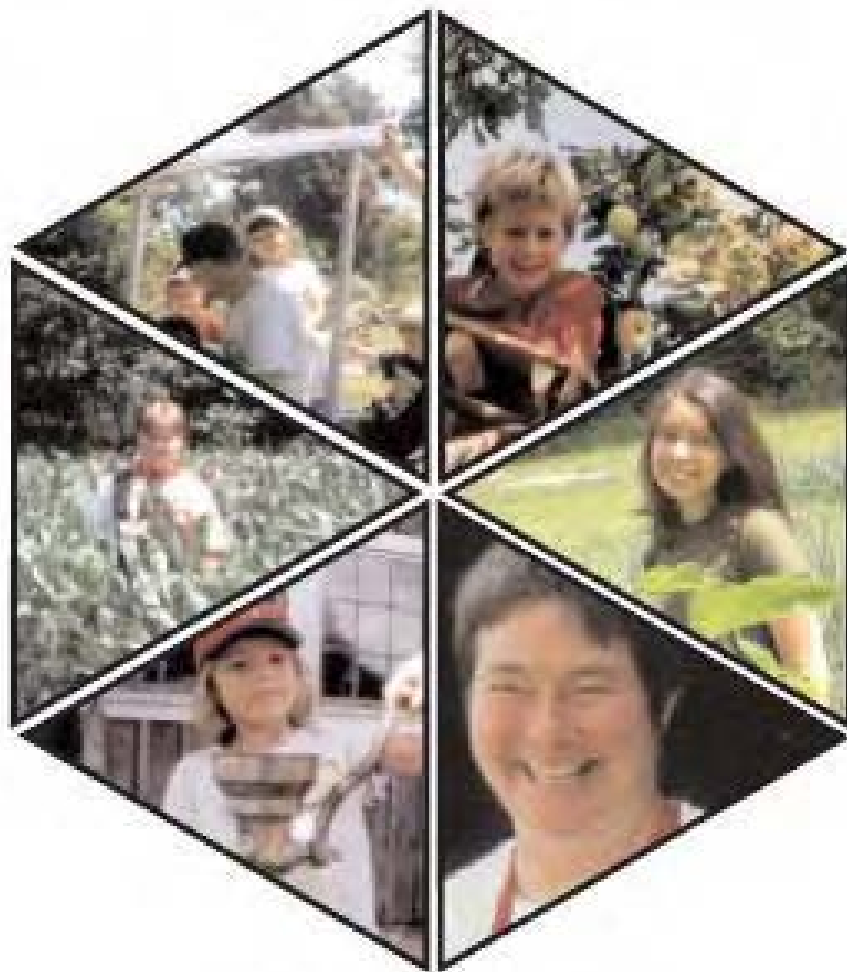




UNIVERSITY of NEW HAMPSHIRE
Cooperative Extension



Creative Ideas, Practical Solutions:
SARE Farmer Grants in New Hampshire



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ABOUT SARE AND THE FARMER/GROWER GRANT PROGRAM

SARE—Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education—is a U.S. Department of Agriculture program that helps build the long-term economic, ecological, and social sustainability of agriculture through competitive grants and education programs.

SARE is administered through regional leadership and programs. Farmers serve with other agricultural professionals and researchers on the Northeast SARE Administrative Council, Technical Committee, and Professional Development Program Coordinating Committee. The Northeast region includes Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

Northeast SARE Farmer/Grower Grants help farmers test new crops, practices, and systems through on-site experiments, and share the results with other farmers. The maximum grant is \$10,000, with awarded grants averaging about \$5,200. The 2005 Farmer Grant application proposals are due December 7, 2004. In 2003 Northeast SARE awarded 52 Farmer/Grower Grants totaling \$268,744. The goal of the Farmer/Grower Grant program is to help farmers explore production and marketing practices that are innovative, profitable, environmentally sound, and beneficial to the wider community.

Only farmers in the Northeast SARE region are eligible. Applicants do not have to be farming full time, but should have an established crop or animal product sold on a regular basis. The program is not intended for inexperienced start-up farming operations. Nonprofit farms may apply, but the primary activity of the farm must be to produce and sell food under the kinds of economic constraints that affect commercial growers. Many community-supported farms qualify, but farms where the primary mission is educational normally do not.

