

Mapping High Tunnels in the Local Food Systems

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ABSTRACT:

High tunnels (HTs) represent a quietly growing, local level response to globalization of the food system. As semi-permanent greenhouses, HTs bring practical on-farm solutions to biophysical growing constraints; they extend the growing season and buffer delicate crops from extreme weather events. In 2009, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) began subsidizing the construction of HTs with the documented goals of increasing environmental stewardship and the added benefit of promoting local foods. However, many questions remain about the impacts of HTs. Where are they located? Who is benefiting from the NRCS HT program? Do HTs benefit rural or urban communities more? Are the benefits and access to HT produce equitably distributed between rural and urban consumers?

This poster will illustrate the impacts of the NRCS HT program and high tunnels in general on farmers, consumers, and the local food movement. The poster will present information about where these high tunnels are in relation to metropolitan areas, food deserts, and the food insecure. Insights provided by GIS analysis about where HTs are located will lead to better projections into where they should be, in order to bring healthy food to more people, while conserving the environment.



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