



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Conservation with High Tunnels

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

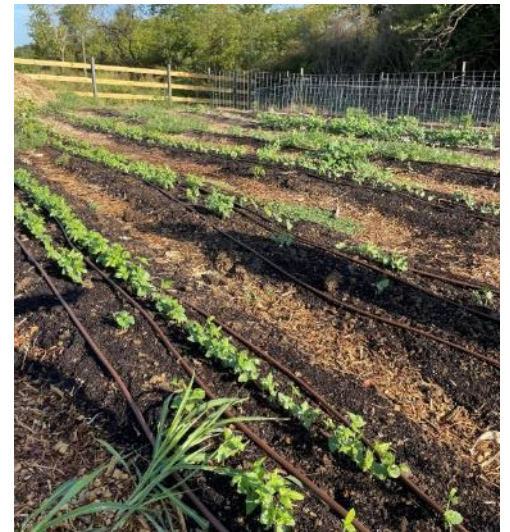
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

- Began as the Soil Conservation Service in 1935 in response to the Dust Bowl
- The mission is to deliver conservation solutions so agricultural producers can protect natural resources and feed a growing world
 - Technical and financial assistance
- All programs are voluntary and offer science-based solutions that benefit the landowner/land manager, and the environment
- Approximately 2,300 Service Centers in communities nationwide
 - Serving all 75 Arkansas counties



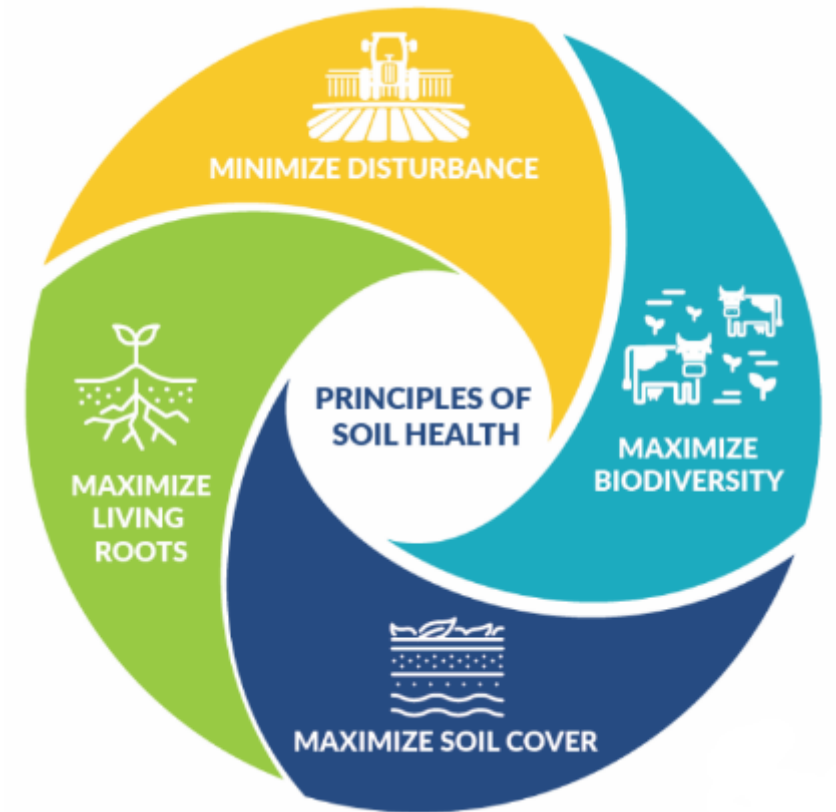
Conservation Planning

- Collaboration between the customer and the conservation planner – free service
- Identify the customer's conservation objectives
- Assess and analyze the natural resource concerns and issues on the customer's land related to soil, water, animals, plants, air, and energy
 - Field visit
- NRCS recommends conservation practices
- Customer chooses options and conservation plan is developed by the conservation planner



Conservation Planning

- Benefits include:
 - Addressing plant productivity and health
 - Enhancing wildlife habitat
 - Increasing irrigation water use efficiency
 - Reducing soil erosion
 - Improving soil health
 - Continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans





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Conservation Practices



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High Tunnels

- This practice applies where:
 - an extension of the growing season is desired
 - plants need protection from the sun, wind, rain, cold temps
 - goal is to improve plant health
- Applies to land capable of producing crops:
 - Not for crops grown outside of the natural soil profile (i.e. not for tables/benches, portable pots, hydroponics, etc.)
 - Enough sunlight
 - Good drainage
 - Soil testing shows suitable soil (with reasonable amending)



