



Natural Resources Conservation Service
Suite 340, One Credit Union Place
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17110-2993
Phone: (717) 237-2200
Fax: (717) 237-2238

SUBJECT: Technical Guide Notice 153

DATE: November 30, 2010

TO: All Holders of the PA Technical Guide

FILE CODE: 450-11

Purpose:

To release revised technical materials for the interim national conservation practice Seasonal High Tunnel Systems for Crops including Interim Standard 798, its related Job Sheet, Statement of Work, Checkout Document, Practice Information Sheet, and an Annual Evaluation Report required to carry out a pilot study of the interim practice.

Background:

Pennsylvania agreed to pilot the interim national conservation practice standard 798 Seasonal High Tunnel Systems for Crops in Fiscal Year 2010, and is currently in the second year of the pilot phase. The technical material for the interim practice has been revised. Following the release of the revised material, the interim standard will continue to be evaluated for its effects on resource concerns through the pilot study during the next 2 years. Field Offices are encouraged to promote the interim practice and participate in the pilot study.

Changes:

The purposes of this practice have been revised to:

- 1) Improve plant quality
- 2) Improve soil quality
- 3) Reduced nutrient and pesticide transport
- 4) Improve air quality through reduced transportation inputs
- 5) Reduce energy use through local consumption

This practice is for a crop production system and can now be constructed using a double layer of plastic covering, as long as the plastic is, at minimum, a 6 mil-greenhouse-grade, UV resistant polyethylene.

Electric and supplemental heating are now allowed to be used within the structure. Mechanical ventilation systems can also be installed in, or used as part of the management of the system.

Please note that the payment rates for 798 have not changed since last year. While a double layer of plastic covering, electric, supplemental heating, and mechanical ventilation systems are allowed to be installed by the producer in conjunction with the high tunnel practice, NRCS is not paying for these items. The producer is responsible for all costs associated with these items.

The practice still does not apply to greenhouses, low tunnel systems that cover single crop rows, or crops grown on tables, benches, portable pots, containers, etc.



Access Instructions:

The Pennsylvania eFOTG can be accessed at the following web address and then selecting the appropriate county. http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/efotg_locator.aspx?map=PA

The Pennsylvania eFOTG Section Table of Contents can be accessed *directly* at the following:
Section IV Conservation Practices and Specifications
<http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/toc.aspx?CatID=12487>

The official version of the FOTG is what appears in Pennsylvania's eFOTG.

/S/

DENISE COLEMAN
State Conservationist