To learn more about past Farmer/Grower Grant projects, click here to view the national SARE project database. This database can be sorted by grant type, region, interest area, and a variety of other criteria. A helpful bulletin on farm-based research is available by clicking here. For a grant application contact Northeast SARE, or download an application from the Northeast SARE website. To request printed materials and general background about SARE, call 802-656-0471 or send e-mail to nesare@uvm.edu.

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Charles 'Chip' Hardy, Brookdale Fruit Farm, Hollis NH
FNE96-130

Chip Hardy's comparison of plant population's effect on yields of marketable ears of sweet corn in 1996 was a small grant (\$632) that yielded a big outcome. This experiment led to revision of the recommended planting density for sweet corn in the New England Vegetable Management Guide.

Sweet corn is the largest-acreage crop at Brookdale Fruit Farm, a diversified fruit and vegetable owned and operated by the Hardy and Whittemore families. More acres are planted to sweet corn in New Hampshire than any other vegetable crop, bringing in more than \$5 million in 2003 for the state's growers. Brookdale Fruit Farm markets produce through their retail farmstand and several wholesale accounts.

"A lot of people were just looking at higher populations of sweet corn—some were planting 16,000-18,000 seeds per acre, some were at 22,000-24,000, and some were much higher at 28,000 or even 30,000 seeds per acre," Chip explained. Growers had a lot of different opinions on whether the increased seed costs of various higher planting rates could be justified. "We wanted to find out which rate would give the best yields of marketable ears," he said.

This experiment led to revision of the recommended planting density for sweet corn in the New England Vegetable Management Guide.

The bicolor variety 'Twilight' was planted in four eight-row blocks of each of six different seeding rates (ranging from 12,000 to 32,000). All blocks were grown the same way, using a pre-sidedress soil nitrate test to determine sidedress nitrogen needs. They harvested the sweet corn by hand, and counted and weighed marketable-size ears.

Like Goldilocks, the study determined that at the lower seeding rates, yields were too low. But at the highest rates, seed costs were too high in relation to yield of marketable-size ears. "22,000-24,000 seeds worked best," Chip said of the middle range of seed rates, "--with good yield and marketable ears." He finds the combination of that planting rate with pre-sidedress testing for nitrogen highly effective for economic return and protection of water quality. "A lot of growers have changed their habits," Chip noted, based on his on-farm research results.

George Hamilton, UNH Cooperative Extension agricultural educator for Hillsborough County, was technical advisor and extension representative for this project. "This was a good project, with good outreach, too," commented Hamilton, noting that recommended planting rates were changed as a result. Now-retired UNH Extension Agronomist Jim Mitchell, now-retired UNH Extension Vegetable Specialist Otho Wells, and University of Connecticut Extension Agronomist Tom Morris were also involved in the project. Morris did the statistical analysis, and duplicated the experiment in Connecticut. Morris and Hamilton coauthored an article on the study that was published in the refereed Horticulture Technology Journal. "This project would probably be a SARE Partnership Grant today," George Hamilton noted, referring to a new category of SARE grants that was created to fund on-farm research and demonstration projects developed by agricultural professionals who work directly with farmers.



Caroline & Buck Robinson, Berry Hill Farm, Stratham
FNE94-67

“We were always carrying tools and things out to the field,” explains organic berry farmer Caroline Robinson. “We just thought, ‘But why use a 4000-pound truck to do a job that a golf cart could do?’” The Robinsons had long had a keen interest in alternative energy, and they also had experience with photovoltaics, with solar panels on the roof of their farmhouse to help heat their domestic hot water. In 1994 they applied for a Farmer Grant from SARE, and used the \$3,355 grant to convert a used golf cart to solar power.

The Robinsons bought three 100-watt photovoltaic modules, which they mounted over the cart on aluminum supports bolted to the cart’s sides. The modules were connected to a charge controller to prevent overcharging, and to batteries located under the seat. Thus the modules provided shade to the occupants—or harvested berries—in the cart, while collecting energy from the sun. A carrying tray added on the back took advantage of the cart’s possible 700-pound payload.

The Robinsons figured they saved about 50 gallons of gas in the first year, reduced air pollution, and prevented soil compaction. They never once needed to use the electric charger during the first season of use.