High Tunnels

- Check with the HOA/local zoning or planning department to ensure it is possible to install a high tunnel on the proposed location
- High tunnel structure must be planned, designed, and constructed from a manufactured kit following manufacturers' recommendations
- Must meet Arkansas Standards and Specifications
 - Available from your local office

NRCS high
tunnel
video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmgkVxLTAJk>



High Tunnel Requirements

- Gothic style tunnels with post spacing of 4 feet apart
- Width: minimum 10 feet, maximum 30 feet
- All high tunnels over 24 feet wide must have V-trusses or W-trusses
- Minimum 14 ga. metal for frame construction
- Minimum 6 feet in height at the roof line of the structure
- Roll up/drop down sidewall curtains
- Minimum 6-mil greenhouse-grade-UV resistant polyethylene film with 4-year lifespan



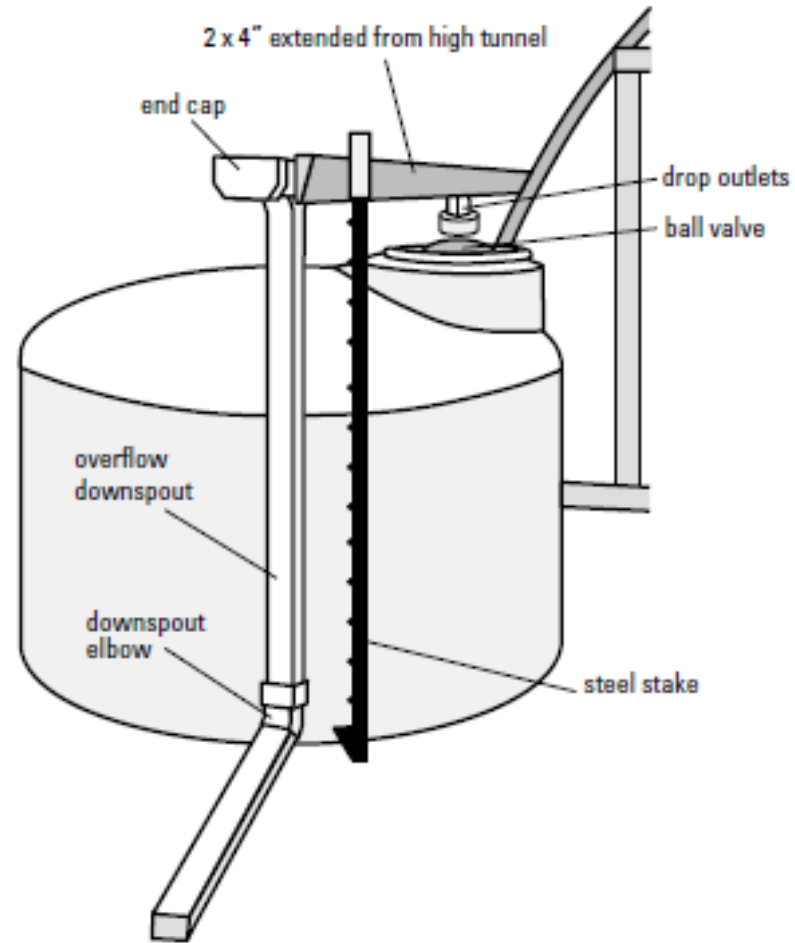
Supporting Practices

- Crop rotation
- Cover crops
- Mulching
- Low tunnels
- Compost application
- Pollinator plantings
- Microirrigation
- Irrigation Pipeline



Supporting Practices

- Rainwater catchment



<https://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/13734>

Building a
rainwater
catchment
system
video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XsxRZQR_7VU





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Financial Assistance



Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- NRCS provides agricultural producers with one-on-one help and financial assistance to plan and implement conservation practices
- Financial assistance is intended to cover part of the cost of implementing conservation practices
- Applications are accepted throughout the year at your local office
- Competitive process based on multiple factors, including addressing resource concerns
- If application is selected for funding: enter into a contract
- Payments are made after NRCS certifies completion of the practice



Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- Applicant must:
 - Be an agricultural producer
 - Owner or renter
 - Have an interest in the products produced
 - Control of the land for the term of the proposed contract
- Eligible land:
 - Privately owned land
 - Indian or Tribal land
 - Publicly owned land in certain cases
- Address at least one resource concern



Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- There's no minimum agricultural income requirement to participate in NRCS programs
- Size and location of the production are not barriers for program eligibility. Anyone who is producing food, fiber, livestock, or other agricultural products at the time they apply may be considered an agricultural producer
- When installing irrigation-related practices, the land must be irrigated 2 out of the last 5 years
 - Any form of irrigation is acceptable, as well as the source



Historically Underserved (HU)

- Beginning Farmer/Rancher
 - Have not operated a farm for more than 10 consecutive years
- Socially Disadvantaged Farmer/Rancher
 - Member of a group who has been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identify as a member of that group
- Veteran Farmer/Rancher
 - Individual who served in the armed forces, was released from service under conditions other than dishonorable, and
 - Qualifies as a beginning farmer or
 - First obtained veteran status during the last 10 years
- Limited Resource Farmer/Rancher
 - Based on gross farm sales and household income
 - Online Tool: <https://lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/Default.aspx>

[HU Guide](#)



Farm Service Agency (FSA)

- Establish a farm record to be eligible for many of the financial assistance opportunities with FSA and NRCS.
- FSA also has other opportunities such as:
 - Microloans
 - Farm storage facility loans
 - Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program
 - County Committees
 - <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/county-committee-elections/index>

FSA Loans



www.farmers.gov/loans



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Additional Resources



Farmers.gov

How Can Farmers.gov Help You Today?

If a statement below describes your interests, select "Yes" to see related resources. To move on to other topics, select "No."

1 I'm a beginning farmer or rancher looking to start or expand my operation.

USDA considers anyone who has operated a farm or ranch for less than ten years to be a beginning farmer or rancher.

Yes

No



Popular Topics

[How to Start a Farm](#) >

New to farming? Veteran looking to start a farm? USDA can help with resources specifically designed for beginning farmers and ranchers.

[Underserved Producers](#) >

A complete guide to USDA resources for historically underserved farmers and ranchers to ensure equitable access to services.

[Urban Growers](#) >

Are you gardening or farming in an urban environment? USDA can help you start and grow your operation.

Farmers.gov









www.farmers.gov/

Conservation Concerns Tool

Identify and Get Help with Conservation Issues

Learn about different types of conservation issues that might impact the productivity or natural resources on your farm, ranch, or forest by exploring the topics below.

You can also build a list of concerns to discuss with a local USDA conservation specialist.

 Animals Inability to meet livestock or wildlife habitat needs >	 Energy Reduced energy efficiency for equipment of field operations >
 Soil Soil erosion, soil quality degradation, or soil health >	 Water Excess water, insufficient water, or water quality issues >
 Plants Reduced health or quality of plants >	 Air Air quality issues such as greenhouse gases or odors >

Conservation Concerns Tool



www.farmers.gov/conservation/concerns-tool

Farmers.gov

Small-scale Producers

USDA is committed to equity in the delivery of programs and resources and creates opportunities for small-scale producers to access products that helps meet their unique management needs. No matter the size of your operation or the crop being produced, our programs can help you start, grow, and protect your operation. Start by learning how programs can serve you, reading about how other producers have used USDA programs for their operations, and getting connected to local USDA staff who can support you.

On This Page

- [Programs and Services](#)
- [Conservation for Small-scale Producers](#)
- [Working With Us](#)
- [Get Involved](#)
- [Additional Resources](#)

Small-scale
Producers



[www.farmers.gov/
your-
business/small-
scale-producers](http://www.farmers.gov/your-business/small-scale-producers)

Farmers.gov



Find Your Local Service Center

Ver en: [Español](#)

[USDA Service Centers](#) are locations where you can connect with Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or Rural Development employees for your business needs. Enter your state and county below to find your local service center and agency offices. If this locator does not work in your browser, please visit offices.usda.gov.

Learn more about our [Urban Service Centers](#).

Visit the Risk Management Agency website to find a [regional or compliance office](#) or to find an [insurance agent](#) near you.

State

County

GO

Get Started at
Your USDA
Service Center



www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/USDA-service-centers

Handouts

Establishing Eligibility for USDA Programs

and steps for program application



Forms Needed to Apply

If you have never worked with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and don't have a farm and tract number, you will need to make an appointment with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) at your local USDA Service Center to establish eligibility for USDA programs. You can find your service center by visiting [offices.sc.gov.usda.gov/locator/app](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/locator/app).

You will need to bring the following information to the appointment:

- Proof of Identity — you may be required to show a valid state driver's license, passport, or other personal identification, as well as provide your Social Security or Employer Identification (EIN) numbers, address, and other related information.
- Farm location information.
- Copy of the property deed or lease agreement.
- Copy of the articles of incorporation, bylaws, legal power of attorney, or partnership paperwork, if applicable.

