



2018 Farmer Grant Application Instructions

Grants to explore new ideas in agriculture

To submit, go to <http://www.ciids.org/nesare/fg>

The online submission system will open by November 1, 2017

Deadline is December 5, 2017 11:59 PM EST

Staff will be available to answer questions until 5 p.m. on the due date

Northeast SARE
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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 have a positive influence on their communities and the environment.

—Northeast SARE outcome statement

Note to applicants

Electronic copies of these application instructions and the budget justification template can be downloaded from the Northeast SARE website at www.nesare.org/Grants/Get-a-Grant/Farmer-Grant. You will also find other useful documents there such as “What is a Farm?” and the extensive “How to write a SARE Farmer grant” guide.

For an introduction to Farmer Grants, you are welcome to view a PowerPoint presentation at www.nesare.org/Dig-Deeper/Grant-Workshop-PowerPoints-and-Webinars/Farmer-Grant-narrated-PowerPoint

Proposals must be submitted through an online system at www.ciids.org/nesare/fg

Only one proposal per farm per year is allowed.

Questions?

Call 802/651-8335 or send e-mail to nesare@uvm.edu

Northeast SARE programs are offered to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status.

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Overview

The primary goal of the Farmer Grant program is to help farmers explore new sustainable production and marketing practices, often through an experiment, trial, or on-farm demonstration. Projects may also help farmers to address issues that affect farming and the farm community with long-term sustainability in mind. SARE defines sustainable agriculture as agriculture that is profitable and environmentally sound, and provides a good quality of life for farmers and the wider farm community.

Eligibility

You must be a farm business owner or manager in Washington, D.C, West Virginia, Vermont, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Delaware, or Connecticut. You must run a commercial operation with an established annual farm income of at least \$1,000 from the harvest and sale of crop, nursery, livestock, greenhouse, or aquaculture products that you sell on a regular basis. You need not be farming full time, but the grants are not intended for gardeners or hobby farmers. If you aren't sure you qualify, read our document on [What is a farm](#), found in the right sidebar at www.nesare.org/Grants/Get-a-Grant/Farmer-Grant or call the Northeast SARE office at 802/651-8335.

Managers on farms affiliated with an institution or a nonprofit organization are eligible to apply, but only if the primary activity of the farm is to produce and sell agricultural products under the kinds of economic constraints that affect commercial farmers. Farms where the primary mission is education or research are not eligible. Farms affiliated with institutions or organizations should apply using the name that appears on their 501(c) (3).

Applicants who are hired farm managers rather than farm owners need to complete an application signoff sheet, available on request from nesare@uvm.edu. The signoff sheet must be uploaded with the application to verify the farm owner's or institution's approval and support for the project.

Only one proposal is allowed per farm per year. If you have several different ideas, you will need to choose which one you want to submit.

You must enlist a technical advisor who provides a commitment letter.

Current grant recipients who are behind in their reporting cannot apply. If you have a grant project that has ended or is near completion, finish it and file your final report; if your project is still in progress, make sure you have submitted a recent annual report.

Size and duration of grants

Grants are limited to \$15,000. The overall project cost may be higher, but the SARE portion of the budget - the one covered by this application – must be \$15,000 or less, and there is no matching funds requirement. Most projects last one year, but multiyear projects are accepted. SARE grants are competitive. In 2017, the program awarded \$288,184 to 23 farmers from a field of 39 applicants. Awards ranged from \$5,459 to \$15,000.

Types of projects funded

Reviewers look to fund projects that promise the greatest benefit to farms and farmers and are well-designed to meet the objectives. Successful proposals define a problem or opportunity and offer solutions or test new ideas.

There are no set restrictions on topic. You can experiment with a new crop or production method, develop a machine or tool that does something new, try out a pest control or grazing technique, explore new ways of adding value, test a new way of marketing directly to the public, or address issues related to farm labor and apprentices, such as improving the skills of immigrant workers and those who manage them. To read short descriptions of previous Farmer Grant awards go to www.nesare.org/Grants/Sample-Grants/Farmer-Grants.

How SARE funds can be used

SARE funds can be used to cover **labor** for your time and the time your employees work directly on the project; **materials** specific to the project; project-related **services** like soil testing and consulting; project-related **travel**; **postage**, **printing**, and other outreach expenses; **stipends or fees** for technical advisors, collaborators, and other participants; **renting** or sharing the cost of equipment needed specifically for the project; and a *de minimus* contribution to overhead, or **indirect costs**, at the rate of 10 percent of direct costs.