The solar-powered cart far exceeded the Robinsons’ expectations right from the start. They never once needed to use the electric charger during the first season of use. Since there is no idling, the electric motor uses no energy at all when the cart is not moving. It can run on its own solar power for a total of about 45 minutes per day. The Robinsons figured they saved about 50 gallons of gas in the first year, reduced air pollution, and prevented soil compaction. The cart also saved all of the members of the farm team a lot of time, because it took the place of many trips

back and forth by foot. It also assisted many customers with disabilities to ride directly from their cars to the berries, and to pick while seated.

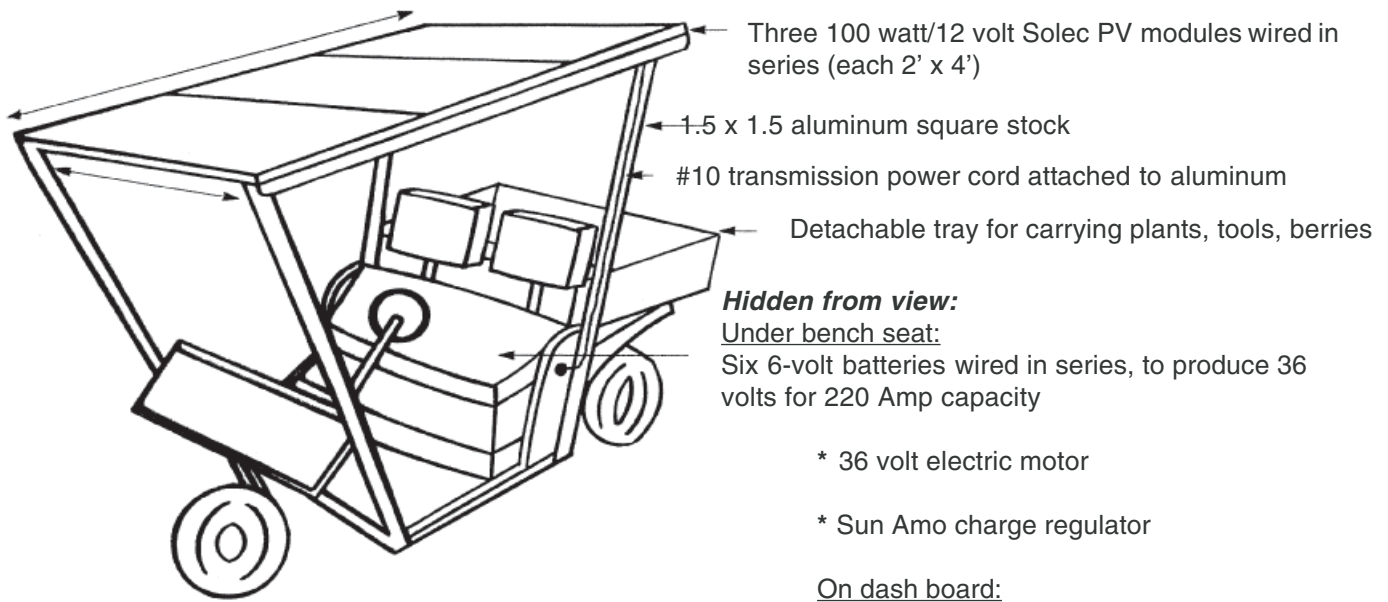
Ten years after they first put a solar-powered cart into service at the farm, Caroline is as enthusiastic as ever. “Even without the solar, an electric cart is such a great thing for a farm!” she said. They have made some modifications. After five years the first used cart had to be replaced. The design of the second used golf cart they bought was less well suited to mounting the panels on top. Also, their children were older and wanting to drive the cart, and Caroline says they thought it was safer not to have the expensive panels on the cart itself. So the original panels are still in use, but are now mounted to the roof of their farmstand. They plug the cart into the unit on sunny days to charge the batteries.

“It’s working very well and holding up well,” Caroline said of the second cart configuration, after five years of service. They can plug it into the standard electric current if needed. She highly recommends golf carts to other farmers—whether solar- or battery-powered. While she believes the solar version is cost-effective over the long run, she realizes that not all farmers have the option to wait long enough for the payback on investment. Farmers with mechanical skills could save a lot on the cost of adapting a cart by doing most or all of the work themselves, she noted. Using clean, renewable energy is a plus. But even a non-solar powered cart offers clean, quiet operation and light impact on soils.



