

Western SARE Competitive Grants Farmer/Rancher Research & Education 2017 Call for Proposals

Submission Deadline: December 7, 2016, 1:00 pm MST

The Administrative Council of the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program announces the Call for Proposals for Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grants for 2017. With a Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grant, a producer, working with a technical advisor, develops a proposal to conduct **both research and education on their farm/ranch** on a sustainable agricultural topic and incorporate such items as: on-farm/ranch demonstrations; farmer-to-farmer educational outreach and other approaches to assist in producer adoption in an area of sustainable agriculture. The goal is to achieve results that can be communicated to producers and professionals and can improve income, the environment, communities and quality of life for all citizens.

Farmer/Rancher Involvement: Congress mandates that the SARE grant program depart from “business as usual.” To that end, the Administrative Council requires that agricultural producers (farmers/ranchers) be involved from start to finish in the planning, design, implementation and educational outreach of any SARE-funded Research and Education project. Token representation is unacceptable.

Research and Education projects primary focus should be to:

- **Conduct on the ground research and education** within the scope of the project. **Not research or education; both must be conspicuous components of the proposal.**
- Design on-farm/ranch experiments that will lead to a more sustainable agriculture
- Be creative and distinctive in addressing the changes that could come from the adoption of the results of this project by other producers.
- Detail creative educational outreach plans that deliver this new knowledge to other producers and professionals in the western region.

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**All proposals are submitted
online at:**

<http://wsaregrants.usu.edu>

Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grant Program Schedule

- December 7, 2016 – Proposals are due by 1 p.m. MST. Signatures required.
- January 2017 – Technical review panel selects proposals for grant funding.
- March 2017 – Western SARE Administrative Council makes final selections.
- April 2017 – Coordinators of funded grant applications are informed of proposal status.
- Summer 2017 – Funds for selected projects will be disbursed.



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Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Micronesia, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming



Sustainable Agriculture

Congress has defined sustainable agriculture as an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will over the long- term:

- Satisfy human food and fiber needs;
- Enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends;
- Make the most efficient use of non-renewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls;
- Sustain the economic viability of farm operations; and
- Enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

– U.S. Code Title 7, Section 3103

Western SARE Goals

- Promote *good stewardship* of the nation’s natural resources by providing site-specific, regional and profitable sustainable farming and ranching methods that strengthen agricultural competitiveness; satisfy human food and fiber needs; maintain and enhance the quality and productivity of soil; conserve soil, water, energy, natural resources and fish and wildlife habitat; and maintain and improve the quality of surface and ground water.
- Enhance the *quality of life* of farmers and ranchers and ensure the viability of rural communities, for example, by increasing income and employment, especially profitable self-employment and innovative marketing opportunities in agricultural and rural communities.
- Protect the *health and safety* of those involved in food and farm systems by reducing, where feasible and practical, the use of toxic materials in agricultural production, and by optimizing on-farm resources and integrating, where appropriate, biological cycles and controls.
- Promote crop, livestock and enterprise *diversification*.
- Examine the regional, economic, social and *environmental implications* of adopting sustainable agriculture practices and systems.

Western SARE Farmer/Rancher Grants in Sustainable Agriculture

Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grants are funded for up to three years. **The producer is the grant applicant and the location is their own farm/ranch.** A technical advisor assists in the development, on-farm field trial and outreach of the project. Up to \$20,000 per proposal is allowed for a single producer and up to \$25,000 is allowed for three or more producers. Each producer must be an independent and separate operation. You are a producer (farmer/rancher) if:

- Your primary occupation is farming or ranching;
- You have a farm/ranch tax number; or,
- You are a part-time producer with at least \$1,000 documented annual income from the operation.

All proposals **must** have at least **one producer (farmer/rancher), who is the applicant**. The producer (farmer/rancher) is fiscally responsible for the project and, if funded, provides his or her Social Security number.

All proposals **must** have a qualified **technical advisor** who should assist with planning, evaluation, education dissemination and reporting. Technical advisors may be cooperative extension educators/agents and specialists, USDA-NRCS field staff, agricultural consultants, nonprofit staff members or other agricultural professionals assisting producers at the local level. The technical advisor’s resume (one page maximum) **must** be included. The technical advisor cannot be one of the producers.

For all applicants from Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, Marshall Islands, and Palau, please see this [Special Farmer/Rancher Note: Pacific Islands](#) before continuing.

Roles: Detail the specific role of the technical advisor and any others, including producers, who are to be involved in this project. In the on-line process, under ‘Project Participants,’ be sure to include a paragraph or two describing each of the agricultural operations of producers.

