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Farmer Grants

Northeast SARE offers grants to farmers who want to try an experiment, trial, or demonstration on their farm such as a new technique for adding value, a pest management strategy, or a method of direct sales. The goal is to help farmers explore and adopt new practices that are environmentally sound, profitable, and beneficial to the wider farm community. Proposals can address a range of agricultural, farm-forestry, labor, and production issues that affect sustainability. Successful projects offer an innovative approach that could be adopted by other farmers.

You must be a commercial farmer in the Northeast SARE region to apply. You need not be farming full time, but your operation must have an established crop or product that you sell on a regular basis. Farms affiliated with an institution or nonprofit 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.

Grant awards average \$5,000 and there is a \$10,000 cap. Projects normally run one year, although multiyear projects are not excluded. Proposals are due in early December.

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Partnership Grants

This grant is for people who work directly with farmers by conducting outreach and education programs.

Grants are used for on-farm research and demonstration projects that address production, marketing, farm labor, and other sustainability issues, and must be conducted in partnership with at least one farmer. The goal of the program is to develop demonstration projects and research results that other farmers can learn from; these grants should address sustainability issues that are important in the Northeast.

You must be affiliated with extension, NRCS, a state department of agriculture, a college or university, an agriculturally oriented nonprofit, or an agricultural consulting firm to apply. Your partnering farmers should participate in planning your proposal, and should also submit letters with the application outlining their roles and

declaring their willingness to participate.

The SARE portion of the grant is capped at \$10,000 and both single- and multiyear projects will be considered. Proposals are due in late November.

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Professional Development Grants

We also fund professional development projects that help Cooperative Extension educators and other agricultural professionals learn and transmit the knowledge needed to help farmers move toward greater sustainability. The focus is on training the trainers, disseminating sustainable practices and technologies, advancing new training strategies, and building an educational delivery system that is directly linked to improved agricultural sustainability. Projects should address the wise use of resources and the health and profitability of farms and farm communities through improved production, marketing, labor, and environmental practices, and should offer measurable outcomes. Calls for proposals may have targeted content in a given year.

Applicants should have experience offering professional development programs to the agricultural community and should also demonstrate a firm grasp on current issues and barriers to sustainability. Past projects have come from extension, agricultural nonprofits, land-grant universities, coalitions brought together specifically for the project, and private consulting firms.

Projects are typically funded for between \$15,000 and \$120,000, and multiyear projects are common. A preproposal—a one-page outline of your project and its performance targets—is due in the spring. If you are invited to submit a full proposal, the deadline is in the fall.

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Research and Education Grants

SARE funds research and education projects that lead to farmers adopting sustainable practices; the emphasis is on improved farming practices and an enhanced quality of life for farmers, farm laborers, and rural communities. Typically, farmers and other stakeholders are involved in planning and implementing the project. We also fund projects where research, Cooperative Extension, and education are closely linked.

Applicants are expected to show a clear understanding of the issues and barriers to sustainability in the region and offer a project that addresses them directly and coherently. Strong applications most often arise from consultation with diverse interests—land-grant universities, farmers, nonprofits, extension, and agribusiness—and offer evidence that the need for the project is compelling. Profitability, stewardship, and farm health and viability are key themes, and measurable outcomes are expected. Calls for proposals may have targeted content in a given year.

Projects are typically funded for between \$30,000 and \$190,000, and multiyear projects are common. A preproposal—a one-page outline of your project and its performance targets—is due in the spring. If you are invited to submit a full proposal, the deadline is in the fall.

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Sustainable Community Grants

The purpose of the Sustainable Community Grant is to connect rural revitalization and farming, and projects can address issues such as land use, labor, public policy, enterprise development, credit and finance, and environmental quality. Proposals should offer innovative models for rural development that bring together farmers, local government, citizens, researchers, Cooperative Extension, community nonprofits, civic and environmental organizations, and others who contribute to community vitality. Projects should also support appropriate growth, an improved quality of life, a cleaner environment, and improved farm stewardship.

To apply, you must be affiliated with an organization such as a community nonprofit, Cooperative Extension, local government, an educational institution, a planning board, a farming cooperative, or an incorporated citizens' group. Individuals may not apply.

The grant is capped at \$10,000 and both single- and multiyear projects will be considered. Proposals are due in mid-November.

This grant is offered in cooperation with the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development. Go to www.cas.nercrd.psu.edu for more information on the Northeast Center.

How to Apply

Proposal materials are released in midsummer for Farmer/Grower, Partnership, and Sustainable Community grants, and can be downloaded from the Northeast SARE web site or requested in print.

Preproposals for Research and Education and Professional Development grants are posted to an online template on the Northeast SARE web site in mid-spring. Preproposal decisions are made in July, and materials will be sent to you if your preproposal is selected for development into a full proposal.

"Agriculture in the Northeast will be diversified and profitable, providing healthful products to its customers. It will be conducted by farmers who manage resources wisely, who are satisfied with their lifestyles, and who have a positive influence on their communities and the environment."

—the Northeast SARE
outcome statement



STEWARDSHIP ❖ PROFITS ❖ INNOVATION

Grant Programs of Northeast SARE

NORTHEAST SARE is a regional program of the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

THE REGION INCLUDES Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

TO LEARN MORE about Northeast SARE projects and publications, go to www.uvm.edu/~nesare/ or call us at 802/656-0471. You can also write to us at Northeast SARE, 655 Spear Street, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405-0107.



NORTHEAST SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EDUCATION