Buck explaining how the “PVEV” works

PhotoVoltaic Electric Vehicle



PVEV Useful Facts

- 100% solar powered during summer months
- Payload after conversion: approximately 700 pounds
- Maintenance: add distilled water to batteries occasionally; lubricate moving parts once a year
- Material costs: used EZ-GO cart, \$500
 PV modules, \$2100
 charge controller, \$180
 battery capacity meter, \$75
 mounting components, \$50

Worshipping the sun on our compost pile



Christine Fowler, Teacher, Sunderland MA
David Batchelder, Mill Valley Farm, Stratham NH
 FNE99-230

Over more than 20 years in farming, David Batchelder often thought about ways to add an educational component to his farm. “I’ve always felt that part of my job—and that of any person involved in farming—is educating our consumers or customers,” he noted. Christine ‘Chrissy’ Fowler, one of his Mill Valley Farm CSA members, suggested running farm day camp programs at the farm. A friend as well as a customer, Fowler taught at a nearby private pre-school. Her goals were to help children grow up to be healthy adults, and to help them expand their knowledge of where food comes from. She also saw potential for educational programs to supplement farm income through tuition and fees, and increased farmstand traffic or CSA participation.

Batchelder and Fowler obtained a Farmer/Grower Grant to develop the curriculum for their kids’ farm program. Fowler worked with a panel of expert reviewers including University of New Hampshire horticulturists and environmental educa-

“We didn’t think there would be that much interest in a farm camp program.

We were wrong! People want a farm experience for their children, including the tasks associated with growing up on a farm.”

tors, and schoolteachers in developing the curriculum for the program. Her tried-and-tested activities are included in the complete curriculum, “Adventures in Agriculture: Guidelines and Activities for On-Farm Education Programs,” which can be obtained from Northeast SARE. (Parts may also be found in the future at the UNH Horticulture Program’s Growing a Green Generation website, <http://horticulture.unh.edu/elementary.html>, which Fowler also recommends for educational resources on horticulture and agriculture.)

David Batchelder and Chrissy Fowler initially marketed the summer kids’ program at Mill Valley Farm as “science camp,” but they found that farm experience was the real draw. “We didn’t think there would be that much interest in a farm camp program,” explained Fowler, a teacher and organic gardener who has taught pre-school to fourth grade, and science enrichment programs. “We were wrong! People want a farm experience for their children, including the tasks associated with growing up on a farm.”

Fowler ran the Farm Camp summer programs at Mill Valley Farm for three years, as a separate enterprise from the farm. Her business, North Twin Education Programs, paid the farm a weekly lease fee for each program week. Traffic at the farmstand noticeably increased when the camps were in session, and a few participating families joined the farm’s CSA. Fowler has since moved to Sunderland MA, where she is teaching and getting involved in CISA—Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture. She hopes to continue providing on-farm education programs.



David

Chrissy



Anton Elbers, Orchard Hill Farm, East Alstead NH
FNE01-370

Anton Elbers had begun using kaolin clay spray (trade name ‘Surround’) with mixed results in his orchard, as part of his effort to produce tree fruit with out chemical sprays. Research has shown the fine clay clings to developing fruit, discouraging insect pests from damaging the fruit. Elbers obtained the \$1,185 SARE Farmer/Grower Grant to test the product’s performance and cost-effectiveness in New Hampshire climate and growing conditions on a more scientific basis. “The grant helped us stay with it, and learn more about it,” Elbers said.

Orchard Hill Farm found that in conjunction with a careful orchard sanitation program, the kaolin product was as effective in controlling plum curculio damage as the practice of two Imidan applications had been in previous years. They found it highly effective on pear psylla on apples and especially on pears. The Elberses also found that effectiveness and ease of application varied with tree varieties, pruning, and height.

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Their project year —2001—brought a wet spring. Repeated rains washed the product off the fruit, requiring additional applications that increased the cost of the practice for both product and time and labor. In 2003 the cold, wet spring reduced pollination so drastically that Elbers decided that the product would not be cost-effective on such a small crop.

