

# Preparing a SARE Farmer/Rancher Grant Proposal

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# Sustainable Agriculture is...

- 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 agriculture economy depends;

# Sustainable Agriculture is cont'd

- Make the most **efficient use** of non-renewable **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

# Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE)

- Funded through USDA Cooperative State Research, Education & Extension Service
- Regional administration & decision making
- NCR HQ at University of MN
- State contacts – Dale Mutch at MSU
- Administrative Council
  - 12 states represented
  - Research, extension, farmers, others
  - Juan Marinez current Michigan representative

# SARE cont'd

- Funding programs
  - Research & education projects (R&E)
  - **Farmer Rancher grant program (FRGP)**
  - Professional development program (PDP)
  - Graduate fellowship program
  - Youth Grant Program
  - Youth Educator Program

# NCR SARE 2009 Farmer/Rancher Grant Program

- WHAT: ~\$400,000 for competitive grants
  - Up to \$18,000 for groups (three or more farmers – independent and separate operations)
  - Up to \$6,000 for individual farmers
- Up to 21 months duration

# NCR SARE 2009 Farmer/Rancher Grant Program

- To test, evaluate, adapt sustainable agriculture practices for their operations
- To conduct learning circles, educational events, field days, demonstrations to share information with farmers
- To develop new technologies
- To create or modify equipment
- Projects with youth component are welcome

- Applicants **MUST** identify specific problems and potential solutions
- Grants are for sustainable agriculture research and education
- **NOT** for everyday farming expenses

# NCR SARE 2009 Farmer/Rancher Grant Program

- WHO: Any NCR farmer
- One farmer is leader for group applications
  - Submits and signs application
  - Responsible for reporting
  - Assumes any tax liability

# NCR SARE 2009 Farmer/Rancher Grant Program

- WHEN:
  - August 2009 applications available
  - December 1, 2009 application deadline
  - Spring 2010 Admin Council recommends recipients
  - Spring 2010 target for initial funding
  - December 31, 2010 progress report due
  - December 31, 2011 final report due

# 2008 Program

- 182 farmer/rancher proposals submitted
- 47 funded
  - 33 individual
  - 14 group
- Project titles, descriptions, coordinators:  
[www.sare.org/ncrsare/prod.htm](http://www.sare.org/ncrsare/prod.htm)
- \$414,489 committed

# Michigan Funded Projects

- Free Range Egg Cooperative, Sam Catey, Charlotte
- Garber's Summer Farm Day Camp, Cindy Garber, Owosso
- Comparing Alfalfa and Red Clover as Economical Dairy Cow Forage, Mike Iho, Trenary
- Comparison of Profitability of Subsoil Heated and Unheated Hoophouses versus Field Production of Cool-Climate Salad Crops in Central Lower Michigan, Phil Throop, Bath

# Michigan Funded Projects

- Developing a Community Sponsored Vegetable Operation in Rural Northeast MI, Brian Botkin, Traverse City
- Winter Hardiness Trials of New Garden Chrysanthemum Varieties and Farm Research on Effectiveness of Winter Mulching Techniques, David Coveyou, Petoskey
- George Washington Carver's Garden: Farm Model and Mentoring Program for Seniors and Youth, Robert Crowder, Covert, MI

# Michigan Funded Projects

- Continuous Fiber Felting Machine, Suzanne Pufpaff, Nashville
- Growing New CSA Farmers: Conference and Mini-School for Community Supported Agriculture, Jim Sluyter, Bear Lake
- Encouraging Managed Grazing in Michigan, Howard Straub, Jr., St. Johns

# Project Outline Worksheet

1. **Describe the problem** your project will address. **What is the project objective?** *How big is the problem? Why is it a barrier to greater sustainability? How have others tried to address the problem?*
2. Describe in detail **how you would** use this grant to **address the problem.** *Explain step-by-step what you will do.*

# Project Outline Worksheet cont'd

3. How will you **evaluate** the success of the project? What are your project's expected **economic, environmental and social impacts**? *How will solving the problem impact your farm profitability, environmental, stewardship, quality of life? Think of specific things you can measure before and after the project to show its impacts.*

# Project Outline Worksheet cont'd

- 4. Why is the problem** you are addressing in your project **important** to your farm and to other farmers in your area and the North Central Region? *How many people/farms besides you does this problem affect in your area, in Michigan, in the NCR? If you are successful with this project, how will your success help others?*
- 5. How will you share information** from your project with other farmers? (Each project must include outreach – the more, the better.) *Describe a specific plan for sharing. Your extension agent and/or farm group may be able to help with this.*

# Project Outline Worksheet cont'd

- 6. Describe your farm or ranch operation.** If a group proposal, describe your operation and provide names, addresses and a brief description of the other farmer members of the group. *Size, products, how long established, who is involved, how market, etc.*
- 7. List names, addresses and phone numbers of any cooperators.** Explain **how they will participate or what they will contribute.** *Be complete and specific. Be sure each person listed here has agreed to their commitment.*

# Budget

- Personnel costs
  - Name and role of each project participant – whether or not paid with project funds
  - Estimate amount of labor -- # hours or days – and cost for each person being paid with grant funds

