



Western SARE
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For immediate release (photo available on request, rjdaines@msn.com)

USU Professor Leads USDA-SARE Program in Washington

LOGAN, UTAH – Utah State University soil scientist Phil Rasmussen, who has headed the Western region of a USDA sustainable agriculture program since 1994, has been named the program's acting national director.

Rasmussen began Nov. 1 as acting director of the Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program (SARE). Over the next year, he will spend 25% of his time in SARE's Washington DC office and the balance at USU where he will continue as coordinator of Western SARE and professor in the USU College of Agriculture's Plant, Soils and Climate Department.

SARE, which this year marks its 20th anniversary, is a USDA competitive grants program that funds research and education to foster profitable agriculture, protected environments and strong rural families and communities.

In the 14 years that Rasmussen has administered the Western Region SARE Center, USU has received more than \$48 million to fund well over 1,000 grants in 13 Western states and four Pacific island protectorates in the region. Recent Congressional increases to the national SARE program brought an additional \$4.2 million to the SARE Center on the USU campus for fiscal year 2009.

Rasmussen takes the national reins from Jill Auburn, SARE director since 1998. Auburn has been promoted to USDA's new Research, Education and Extension office (as part of the new National Institute for Food and Agriculture), where she will serve as a division chief for agricultural systems and technology.

Rasmussen, a Clarkston, Utah, native, holds a Ph.D. in soil physics and microclimatology from Kansas State University. He joined USU in 1981, serving in various positions including department head, the nation's first geospatial extension specialist and as assistant director of both the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station and USU Cooperative Extension.

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