Elbers has owned the orchard for 15 years, taking over and expanding what had been his father’s “hobby orchard.” His son Noah has joined the business and added an on-farm bakery, Orchard Hill Breadworks, to the enterprise. Most of their fruit is sold directly to retail customers, so they were able to explain the kaolin practice, and report that their customers were very supportive. Since they make their last application in July, there is little visible residue at harvest.

Working with their Cheshire County Conservation District collaborators, Orchard Hill Farm hosted a demonstration day for other growers at the farm, and distributed reports to conservation districts, Beginner Farmers organizations, and NOFA/NH.

“It was a good learning experience,” Elbers said of their Farmer/Grower Grant project. Orchard Hill Farm will continue to use the kaolin spray on a limited basis for plum curculio on apples, he reported, based on the knowledge gained from the on-farm research. He found the grant process “very farmer-friendly and flexible,” and said he would apply again if he gets another idea that would lend itself to this kind of testing.



Dave Trumble, et al, Good Earth Farm, Weare, NH
FNE02-444

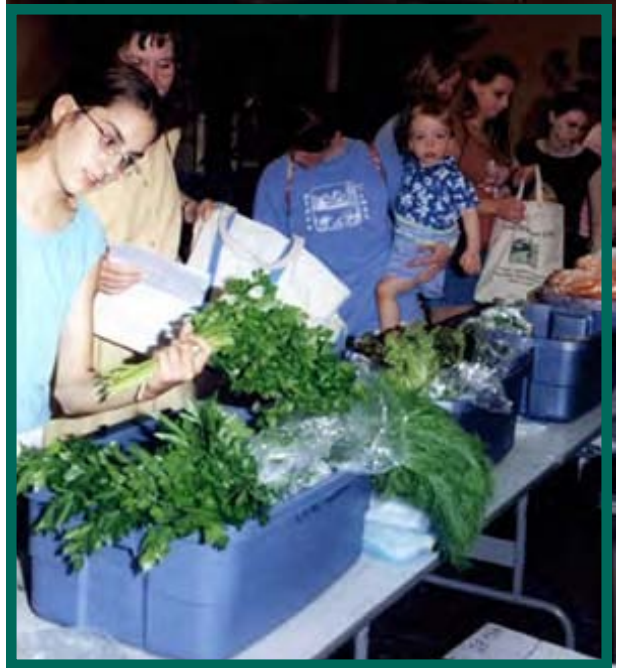
Dave Trumble, then farming in Frankestown and selling his crop wholesale through the Deep Root Farmers Cooperative based in Westminster, VT, was awarded his first Farmer Grant in 1994 to compare different organic methods of disease control in tomatoes. Now farming in Weare, Dave and his wife Linda Taylor are operating a greenhouse business and growing five vegetable crops. Having experienced how farmer cooperatives can give smaller and medium-size growers access to larger markets, Dave wanted to combine a farmer cooperative organization with a CSA (community supported agriculture). He got a small group of organic growers in central New Hampshire interested in the idea, and applied to SARE for a Farmer/Grower Grant to help with the costs of organizing and forming a cooperative, and establishing a sizeable CSA.

The farmers' goals were to build local markets for smaller-scale growers, encourage new start-up farmers, and foster community amongst both farmers and CSA customer-members.

The farmers' goals were to build local markets for smaller-scale growers, encourage new start-up farmers, and foster community amongst both farmers and CSA customer-members. "Farming can be isolating," Dave observed. The \$7,200 grant helped with development, marketing, and legal costs of forming their innovative cooperative. In the first year they laid the legal and organizational groundwork for the organic CSA cooperative, which they named 'Local Harvest CSA.' NOFA-NH (Natural Organic Farmers Association) supported the effort, and helped solicit growers interested in exploring the cooperative CSA proposal. Elizabeth Obelenus, office manager for NOFA-NH and a beginning grower herself, helped Dave Trumble with the start-up work.

In 2003, the first year of operation, eight farmer-members produced food for 128 CSA-member families. By spring 2004, the cooperative had 10 member farms and 185 CSA families—with more expected to sign up. Weekly distribution at the Concord Unitarian Church has become a social event, drawing customer-members from as far as Nashua and Deering. Obelenus said CSA families want to proactively support local farms, and like the CSA's convenience and dependability.

