

Investigation into a Year-Round Complimentary Broiler and Vegetable Farm Enterprise using Mobile High Tunnels

Project Titles: Investigation into a Year-Round Complimentary Broiler and Vegetable Farm Enterprise using Mobile High Tunnels

Coordinators: Amy Surburg

Location: Morristown, Indiana

SARE Grants: \$7,467

Duration: 2015-2017

To read the full project reports, go to www.sare.org/projects and search for project number FNC15-1015.

From improving soil health to diversifying income streams on the farm, vegetable growers have plenty of reasons for adding poultry to their farms. Amy Surburg of Berry Goods Farm in Morristown, Indiana, wanted to integrate poultry production with winter vegetable production, and she wanted to build a hybrid mobile coop/greenhouse that could be used for chickens and turkeys in the summer and for growing vegetables through the winter.

With a \$7,467 Farmer Rancher grant from NCR-SARE, Surburg and her dad designed a mobile “coop house” that can be used for chickens in the spring/summer, turkeys in the summer/fall, and then washed and used to cover pre-planted fall greens.

“The mobile ‘coop house’ is a versatile design well suited to a small farm and/or urban market garden setting,” reported Surburg. “It allows the farmer to utilize the house for chickens in the summer and high tunnel type growing in winter with very low input costs to build. The ability to move these houses has been a significant advantage for pest population control and for controlling exactly where the chicken manure is applied to the field. In our case, we move the chicken houses between rows of blackberries in early spring and through fields that we plan



Amy Surburg’s “coop houses” can be joined together to make one larger hoop house, with both ends sliding over the crops on either side so as not to damage pre-planted greens. Photo by Amy Surburg.

to rotate into vegetables in the next two years.”

For more information on Surburg’s NCR-SARE Farmer Rancher grant project, visit the SARE project reporting website. Simply search by the project number, FNC15-1015, at www.mysare.sare.org, or contact the NCR-SARE office.

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