

# Western SARE Competitive Grants Farmer/Rancher Research & Education 2018 Call for Proposals

Submission Deadline: December 6, 2017, 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 2018. With a Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grant, a producer, working with a technical advisor, develops a proposal to **conduct research and education** (outreach) on a sustainable agriculture topic. Outreach may include: on-farm/ranch demonstrations; farmer-to-farmer educational activities and other approaches to assist in the education and producer adoption in an area of sustainable agriculture. The goal is to find ways to enhance farm income, protect the environment, and improve the quality of life for farm/ranch families, communities, and society as a whole.

**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.

Western SARE Farmer/Rancher Research and Education projects should:

- Design innovative on-farm/ranch experiments that will lead to a more sustainable agriculture.
- Conduct on-the-ground research and education (outreach) within the scope of the project. **Both research and education components must be distinct elements of the proposal.**
- Identify how the results of this project and the adoption by other producers could advance sustainable agriculture.
- Detail creative educational outreach plans that deliver this new knowledge to other producers and professionals in the western region.

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**All applications are submitted  
online at:**

<http://wsaregrants.usu.edu>

### Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grant Program Schedule

- December 6, 2017 – Proposals are due by 1:00 p.m. MST. Signatures required.
- January 2018 – Technical review panel selects proposals for grant funding.
- March 2018 – Western SARE Administrative Council makes final selections.
- April 2018 – Coordinators of funded grant applications are informed of proposal status.
- Summer 2018 – Funds for selected projects will be disbursed.



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Host Institution:  
**Utah State University**

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

**Overview:** Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grants are funded for up to three years. All proposals **must have at least one producer (farmer/rancher), who is the applicant**, and a technical advisor. A technical advisor should assist in the development of the on-farm field trial, and the outreach of the project. Up to a total of \$20,000 per proposal is allowed for a single producer and up to \$25,000 is allowed for three or more producers. Projects may be 1-3 years in length.

**Eligible Applicants:** Only producers operating a for-profit operation are eligible to apply for a Farmer/Rancher Grant. Non-profit organizations are not eligible for this grant program. The producer (farmer/rancher) is fiscally responsible for the project and, if funded, provides his or her Social Security number. Each producer must be an independent and separate operation. You are a producer (farmer/rancher) if:

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

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

**Technical Advisor:** All proposals **must** have a qualified **technical advisor** who should assist with the planning, evaluation, outreach, 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 (two-page maximum) **must** be included. The technical advisor cannot be one of the producers.

**Funding:** Up to \$20,000 is allowed for one (1) producer. Proposals with three (3) or more producers may request up to \$25,000. Funding is paid as a fixed price contract, with 50% of the award being paid upon project initiation. The remainder is paid in fixed increments after submission and approval of the annual and final report.

**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](#).

**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](http://wsaregrants.usu.edu).

## **WRITING THE PROPOSAL**

Proposals are submitted online at <http://wsaregrants.usu.edu> as PDF documents (a 6-page narrative, a one-page summary, and budget justification) as well as other supporting documents. The project participant and budget information is entered on-line.

**Text Limitations:** Text for the narrative portion is limited to six (6) pages using 1-inch margins and a font size no smaller than 12 point Times New Roman. The narrative portion includes the following sections: Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture; Innovativeness; Benefits & Impacts to Agriculture; Objectives; Materials and Methods; Educational Outreach Plan; Evaluation & Producer Adoption; Timeline; and Roles. Citations may be included at the end of the narrative portion (not part of page limitation). In addition, a one-page summary of no more than 300 words and a budget justification should be included. Attach all three files (narrative, summary, budget justification) as PDF files. Proposals that do not follow the guidelines may be disqualified.

## **PROPOSAL APPLICATION**

### **A. Project Team** (Entered online)

The names, addresses, and contact information for the producer(s) and the technical advisor are entered online.

### **B. Summary** (Limit 300 words, PDF)

The summary should include the proposal title and a brief description of the problem or need, the creative approach to solving it, and why this is important. Describe the research and outreach components of your proposal, and explain how your project will distinctively or creatively address these problems. A clear and concise description of your proposal is important for the review process. The summary is submitted as a one-page PDF.