The cooperative pays Obelenus, Trumble, and other farmer and CSA members for their work for the CSA, including production and office management, CSA site coordination, bookkeeping, and marketing. Each farmer commits to providing certain products for the CSA, allowing growers to specialize some of their production. "Some of us can do a better job—and have a saner life—if we don't grow everything," Trumble noted. Member farms are scattered from Enfield to Strafford to Litchfield to Weare, ranging from larger, established operations to small start-ups. Diversity of growers offers more than just crop variety. For example, Trumble said, established grower and SARE Sustainable Farmer-Educator Eero Ruuttila insisted from the beginning on high quality standards. "One goal was to encourage beginner farmers—and that's happening!" Trumble noted. He also sees a growing sense of community and support among farmers, who are starting to help each other or collaborate in other ways.



Courtney Haase, Nunsuch Farm, Sutton NH
#FNE03-467

"I'm an entrepreneur," explains Courtney Haase, who built Nunsuch Farm from scratch on a 5.5-acre patch of rocky hillside in Sutton in the late 1970s, after leaving a cloistered convent in New Orleans. She is also a teacher, committed to helping others by sharing what she has learned about running a small dairy, making and selling cheese. Her 2003 SARE Farmer Grant project fills a need she saw for information on safe handling and marketing of dairy products at farmers markets. Courtney had obtained a Farmer Grant in 1998 (#FNE98-191) to support qualifying her farm as a Training Site for the Micro-process Design 25-Gallon Vat Pasteurizer. That first project aimed to develop safe and sanitary systems for processing small volumes of milk. She formed the nonprofit Small Dairy Project to help farmers establish new value-added enterprises, including a pasteurizer lending program.

After years of selling her farmstead goat cheeses from the farm and directly to high-end restaurants and shops, Courtney began selling at farmers' markets in 1997. She saw a need for a handbook with information and guidelines for selling highly perishable dairy products under the very challenging conditions of farmers markets. She discovered that none of the Northeast states had regulations or guidelines specific to farmers market dairy sales. "I saw

things that needed addressing—liability issues, licensing, people bringing livestock to display where they are selling food," Courtney says. "I have made my mistakes with sampling and things, and I want to help others avoid mistakes."

"Over the years I had been making cheese, I saw a greatly increased public awareness and concern for food safety," Courtney reports. She wanted to create a handbook that would address food safety and customer perceptions, and provide market-

ing guidelines for the growing number of small-scale dairy marketers. "The public has become very astute in their search for quality food," she wrote in her SARE grant application. "Systematically explaining and studying different ways of keeping dairy food cool, safe, and clean in an open market is a challenge. Having potential customers feel comfortable about what they see in a display often dictates whether or not they will buy what is offered."

"Proper handling of dairy products--and all food products--is important in providing a safe product to the public," noted Leah Keller, dairy sanitation supervisor for the NH Department of Health and Human Services and collaborator on the handbook project.

"Dairy products especially provide a good environment for the growth of potentially harmful bacteria if subjected to improper cooling and sanitation. The more information available on handling products in less than ideal circumstances the better equipped the marketers are to provide a safe product to the consumers." More conscientious and better educated farm marketers reduce the risks of causing food-borne illness. "Outbreaks are detrimental not only to the people made ill but also to the marketer and the industry they represent," Keller added.

The \$8,703-grant supported gathering of state guidelines and standards, and funded research of systems, practices, and trends for cooling and sampling dairy products in farmers' market settings. She involved professional dairy sanitarians and extension educators in dairy and food and nutrition in the development and review of the handbook. When completed, the handbook will be available from Northeast SARE, and on Courtney's website, www.nunsuch.org.

The Northeast SARE Program chose Courtney Haase as a 'Sustainable Farmer-Educator' in 2003. She is available to speak at conferences, lead training programs, etc.--and SARE will pay her fee and expenses. In 2004 Courtney decided to sell her 25-doe herd of Toggenburgs after 25 years of full-time dairy farming, and devote the next stage of her career to promoting sustainable agriculture and helping farmers establish profitable small-scale dairy enterprises.