Following Directions: An important and practical element of the granting process is following directions. Each year, Western SARE disqualifies proposals *before review* because applicants fail to follow directions found in the Call for Proposals as well as those associated with the online application process at wsaregrants.usu.edu.

Public Domain: While proposals and reviews will remain confidential, the Western SARE program considers all funded proposals, subsequent reports, and related information to be in the public domain. See details of this stipulation in the special notes in [USDA Grant Policies](#).

Writing the Proposal

The following criteria are to be addressed with clear explanations for each:

Summary: (10% of evaluation criteria, 900 word text limit)

Give the researchable and educational outreach components of your proposal and briefly explain these in the context of why this project is important. What problems or situations are being addressed? How would your project distinctively or creatively address those problems?

List of Objectives: (10% of evaluation criteria, 450 word text limit)

Provide a **numerical list** of the achievable objectives of your project. These are major things you plan to accomplish. Also provide a timeline for accomplishing each objective.

Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture: (5% of evaluation criteria, 450 word text limit)

Clearly articulate how the project and its possible outcomes are relevant to the three basic elements of sustainable agriculture, specifically:

1. Economically viable
2. Environmentally sound
3. Socially responsible

Benefits and Impacts to Agriculture: (10% of evaluation criteria, 450 word text limit)

Describe the potential benefits and impacts of your project and its findings on other producer (local, state and regional) or agriculture in general. For example, how does it affect: overall farm/ranch productivity levels, operational profits, soil or water quality or quantity, rural communities, society as a whole?

Where possible, use specific estimates of benefits – for example, dollars saved per acre, tons of soil protected from erosion, pounds of chemical reduced, number of acres or people affected, markets expanded, jobs created, etc.

Educational Outreach Plan: (20% of evaluation criteria, 450 word text limit)

Create a yearly plan for outreach to other producers. This plan should identify dates, locations and methods, using such networking techniques as field days, workshops, demonstrations or other events. Explain how you will communicate your project and its findings to producers (specifically) and others (generally).

Educational Materials: (20% of evaluation criteria, 450 word text limit)

Provide a list of the educational materials you plan to produce and use in the outreach plan listed above. This list should describe the type of materials that will be developed and used for outreach to producers – such things as factsheets, PowerPoint presentations, posters, handouts, articles, brochures, social media, etc.

Specific examples include: outreach publications, videos, photos, posters, slideshows, brochures, fact sheets, surveys, program announcements, web-based materials or any other information or educational materials. Social media techniques such as YouTube videos, blogs, Twitter, Face book and other popular methods are highly encouraged.

Producer Adoption: (20% of evaluation criteria, 450 word text limit)

Explain how you will measure reactions to, and adoption of, the findings of your project in the producer community. This plan should also describe changes expected in these producers (increased knowledge or awareness, changed attitudes or opinions, adoption of new practices) and ways to measure these changes, such as a before -and-after survey.

Please review the documents in [Helpful Documents](#) to strengthen your proposal and to understand what will be expected of you and your project team if you are awarded a grant:

- The [Farmer/Rancher Grantee Reporting and Evaluation Expectations](#) list shows which results you report on during the project and what SARE may assess two to four years after the project's completion.
- The [Outreach Survey](#) is a sample tool of how grantees can gather results from a project's outreach activities. This survey is one important way for collecting required data to measure changes in farmer/rancher knowledge, attitude, skills and awareness.

SARE recognizes there are limits to what can be accomplished, measured and reported during the life of your project. As a result, along with your reporting, we plan to conduct post-project assessments of representative projects to get a fuller measure of the SARE program's impact in areas such as:

- Who is participating in SARE-funded projects?
- What is being created by the projects (e.g., new knowledge, new approaches)?
- What are people learning from these projects?
- What changes are farmers and ranchers making?
- What economic, environmental, social or productivity benefits are farmers and ranchers seeing as a result of having made a change? (after the project is completed, *this is **not** the responsibility of the farmer or rancher grantee*)

Budget & Justification: (5% of evaluation criteria) Provide a concise budget, with proper justification, that is appropriate to the proposed project. **Special Note:** Any single item or piece of equipment over \$500 must be listed separately with proper budget justification.

Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grant funds may be used for the following purposes:

- Mini-grants to producers to compensate for field research and education activities.
- Cost of field sampling, crop analysis and educational surveys.
- Materials and supplies needed for the project.
- Small tools and equipment. Any one piece of equipment costing less than \$5,000. Describe type of equipment (for example, pH meters, balances, scales, hand tools, etc.), cost and a brief narrative on the intended use of the equipment for project objectives.

