



# KNOW YOUR FARMER KNOW YOUR FOOD

Locally grown food is one of the fastest growing segments of agriculture. Consumer demand in the U.S. is expected to rise from \$4 billion in 2002 to \$7 billion by 2012. But today, many mid-size family farms are disappearing. The USDA's new **Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food** Initiative focuses on cultivating new opportunities for these farms to help keep those families on the land and make sure the next generation of producers can find a career in agriculture. The Initiative is creating opportunities for producers, creating economic opportunities in rural communities, and strengthening the connection between farmers and consumers.

**Seasonal High Tunnels** is a pilot project under the *Know Your Farmer; Know Your Food* initiative for farmers to increase the availability of locally-grown produce in a conservation-friendly way.

Made of ribs of metal pipe covered with layers of plastic sheeting, a seasonal high tunnel is a greenhouse-like structure. They are easy to build, maintain, and move. Tunnels modify the climate inside to create more favorable conditions for vegetable and other specialty crops grown in the natural soil beneath. And unlike greenhouses, seasonal high tunnels use no energy other than natural sunlight – saving money and valuable energy resources.

The first year of the 3-year pilot project resulted in 55 high tunnels being funded statewide, for a total of \$491,102. Under the **Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food** initiative, this pilot project will determine if high tunnels are effective in reducing pesticide use, keeping vital nutrients in the soil, extending the growing season, increasing yields and providing other benefits to growers.

During the pilot period, high tunnel systems may be eligible for financial assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

For more information, visit us on the web at [www.ct.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ct.nrcs.usda.gov).



*During the summer, the sides of seasonal high tunnels are rolled up to provide natural ventilation.*



*The simplistic structural details of this 73' x 30' seasonal high tunnel in New Haven County will expand the availability of healthy, local crops.*



*Inside this seasonal high tunnel are tomatoes, green bell peppers, and eggplant.*



U.S. Department of Agriculture  
**Natural Resources Conservation Service**

*Helping People Help the Land*

**CONNECTICUT**

USDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

July 2010