### C. Narrative (Limit 6-pages, PDF)

The proposal narrative is the main portion of the proposal, and is limited to six (6) pages using a font no smaller than 12-point Times New Roman and 1-inch margins. The proposal narrative is submitted as a PDF. The proposal narrative should include each of the following items:

#### **Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture:** (10% of review criteria)

Explain why this project is needed and how this project addresses a critical need in sustainable agriculture. Clearly identify any limitations in the current system and how your project will address those limitations. 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

#### **Innovativeness:** (5% of review criteria)

Explain how this project is novel and innovative. Does this proposal represent an innovative approach or idea?

#### **Benefits and Impacts to Agriculture:** (10% of review criteria)

Describe the potential benefits and impacts of your project and its findings on other producers (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.

#### **Objectives:** (5% of review criteria)

Provide a numerical list of the achievable objectives of your project. These are the major things you plan to accomplish. Are the objectives tangible and attainable?

#### **Materials & Methods:** (30% of review criteria)

Describe how you will design and conduct your research project. What treatments or new technique(s) will you be testing? What materials will be used? What data will be collected? How will you determine if your project was successful? (Note: It is often helpful to repeat the objectives, and under each objective, describe the materials and methods used for that objective.)

#### **Educational Outreach Plan:** (20% of review criteria)

Explain how you will communicate your project and its findings to producers (specifically) and others (generally). 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. Provide a list of any educational materials that you plan to produce and use in the outreach plan such as factsheets, PowerPoint presentations, handouts, articles, brochures, social media, etc. Will the outreach and products be useful to other producers? How will you disseminate this information to other producers?

#### **Evaluation and Producer Adoption:** (5% of review criteria)

Explain how you will measure reactions to, and adoption of, the findings of your project in the producer community. This plan should 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.

**Timeline:** (5% of review criteria)

Provide a timeline for accomplishing each objective. Identify the major milestones or activities that will be completed, and when each of those milestones/activities will occur. A [Gantt chart](#) may be used to present the timeline.

**Roles:** (5% of review criteria)

Detail the specific role of the producer, technical advisor, and any others who are to be involved in this project. In the on-line process, under 'Project Team,' be sure to include a paragraph or two describing the agricultural operation for each of the producers.

#### **D. Budget and Justification** (5% of review criteria; online, PDF)

Provide a concise budget, with proper justification, that is appropriate to the proposed project. The budget numbers are entered in the online budget table. The budget justification is submitted as a PDF. The budget justification should follow the order given in the budget table.

The budget and budget justification should address the following categories (if applicable). This list is not all-inclusive. For a more comprehensive list, and to find what is not allowable, please go to [Required Budgetary Details](#) and [Indirect Costs](#) under the Helpful Documents section.

Senior/Key Personnel: Identify the funding requested, and briefly describe the role and percentage time (FTE) for the PI (major professor), Co-PIs, and any other key personnel that will work on the project.

Graduate Student(s): Identify the funding requested, and briefly describe the role and percentage time (FTE) for any graduate students involved with the project.

Other Personnel: Identify the funding requested, and briefly describe the role and percentage time (FTE) or hours for any other personnel involved with the project. This includes other professionals, hourly labor, and secretarial-clerical labor (only when specific to the project).

Fringe Benefits: For each of the personnel, identify the benefit rate (e.g., percentage, flat fee).

Travel: Identify the purpose and costs for any domestic travel. Note: As a general rule, international travel is not allowed on Western SARE grants.

Materials & Supplies: List the total funds requested for materials and supplies, and indicate the general categories and amount for each category (e.g., glassware, chemicals, fertilizer, etc.). Special Note: Any single item or piece of equipment over \$500 must be listed separately with proper budget justification.

Other Direct Costs: As applicable, please identify the purpose and costs for any direct costs other than materials and supplies such as publication costs, consultant fees, subawards, communications, copies/postage/printing, conferences/workshops, professional service fees (e.g., graphic design, welding), honoraria/speaker fees, mini-grants, and any other direct expenses.