Forms Available at USDA Service Center

- Form AD 1026 — Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification
- Form CCC 941 — Average Adjusted Gross Income Certification and Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information
- Form CCC 901 — Members' Information for entity and joint operations only
- Form CCC 902-1 — Farm Operating Plan for an Individual

- Form CCC 902-E — Farm Operating Plan for an Entity
- Form AD 2047 — Customer Data Worksheet for new producers or to update an existing customer record.

It takes time for the paperwork to be processed and additional information may be needed. Please start this process early to ensure you are eligible prior to any program sign-up cutoff dates. If you apply for a USDA program and the system does not show you or your entity as eligible, your application will not be processed or funded.



Confidential and Private Information

Many of the program application forms or documentation require the applicant to provide sensitive contact, financial or other confidential information. Disclosure of this data is voluntary, but failure to provide the required information may result in the deferral of an application or denial of a benefit payment. By law and policy, 'confidential, private and sensitive information' is protected by USDA. USDA employees and partners are subject to penalty and disciplinary action for inappropriate or mismanagement of private data.

For More Information

If you would like more information about Farm Bill Program opportunities, visit www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/farm-bill and the Arkansas NRCS website www.nrcs.usda.gov/arkansas.

For more information about USDA-NRCS program eligibility or applying for a program, please contact your local NRCS office. You can find your local NRCS office by visiting [offices.sc.gov.usda.gov/locator/app](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/locator/app).

AskUSDA is a central entry point for you to access information and help from USDA:

AskUSDA.gov
1-833-ONE-USDA
askusda@usda.gov

Urban/Small Farm Practices

Arkansas NRCS Conservation



Conservation practices help improve soil health, reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, and provide other natural resource benefits.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service-Arkansas

No matter the size of your operation, having the knowledge you need to conserve, maintain, and restore the natural resources on your farm is a powerful tool. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can help urban and small farmers create a conservation plan that can serve as a road map towards improving the health and resiliency of your operation.

A conservation plan can enable you to make educated decisions for your farm, keep you from making costly management mistakes, and possibly help qualify you for financial programs.

The way we manage our soil has a greater impact on its ability to function than any other factor. Productive and resilient land can be obtained by using a soil health management system that incorporates these four simple principles:

- Minimizing disturbance from tillage and over-grazing.
- Maximizing soil cover with residues and living plants.
- Maximizing diversity with crop rotations and cover crops.
- Maximizing living roots year-round with crops, forages, and cover crops.

Benefits can include increased soil organic matter, improved resilience to drought and floods, improved nutrient cycling and overall increased profits.

This fact sheet lists some of the common conservation practices that will help address natural resource concerns on your urban/small farm. To learn more about the assistance available for your farm and how to get started, visit your local USDA NRCS office. We can help you make the right choices to protect and improve your land and other natural resources.



AUGUST 2023

Helping People Help the Land

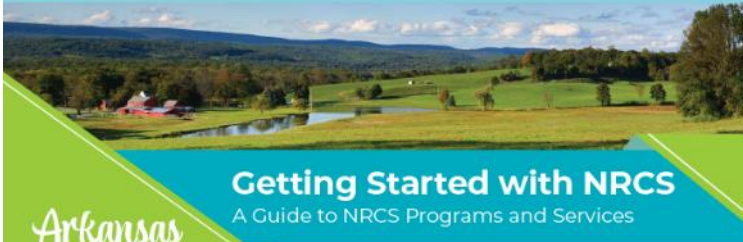
ARKANSAS



AUGUST 2023

Helping People Help the Land

ARKANSAS



Getting Started with NRCS

A Guide to NRCS Programs and Services

Arkansas

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Thank you for your interest in working with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to help you manage your natural resources in a sustainable manner!

This guide will help you understand how NRCS can provide voluntary technical and financial assistance as you prepare to work with us for the first time. Whether you are new to farming or just new to working with USDA, NRCS can help you achieve your conservation goals. More information can be found at www.nrcs.usda.gov/arkansas. To learn more about the variety of programs across USDA, visit www.farmers.gov or call 833-ONE-USDA.

Your first step should be to contact your USDA Service Center and make an appointment. You can search for the nearest office online: <https://offices.sc.gov.usda.gov/locator/app>. Be sure to ask what documents you'll need to bring with you. Also consider, what is your vision for your land and farm? What are your challenges?

Need information in a language other than English? We offer free translation services, so please let your local office know when setting up your appointment.



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- Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.
- USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Thank you!

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Message Alerts**

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