Checklist for Cold House Start-Up

Is the proposed site higher than the land around it or can the site be shaped so runoff won’t flow in?
Do you have sites with reddish or sandy soils that have natural internal drainage?
Will you ridge flat gray soils into beds for better in-row drainage?
Has site been repeatedly tilled to germinate weed seeds and reduce weed seed reservoir?
Have adequate amounts of lime, fertilizer, or soil amendments been incorporated into the soil?
Was the plastic cover put on while the soil was still dry?
If moveable, is structure stabilized on the corners and staked down against the wind?
Is house sturdy or reinforced to withstand a heavy snowfall?
Is double poly-plastic needed in this situation or can row covers be used under a single poly layer?
Can the sides be either raised or lowered for clear day ventilation?
Does it have venting in the peak of both front and back?
Can both ends be opened?
Was fringe of plastic left from base of frame outward 18 or 24” to divert runoff from sides?
Can plastic mulch be used over rows or over entire floor?
Does your all-winter house have double poly-plastic and an outside vented inflation fan?
Do you ventilate timely to reduce condensation in winter and keep temperature below 90 in spring?
Do you avoid over watering in winter and under watering in late spring?
Are you starting to plant early enough?
Are you “front loading” by planting extra by November to be harvested during slow-growing January?
Are you planting the slower-growing red lettuces and kale two weeks earlier than the green varieties?
Are you planting the mixed lettuce and the Asian greens densely enough?
Do you have containers of dry soil that can be used to cover shallow seedings when soils are moist?
Do you want to direct seed some crops and flat & transplant others?
Do you want a portable propane heater for the coldest nights?
Do you have a soil thermometer and also a max-min thermometer placed 1’ above the ground?
Would use of heat lamps for short periods during overcast periods pay back with certain varieties?
Do you have a plan for monitoring and responding to disease and insect problems?
Do you want to try shade cloth and fertigation for summer production?
Is frame stabilized so it can be moved without stretching the plastic?
Are side boards or extra framing or shelving or southern doors causing shade on certain rows?
Are you planting too close to the cold sides of the house?
Can you avoid gritty leaves by not removing cold house early or by using plastic mulch or row covers?