21, 2014 and

April 18, 2014

The deadline to apply for the current ranking period is:

Nebraska

Jan. 17, 2014

The deadline to apply for the current ranking period is:

South Dakota
February 14, 2014



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