



2011 Annual Report

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Seasonal High Tunnels Pilot

This report contains fiscal year activity for the state of Colorado from the time period of October 2010 to September 2011.

Who We Are

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to help agricultural producers and others care for the land. NRCS has six mission goals that include high quality, productive soils; clean and abundant water; healthy plant and animal communities; clean air; an adequate energy supply; and working farms and ranchlands.

Vision

Productive Lands -
Healthy Environment

Mission

Helping People Help the Land

“Seasonal High Tunnels allow me to produce in the winter and be a year-round grower during the time of year when traditionally no one is producing.”

Landowner

Fiscal Year 2011 Seasonal High Tunnels Pilot Program

Statewide Activities

Number of Applications Contracted	49
Dollar Amount Approved.....	\$281,316
Acres under Contract	185

The Program

The Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative is a voluntary program under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers.

The goal of the initiative is to assist producers with extending the growing season for high value crops in an environmentally safe manner.

The initiative can assist producers with improving plant and soil quality, reducing nutrient and pesticide transportation, improving air quality through reduced transportation inputs, and reducing energy use by providing consumers with a local source of fresh produce.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include individuals, legal entities, Indian Tribes or joint operations engaged in agricultural production.

Producers who grow agricultural commodities on eligible land and have resource concerns which may be addressed by a seasonal high tunnel may participate in the new Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative.

Eligible producers interested in entering into a financial assistance agreement with NRCS for EQIP assistance may file an application at their local USDA Service Center at any time.

Applicants must:

- Be an agricultural producer and have control of eligible land for the term of the proposed contract period.
- Be in control of eligible land such as cropland.
- Be in compliance with the provisions for protecting the interests of tenants and sharecroppers, including the provisions for sharing EQIP payments on a fair and equitable basis.
- Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation compliance provisions of the 2008 Farm Bill.
- Be within appropriate payment limitation requirements, as specified in the 2008 Farm Bill.
- Be in compliance with adjusted gross income requirements of the 2008 Farm Bill.

Payment Limitations

Program payments are limited to \$300,000 a person or entity for all contracts entered into during any six-year period. This limitation includes unpaid prior year contract obligations as of October 1, 2008, as well as new contract obligations. Payments received for technical assistance are excluded from this limitation.

For More Information

Visit our web site at www.co.nrcs.usda.gov.



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NRCS CONSERVATION PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY

Greeley Field Office Takes Customer Service to New Heights

When Sarah and Anthony Zamora became proud EQIP participants in the Seasonal High Tunnel pilot program, they were anxious to get the structure up and in use.

The funding came a little later than they expected, but as soon as they got the ok, they ordered the 30 x 72 foot model. By the time they got the frame erected, they became proud parents of a bouncing baby boy. Contrary to popular belief, this did not add one to the work force, it left Anthony short his number one helper, Sarah.

Ray Mowery, District Conservationist, NRCS Greeley Field Office, asked Anthony how many people it takes to install a sheet of plastic large enough to cover the sizable hoop house. The answer was: "As many as NRCS can provide." Ray thought this would be a great field training opportunity, so he volunteered the Greeley Field Office staff.

The end covers on this model are heavy woven plastic with zipper doors that required 4 to 5 people to lift up into place and fasten with clips. After both ends were installed, it was time to unroll and unfold the giant sheet of plastic to cover the frame.

With 6 people and a little help from Mother Nature, no wind, it was a breeze! Mother Nature knew there were too many conservationists around to blow this project.

The High Tunnel will be used to protect and extend the growing season for tomatoes and an assortment of produce provided to member growers and local Farmer Markets.



Hoop House ends installed.



Hoop House cover on.



Hoop House construction crew (left to right): Ray Mowery, District Conservationist; Will Owsley, SCEP student; Kyle Bobst, West Greeley Conservation District; Anthony Zamora, Farmer; and Levi Sievers, Soil Conservationist Technician. Not Pictured: Kari Easley, BMLP-Photographer.