NOTE: Any single item or piece of equipment over \$500 must be listed separately with proper budget justification.

- Outreach expenses such as holding a field day, tours, making a brochure, creating a webpage, etc.
- Out-of-town travel needed for the project. State purpose, destination, number of travelers and estimated cost per trip. (i.e., St. Louis, MO. to attend the National Conference; two persons - \$1,000 each).
- Local travel (where personal auto is used and reimbursed) needed for project. State purpose and total dollar amount of reimbursement for vehicle use. If any overnight stays are anticipated, include the number of nights and the amount for meals and lodging. (i.e., local travel for site visits to farmers in neighboring counties - \$500 for mileage and \$500 for meals and lodging (five days @ \$100/day) = \$1,000.) Maximum mileage allowance depends on Federal allowable rate.
- Hired labor for things that you cannot do yourself. State whether flat rate. If not flat rate, show percent of fringe benefits.
- Producer labor for project activities **above and beyond their normal farming activities.**
- Refreshments at field days, e.g. coffee, cold drinks, fruit, pie, cookies, etc. Meals are allowable if they maintain the continuity of the meeting and to do otherwise will impose arduous conditions on the meeting participants. This justification must be provided.
- Services of agricultural professionals can be compensated. Provide the rate in your budget justification.

Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grant funds may NOT be used for the following purposes:

- Starting or expanding a farm or farm operation.
- Any single piece of equipment costing more than \$5,000. This limit **cannot** be used toward the purchase of a piece of equipment or the modification of equipment costing more than \$5,000 or to purchase or produce durable parts for tractors, equipment, irrigation systems, etc.
- Permanent improvement to a farm or ranch, such as constructing or remodeling a building.
- Any meal that does not maintain the continuity of a scheduled meeting.
- Testing of commercial products.

Text Limitations: Text limits are based on the *word count*. For purposes of Western SARE online proposals, 450 words equate to approximately ½ page of single-spaced, 12-point text on an 8.5x11 inch sheet of paper. A full page equates to 900 words.

Required Supporting Documents

All supporting documents should be uploaded into the “Supporting Documents” section of your online grant application.

1. Budget Narrative/Justification: Provide additional budget details and justification. You should follow the [Required Budget Details](#) when organizing your budget Narrative/Justification.

2. Animal Welfare Assurance Statement: If your project includes warm-blooded vertebrate, you must have the statement signed by you and an IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee) representative or attending veterinarian. Do not submit the form if it is not applicable to your proposal (no warm-blooded vertebrate animals in your project).

3. Technical Advisors Resume: The application must include a one page resume for the Technical Advisor. This should be uploaded into the “Supporting Documents” sections of the grant submission.

Producers (farmer/ranchers) are not required to submit a resume. The Technical Advisor **cannot** be one of the producers.

4. Signature Page: Be sure to get all signatures from the relevant parties. You should print the signature page(s). Then, you should get it signed, scanned (as a PDF file), and uploaded into the “Supporting Documents” section of your online grant application by the deadline (this is in lieu of mailing the original signature page). If you are unable to upload the signature page, hard copies may be mailed into the Western SARE office—however they should be in the Western SARE office by the deadline.

The Review Process

All Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grant proposals compete with one another. A panel of agricultural producers, scientists, educators, business leaders, and other professionals will conduct a criteria-based review of all proposals and select those that meet SARE goals with the dollars available. As you develop your proposal, keep in mind that funded projects clearly define an opportunity or issue in sustainable agriculture and propose innovative and specific solutions. Eligible proposals received by the due date are reviewed in two stages:

Stage 1: Proposals are sent to a diverse group of reviewers that includes farmer and ranchers, scientists, educators, business leaders and government and nonprofit professionals. Their reviews and comments are forwarded to an evaluation subcommittee.

Stage 2: The evaluation subcommittee, which includes the same diversity listed above, meets to discuss and rank the proposals based on these criteria:

Summary	10%
List of Objectives	10%
Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture	5%
Benefits and Impacts to Agriculture	10%
Educational Outreach Plan	20%
Educational Materials	20%
Producer Adoption	20%
Budget & Justification	5%
Total	100%

Additionally, reviewers are asked to answer the following questions about each proposal:

- Does this project deal with a critical need in Sustainable Agriculture?
- Is there evidence that producers were involved in the development of this proposal?
- Does this proposal represent an innovative approach or idea?
- Do you believe the outcomes and products will be useful to producers?
- Are the objectives tangible, and attainable?

Confidential Information: Proposals and all deliberations by reviewers will remain confidential. While proposals and reviews will remain confidential, the Western SARE program considers all funded projects, subsequent reports, and related information to be in the public domain (see [USDA Grant Policies](#)).

