

## High Tunnel Field Day at Armstrong Research Farm Near Lewis

Written by Joy Venhorst  
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AMES, Iowa - Proper water management is an essential skill for fruit and vegetable high tunnel growers. Since the plastic film covering prevents rain water from reaching the crop, the environment underneath is virtually a desert. Water is typically provided by drip irrigation lines placed beside the crops. Drip irrigation waters only the crop root zone, keeping the foliage dry which results in less incidence of foliage diseases associated with water on the leaves.

However, an estimated 1,800 gallons of water runs off a 30 x 96 foot high tunnel with each inch of rain. That volume tends to puddle around the sides of a high tunnel or requires drainage. Rather than letting water create a saturated area around the high tunnel, erode the soil around the high tunnel or go unused, Iowa State University Extension specialists have developed a system to collect the rain water and store it for reuse on the crops in the high tunnel. The system demonstrates a water collection system that was retrofitted on a Quonset style high tunnel with both electric and solar powered pumps.

The public is invited to a field day to learn more about this system and see the production and drip irrigation system in the high tunnel. The field day will be held on July 12 at 6:30 p.m. at the Armstrong Research and Demonstration Farm, 53020 Hitchcock Avenue, Lewis, Iowa. The farm is located 11 miles southwest of Atlantic.

For more information, contact Linda Naeve at 515-294-8946 or via email at [lnaeve@iastate.edu](mailto:lnaeve@iastate.edu).

Practical Farmers of Iowa also will be hosting a field day in central Iowa for high tunnel water catchment installed on a new gothic-style high tunnel. The field day will be held July 18 at the Nature Road Farm, 753 Nature Road, Boone, Iowa. For more information go to page 8 of 2011 Field Day Schedule and Guide at [www.practicalfarmers.org/events/field-days.html](http://www.practicalfarmers.org/events/field-days.html).

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