"Having potential customers feel comfortable about what they see in a display often dictates whether or not they will buy what is offered."



Toggenburg goats



Courtney

SAMPLE LIST OF SARE FARMER/GROWER GRANTS AWARDED TO NEW HAMPSHIRE FARMERS

- FNE04-514 A Book on Why and How to Run Cooperative CSA
Scott Franzblau, Hopkinton NH
- FNE03-467 Innovative and Creative Ways of Safely Selling Dairy Products at
Farmer's Markets
Courtney Haase, Sutton NH
- FNE03-459 Reclaiming Pastureland for Diversified Fruit/Maple Production
Stephen Davis, Acworth NH
- FNE02-444 Concord Cooperative CSA
Dave Trumble, Weare NH
- FNE01-370 Orchard Hill Farm Orchard Spray Program
Anton Elbers, East Alstead NH
- FNE01-364 Evaluating Italian Ryegrass for Summer Pasture in New England
Ellen Clement, Westmoreland NH
- FNE01-363 Food Safety & Quality Control Program for Farmstead Sheep Cheese
Bruce Clement, Westmoreland NH
- FNE00-333 Community Partnering, Education and Marketing
Tom Earle, Center Conway NH
- FNE99-249 Alternative Use of Seasonal Forage Crops: Triticale, Field Peas and
Brassicas
Chris Gowdy, Walpole NH
- FNE99-230 Farm Based Sustainable Agriculture Education Programs
David Batchelder and Christine Fowler, Stratham
- FNE98-220 Forest Grown Medicinal Plants to Increase Woodlot Income
Charles Baylies. Whitefield NH
- FNE98-191 Training Site for the Micro Process Design 25 Gallon Vat Pasteurizer
Courtney Haase, Sutton NH
- FNE96-130 Plant Population Effects on Yields of Sweet Corn
Charles Hardy, Hollis NH
- FNE94-74 Organic Tomato Disease Control
Dave Trumble, Weare NH
- FNE94-67 Solar Vehicle for Farm Use
Buck & Caroline Robinson, Stratham NH
- FNE93-35 Evaluation of Alternatives to Synthetic Chemicals and Lime for Nutrient
Supply, Weed Suppression, and pH Control on Raspberry Plants
John Shaw, Hampton Falls NH

On applying for, and completing a successful SARE Farmer/Grower Grant

The NESARE competitive review process typically results in funding for 50 to 60 projects out of 120 to 150 applications each year. Reviewers look for innovative, interesting projects likely to produce results that will benefit other farmers in the region. Northeast SARE does not fund projects that simply confirm established practices as sustainable or profitable. Reviewers seek new techniques and ideas that are likely to reduce environmental or health risks in agriculture, reduce or prevent pollution, reduce costs and increase farm income, conserve soil and other natural resources, enhance communities, or improve quality of life for farmers and society.

Successful grant applications are clearly written, spelling out the goals of the project, and explaining in detail how the project will be carried out, and how results will be reported to other farmers. See Northeast SARE's guide to the Farmer/Grower Grant process for detailed advice on planning a proposal, completing the application, and completing a funded project at <http://www.uvm.edu/~nesare/FGinfo.html>.

“I didn’t get the first grant I applied for,” commented Courtney Haase, who has since received two Farmer/Grower Grants. “But boy, did it clarify my thinking! The process really helped me figure out what I wanted to do—and that was far more beneficial to me than the money would have been.”

New Hampshire Farmer Grant recipients offered these comments and suggestions:

- “I didn’t get the first grant I applied for,” commented Courtney Haase, who has since received two Farmer/Grower Grants. “But boy, did it clarify my thinking! The process really helped me figure out what I wanted to do—and that was far more beneficial to me than the money would have been.” Her unsuccessful grant application did help her obtain a Farm Service Agency loan.

- “Apply for a grant if you have a project that is worthwhile—and a good advisor or somebody working with you,” advised Chip Hardy, whose study resulted in revised sweet corn recommendations in the *New England Vegetable Management Guide*. “It takes two parties that work well together as a team to carry out both the cultural and technical requirements of research.”