Reporting Requirements

Please review the documents in the [Helpful Documents](#) section online to strengthen your proposal and to understand what will be expected of you and your project team if you are awarded a grant:

- The [Farmer/Rancher Grantee Reporting and Evaluation Expectations](#) List shows which results you report on during the project and what SARE may assess two to four years after the project's completion.
- The [Survey Instrument](#) is a sample tool of how grantees can gather results from a project's outreach activities. This survey is one important way for collecting required data to measure changes in farmer/rancher knowledge, attitude, skills and awareness.

SARE recognizes there are limits to what can be accomplished, measured and reported during the life of your project. As a result, along with your reporting, we plan to conduct post-project assessments of representative projects to get a fuller measure of the SARE program's impact in areas such as:

- Who is participating in SARE-funded projects?
- What is being created by the projects (e.g., new knowledge, new approaches)?
- What are people learning from these projects?
- What changes are farmers and ranchers making?
- What economic, environmental, social or productivity benefits are farmers and ranchers seeing as a result of having made a change? (after the project is completed, *this is **not** the responsibility of the farmer or rancher grantee*)

Selected Proposals

If the Western SARE Administrative Council selects your project for funding, you may expect the following:

Notification: The Western SARE Administrative Council will select proposals for funding during its 2017 winter/spring meeting. (The Council reserves the right to restructure or reduce the budget of any grant proposal before final approval.) Recipients will be notified April 2017.

Contract: Grant recipients will receive a Purchasing Agreement from Utah State University (USU), the contracting institution for Western SARE. This agreement is the award notice for this grant. The agreement contains the Terms and Conditions of the grant. Acceptance of the initial payment is the recipient's acceptance of the terms and conditions of the grant.

Funds: Western SARE sends a payment of 50% of awarded funds when the recipient signs a letter of initiation and returns the appropriate tax forms and any additional budget detail that may be requested. The remaining 50% will be provided on a yearly basis to be determined by the length of the grant. When the grant is completed and a final report is submitted and approved by Western SARE and the final 25% will be allowed for payment. Detailed financial records are required. USU may request receipts to meet General Accounting Office requirements. You must report to Western SARE information changes (address, phone, technical advisor, etc.) in your funded project. **There are no advances after the 1st payment.** All proposals from Micronesia (Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, Marshall Islands and Palau) are required to have the College of Micronesia (at Pohnpei) as their fiscal agent in the disbursement of funds.

Photographs: Grant recipients are required to document their project with photographs, which can be useful to them and help us highlight and promote their work on our website and in publications. Digital

photographs and videos are preferred.

Proper Citation: In addition, the Western SARE program must be credited, with our logo published, as the funding source in any publications or outreach materials generated.

Reports: A yearly report is required – interim, annual progress or final depending on your project status – each year the project is conducted. When the project is completed and the final report is reviewed and accepted by the Western SARE office, the balance of funding will be released and paid. Project reports are compiled each year and shared with producers, interested policymakers and leaders at community, state, regional and national levels. All educational materials and products must be constructed in an electronic format. This format will be required in your reports. Our goal is to have **all** your information available on the Western SARE website once your project’s final report is approved. A yearly summary of the results from that years outreach participant surveys ([Survey Instrument](#)) are also required.

Site visits: Western SARE Staff and Administrative Council members will schedule a site visit with the PI and participants as soon as practical for outreach and compliance assistance.

Changes: Grantees must report information changes (e.g., address, phone number, change in principal investigator, etc.) related funded projects to the Western SARE office.

How to Apply

Apply at: wsaregrants.usu.edu

See the “Helpful Documents” at wsaregrants.usu.edu. Also see “[How to Conduct Research on Your Farm or Ranch](#).” If you have further questions after consulting these documents, please contact our office.

Proposals are due by 1 p.m. MST, December 7, 2016

In compliance with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, this material can be made available in other formats upon request.

Resources:

Information on past projects including summaries, highlights and reports can be found at westernsare.org/projects. We encourage you to visit this website to learn more about sustainable agriculture and the Western SARE program. wsaregrants.usu.edu offers proposal writing tips on the Grants page.

Another source of information on sustainable agriculture is the Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC), funded in part by SARE. AFSIC specializes in locating, collecting and providing information about alternative crop, livestock and production systems. Information specialists can answer questions, provide access to materials, provide references to individuals or organizations identify researchers and research projects within USDA and furnish free bibliographies and reference briefs. Contact AFSIC at (301) 504-6559 or afsic@nal.usda.edu.

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