#### ***Farmer/Rancher Grant funds may be used for the following purposes:***

- Compensation for field research and educational 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, printing, creating a webpage, etc.
- Out-of-town travel needed for the project. State the purpose, destination, number of travelers and estimated cost per trip. (e.g., 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 (e.g., 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 the Federal allowable rate.
- Hired labor for things that you cannot do yourself. State whether pay is a flat rate, or if the pay includes benefits. If not flat rate, identify 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.

## **E. Required Supporting Documents**

The following supporting documents should be uploaded into the online grant application.

***Signature Page:*** Signatures from the relevant parties (e.g., producers, technical advisor) are required. Print the signature page(s) from the online application. 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.

***Technical Advisor's Resume:*** The application must include a resume (two-page maximum) for the Technical Advisor. This should be uploaded as a PDF file into the Supporting Documents section of the grant application. Producers (farmer/ranchers) are not required to submit a resume. The Technical Advisor cannot be one of the producers.

***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. Attach as a PDF. Do not submit the form if it is not applicable to your proposal (no warm-blooded vertebrate animals in your project).

## **The Review Process**

Eligible proposals received by the due date are reviewed by a panel of agricultural producers, scientists, educators, agricultural professionals, business leaders, and government and nonprofit professionals. 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. Proposals are evaluated based on the following criteria:

Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture	10%
Innovativeness	5%
Benefits and Impacts to Agriculture Objectives	10%
Materials & Methods	30%
Educational Outreach Plan	20%
Evaluation & Producer Adoption	5%
Timeline	5%
Roles	5%
<u>Budget &amp; Justification</u>	5%
Total	100%

## **Reporting Requirements**

Annual and final reports should describe the progress made on the research project, detail the findings observed, and document any outputs and impacts. All educational activities should include an evaluation component that measures changes in knowledge or awareness, attitudes and opinions, and/or the adoption of new practices.

Please review the following 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.

## **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 2018 winter/spring meeting. (The Administrative Council reserves the right to restructure or reduce the budget of any grant proposal before final approval.) Western SARE staff will notify applicants of the status of their proposals in April 2018.

**Funds:** If your proposal is selected for funding, Western SARE will send a letter of initiation, some tax and subcontract forms, and may request additional budgetary clarification. Upon receipt of these items, an initial payment of 50% of awarded funds will be released. The remaining 50% will be provided incrementally each year upon receipt and approval of an annual/final report, depending upon the length of the grant.

**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.

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.

**Note: All proposals from Micronesia (Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, Marshall Islands and Palau) are required to have the College of Micronesia (at Pohnpei) act 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 – an annual progress report or final report depending on your project status – each year the project is conducted. 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. Evaluations of outreach events, such as the outreach participant surveys ([Survey Instrument](#)) are also required. Our goal is to have all your information available on the Western SARE website once your project's final report is approved.

**Site visits:** 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, Western SARE staff 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*)

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

## **How to Apply**

**Apply at:** [wsaregrants.usu.edu](http://wsaregrants.usu.edu)

We strongly encourage applicants read the entire Call for Proposals before beginning to write the proposal. After writing the proposal, review the call for proposals again to ensure that all requested information is provided.

**Proposals are due by 1 p.m. MST - December 6, 2017**

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**

See the “Helpful Documents” at [wsaregrants.usu.edu](http://wsaregrants.usu.edu). Also see “[How to Conduct Research on Your Farm or Ranch](#).” If you have further questions, please contact our office at 435-797-2257 or [wsare@usu.edu](mailto:wsare@usu.edu)

**Information on past projects** including summaries, highlights and reports can be found at [westernsare.org/projects](http://westernsare.org/projects). We encourage you to visit this website to learn more about sustainable agriculture and the Western SARE program. Tips for writing proposals are available under [Grant Writing Tips](#) on the Helpful Documents page.

The Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC) at the National Agricultural Library specializes in locating, collecting, and providing information about sustainable agriculture. Information specialists can answer questions, highlight resources, and share search techniques for background research. AFSIC has a number of resources at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/> that may be relevant to your proposal; or, contact AFSIC at [301-504-6559](tel:301-504-6559) or [afsic@nal.usda.gov](mailto:afsic@nal.usda.gov).

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