<b><i>PERSONNEL COSTS (List individuals and their role)</i></b>	<b><i>Grant Funds Request</i></b>
JoAnn Smith, farmer: conduct trials, take samples, record findings, evaluate test results. 86 hrs. @ \$10/hr. = \$860	\$430
David Hay, neighbor and cooperating farmer: take samples, 10 hrs. @ \$10/hr. = \$100	\$100
John Adams, Extension Service: assist with field day	
Tammy Black, University researcher: 3 days data analysis	
Ken Jones, private crop consultant: scouting, 18 hours @ \$15/hr. = \$270	\$270
Bob Allen and Henry Hedge, field day speakers: travel 310 miles @ .405 per mile = \$125.55 or \$126	\$126
Henry Hedge, field day speakers: travel 443 miles @ .405 per mile = \$179.42 or \$179	\$179
Teresa Alias, marketing consultant: special market survey, marketing plan 80 hours @ \$20/hour = \$1,600	\$250
Ward Smith, son: input data into computer, 32 hrs. @ \$8/hr = \$256	\$210
Jay Brown, hired hand: help collect samples, 20 hrs. @ \$9/hr = \$180	\$125
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,690</b>

## Budget (cont)

- Other costs – everything other than paying for people
  - Travel
  - Operating and supplies
  - Lease of land, equipment
  - Outreach
  - Miscellaneous
  - Equipment, permanent fencing, perennial seeds & plants

# Budget Restrictions

- Grant funds can pay up to 50% cost of equipment, permanent fencing materials, perennial seeds & plants
- Grant funds cannot be used to construct or remodel buildings, purchase livestock, purchase motorized vehicles – but may be used to lease or rent these items
- Grant funds cannot be used to pay for food & drinks at field days, meetings, etc.

# Budget

- Calculate labor, facilities, supplies on annual cost-equivalent basis
- Grant recipients are paid for actual project expenses. Any unspent funds must be returned

# Other Costs

Visit a University research farm (325 @ .405/mile)		\$132
Pick up: trees, earthworms, seed (76 miles @ .405/mile)		\$31
Plumbing for a pasture watering system		\$260
Lime and fertilizer		\$200
Manure analysis (4 @ \$15)		\$60
Four 6 x 6 metal cages (400 x .40 = 160)		\$160
Equipment modifications		\$75
Electric fencing : wire, posts, insulators		\$300
Land lease, 6 acres @ \$60 per acre		\$360
Weigh wagon rental to measure crop yields		\$50

# Other Costs

Film and developing		\$24
Writing, editing, printing, mailing field day brochure		\$90
Lab tests (atrazine residual, 26 samples)		\$60
Nebraska Sustainable Ag Society (conduct, promote meeting)		\$150
Market research for alternative crop		\$200
<b>Equipment, permanent fencing, perennial seeds &amp; plants</b> * These items subject to the 50 percent rule (see page iv). NCR-SARE only pays for 50%.	<b>Total Cost of Item</b>	<b>Grant Funds Request</b> (Amounts must be 50% or less of the total cost of each item.)
Used no-till drill (\$2,500 x .50 = \$1,250),	\$2,500	\$1,250
Feed grinder (\$8,000 x .50 = \$4,000)	\$8,000	\$200
High-tensile wire for vineyard trellis (\$450 x .50 = \$225)	\$450	\$50
40 Blue spruce trees @ \$65 each (\$2,600 x .50 = 1,300)	\$2,600	\$650
	<b><i>SUBTOTAL (from above)</i></b>	<b>\$4,302</b>
	<b><i>SUBTOTAL (from pg. 6)</i></b>	<b>\$1,690</b>

# Reference Letter

- One or two letter(s) of reference required
- From “community contacts” (extension educator, banker FSA representative, NRCS staff, network coordinator, implement dealer, co-op manager, etc)
- Should indicate need & appropriateness of project within the community
- May also include additional supporting information

# Selection Committee

- Farmer/rancher members of NCR SARE Administrative Council
- Farmers/ranchers from NCR SARE Technical Committee
- NCR SARE Farmer/Rancher Grant Program Coordinator

# Proposal Review Criteria

- Does the proposal identify a **problem** and have a **specific, innovative plan** to solve it?
- How well does the proposal use **existing knowledge** of the identified problem?
- How well does the proposal evaluate **economic, environmental, social impacts** of the project?

# Proposal Review Criteria cont'd

- How appropriate is the **budget** for the work to be done and how **affordable** would this be for other farmers?
- Is there a plan to share information with others (via workshops, field days, publications, etc.)? Does it include cooperation with other farmers and organizations (MIFFS, Extension, MOFFA, Farm Bureau, etc.) to help share information?
- Will the proposal make a meaningful contribution toward advancing sustainable agriculture?

# Proposal Review Criteria cont'd

- Major strengths
- Major weaknesses
- Suggestions for improvement

# Proposal Details

- Proposals limited to 5 pages, single-sided
- Type with 12-point font

# Grant Recipients Should Expect

- Contract to sign & return
- On-site visit
- Progress report
- At close of project
  - Final report summarizing project
  - Record showing financial accountability
  - Photos or slides of project activities, outreach events
- Funding sent in increments – 75% to start; 25% at completion
- Reimbursement for actual expenses; retain receipts
- Return any unspent funds
- 1099 form filed with each payment

# For Assistance

- <http://www.sare.org/ncrsare/prod.htm>
- [www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/](http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/)
- [www.attra.ncat.org](http://www.attra.ncat.org)
- [smalley3@msu.edu](mailto:smalley3@msu.edu) or 517-432-0049
- Joan Benjamin, NCR SARE Farmer Rancher Grant Coordinator, [jbenjamin2@unl.edu](mailto:jbenjamin2@unl.edu) or 402-472-0809