- “I have passionate feelings about the topic of my project, and I’m thankful that SARE gave me the little bit of motivation to actually try it out,” commented Christine Fowler who developed a K-7 experiential learning curriculum, “Adventures in Agriculture: Guidelines and Activities for On-Farm Education Programs” with Farmer/Grower Grant support. The requirements to share the information and compose a final report were helpful, she said, making her reflect and interpret the results more deeply. Completing the paperwork was a challenge, but she said it resulted in analysis and a product that will be helpful to her—and she hopes to others—in the future.

- “I think the Farmer Grant program is fantastic, and I would recommend it to others,” commented Caroline Robinson of Stratham, who obtained a grant in 1994 to convert a used golf cart to solar power for farm use. But be aware of the record-keeping and reporting requirements and consider them when deciding whether to apply, she cautions.

SARE requires a Final Report before releasing the final half of the grant payment. Northeast SARE provides guidelines for Farmer/Grower Grant Reports to help

recipients meet the accountability requirements, and also to ensure the information provided will be useful to other farmers. The length of the Final Report varies from long to short, depending on the project.

- “It’s a very farmer-friendly process,” Anton Elbers said of his SARE grant experience. “SARE is more flexible. Compared to most grant programs, it’s very user-friendly. I would apply again if I have something that I want to try that would lend itself.”

Farmer/Grower Grants can take some of the risk out of trying a new idea, or help fund development of a practice or program that has the potential to benefit other farmers or the larger community. But just like university scientists, farmers cannot expect to control the outcomes, or all conditions affecting their research.

Some Farmer/Grower Grant projects have been beset with problems and complications beyond the farmers’ control—often weather-related. In 2001 Ellen Clement of Westmoreland NH and several other farmers obtained a \$940 Farmer/Grower Grant to test Italian ryegrass for warm-season grazing in New England. Certified seed was no-till planted into fields on six cooperating farms in southwestern New Hampshire. Problems began with the new seeder used and a dry May, followed by drought and an invasion of armyworms. Clement and her collaborators felt the disappointing results did not provide a fair test of the Italian ryegrass. Some hope to try it again on their own.

- “I’d strongly encourage any farmer with a good idea, or question to be explored, that needs some money to do the project to apply to SARE,” recommended Bruce Clement, recently retired UNH Cooperative Extension ag program leader who has also operated a sheep farm with his wife Ellen for many years. “The process is very straightforward and simple to do.” He advocates connecting with an Extension professional interested in on-farm research to help design and carry out the project.
- “Don’t look at the obvious, at what others are doing,” suggested Courtney Haase, who has successfully applied for SARE and other grants. “Look inside yourself to identify a need.” Creativity comes from inside yourself, she stressed.

Recent Farmer Grant recipients report that SARE staff members are easy to talk to and very helpful throughout the process. But they advise careful consideration of how well your idea fits with SARE’s guidelines and restrictions. Evaluate how much work the granting process will take in applying, meeting requirements, and reporting. Make sure that SARE will fund the costs that you need to cover.

- “Any good idea is going to take some capitalization,” noted Dave Trumble of Good Earth Farm. “For many ideas, the grants are too small, and they won’t pay most capital costs.”
- “Make sure you are aware of the commitment, the time needed for follow-through. Make sure the amount of grant money is worth that commitment,” advised UNH Cooperative Extension Educator George Hamilton, who has served as technical adviser for several SARE Farmer Grants. “Don’t look for it to fund some of your farming start-up costs—that’s not what the grants are for.”
- “You can’t base your business on somebody else’s money,” Courtney Haase contended. “You have to believe in yourself enough to put your own money on it. So if you don’t get your grant, you don’t end your project!” NESARE has selected Courtney as a Sustainable Farmer-Educator, making her available for talks and workshops at no cost to agricultural groups.

For a step-by-step guide to planning and preparing a strong, competitive proposal,

For a step-by-step guide to planning and preparing a strong, competitive proposal, *How to Write a Farmer Grant*, go to the NESARE website at

<http://www.uvm.edu/~nesare/FGinfo.htm>..

Be sure to click on the paragraph, "A useful guide to developing a Farmer/Grower application, with examples and explanations of what makes a strong proposal..."

Download an application from the website, too.

Or contact the Northeast SARE office for an application and a copy of *How to Write a Farmer Grant: A Guide for Farmers and their Technical Advisors*.

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