



Sustainable Agriculture
Research & Education



Farmer Grants

Farmer Grants let commercial producers explore new ideas in production or marketing; reviewers look for innovation, potential for improved sustainability and results that will be useful to other farmers. Projects should be technically sound and explore ways to boost profits, improve farm stewardship, or have a positive impact on the environment or the farm community.

Who can apply for a Farmer Grant?

You must be a farm business owner or manager in the Northeast SARE region. It is not necessary that you farm full time, but the primary activity of your farm must be to produce and sell agricultural products.

There is a limit of one application per farm per year.

What is the size of a Farmer Grant?

The cap on any single Farmer Grant is \$15,000. Each year, SARE awards about \$250,000 for up to 30 Farmer Grants. Awards range from \$2,500 to the \$15,000 maximum.

What can Farmer Grant funds be used for?

Grant funds can be used to pay for your time and time that your employees work directly on the project, materials specific to the project, project-related services like testing and consulting, project-related travel, outreach expenses, equipment rental, and other direct costs.

Are there things Farmer Grant funds can't be used for?

Grant funds can't be used to pay for normal operating expenses—costs that would be there in the absence of the project—or for capital expenses like the cost of buying land, tractors, livestock, machinery, or long-term improvements like barns, high tunnels, or greenhouses.



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Reviewers look for new ideas to improve farm productivity, profits, stewardship, and the vibrancy of the farm community.

Sample topics include production and marketing, soil and pest management, season extension, diversification, tools and prototypes, and on-farm energy and resource management.

How does the program work?

- * Farmer Grants are competitive—only ideas that are clearly presented and have a good plan for verifying results or demonstrating a new practice will be funded.
- * Proposals are reviewed by a team of farmers, researchers, extension agents, and other agricultural service providers who select the best projects for funding.
- * Successful proposals explore new paths to sustainable agriculture; reviewers don't approve projects that merely subsidize the adoption of practices we already know will work.
- * Applicants must have a technical advisor—typically someone from Cooperative Extension, NRCS, a certified crop advisor, veterinarian, or some other agricultural service provider. This advisor should review your proposal for feasibility and good design.

Can I see examples of past projects?

Brief descriptions of past projects in the Northeast region are on our web site at www.nesare.org. You can also search a national database of projects from around the country at www.sare.org; select the “project reports” link.

Where can I get more information or help with applying for a Farmer Grant?

There is a detailed guide for applicants on the Northeast SARE web site. Follow the “Get a Grant” link to “Farmer Grants” and select “How to Write a SARE Farmer Grant application.” Follow-up questions can be e-mailed to Carol.Delaney@uvm.edu or you can call 802-651-8335, ext. 555.

Each state also has a Northeast SARE coordinator who can answer questions. You can find contact information for your state coordinator on our web site under “State Programs.”



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