What things SARE does not fund

Expenses to start or expand your farm operation. SARE funds cannot be used to buy land, tractors, livestock, or machinery, or to make long-term improvements like additions, barns, high tunnels, greenhouses, establish a herd, orchard, or vineyard, or to fund any comparable major farm fixture. As one grant reviewer put it: “Think hard about your proposal, are you truly doing research or a demonstration, or are you looking for funding for your own infrastructure and farm development?”

Normal operating expenses. Do not ask for specific overhead costs in the form of utility bills, general maintenance, general supplies, or any other expenses that would be there in the

absence of the project. Cell phone expenses are also excluded, even if you use your cell phone in the course of the project.

Funds used to develop an exclusive or proprietary process, procedure, or technique. One of the goals of the SARE program is getting useful information into the hands of farmers. Information gathered in the course of a SARE grant becomes public information, and will be available on line as interim and final reports.

Expenses outside the grant period. Expenses incurred before the award notification date or after the end date on the grant contract.

Proposal timeline

Online submission deadlineDecember 5, 2017
Applicants receive email confirming receipt with link to satisfaction survey upon submission
Proposal reviewDec 2017 – Feb 2018
Final selection and notification of applicantsFebruary 26, 2018
Grant contract issued with a February 26 start dateApril 2018
Reviewer comments e-mailed to unfunded applicants and technical advisorApril 2018

If your project is funded

Grants are paid on a reimbursement basis. You need to have the financial capacity to pay project costs and be reimbursed one to two months later. Also, note that SARE will hold 20 percent of the total award until the project work and all outreach have been done and you have submitted a complete final report.

Reporting requirements. Northeast SARE requires annual progress reports and a comprehensive final report that are published on line for public access. Annual reports are due by December 31 each year and final reports are due within 30 days of the end date of the project. To understand the types of information you will be asked to report on, please look at the performance indicators provided (Appendix D). You will not be required to report on all indicators, just the ones that apply to your project. The final report should include the full, detailed results of experiments, research, and outreach activities that were defined as part of this SARE project, regardless of pending or published journal article submissions.

How to apply

Deadline. Proposals must be submitted on line at www.ciids.org/nesare/fg. The application template will close at **11:59 PM EST on Tuesday December 5, 2017**. Waiting until the last minute risks not being able to submit because of power failures, websites going down, browser incompatibilities, bad weather, or other unexpected calamities. Submitting early also allows for resubmitting if a mistake is encountered. Staff will be available until 5:00 p.m. on the due date to help with questions and technical issues.

Answer the questions. You will enter your project summary and responses to the questions into the template, saving each section as you go. Avoid symbols, italics, or unusual formatting since these will be lost when you paste the text into the application template. The template will accept symbols directly entered from the keyboard, but other symbols copied from a word-processing program won't come through. The online application template has strict word limits, which is why we strongly suggest you prepare your proposal using a word-processing program, edit each response to comply with the word limits, and then copy and paste your proposal section by section into the online template, saving each page as you go. If you run into problems with submitting, e-mail Carol Delaney at carol.delaney@uvm.edu or call her at 802/651-8335 ext. 555.

Upload required attachments. Before submitting as final, upload the letter (.pdf or .doc or .docx format) from your technical advisor that describes his or her expertise and involvement in the project and willingness to participate, and your budget justification (excel format only). Read the attachment section on page 10 to see if your project triggers other required documents. Incomplete proposals will be disqualified.

Double check. Preview your proposal, even print out a draft, and correct any mistakes before submitting. At the last entry screen, you can leave the submission system and return to it later by selecting "continue without submitting proposal". When you are satisfied that the proposal is ready to submit, select "Yes, submit my proposal". Once you have submitted, you will be able to print out the entire application as a .pdf file. It is a good idea to download and print a copy of the proposal and its attachments for yourself and your advisor.

Application instructions

Register. The online application template requires registration via a user name and password – use the "create account" button to create an identity in the system at www.ciids.org/nesare/fg

Project title (125 characters including spaces). Use a clear, succinct title that captures the essence of the intent of the project. Avoid acronyms, jargon, or unnecessary words. Since search engines pick up on keywords in the title, it should briefly and appropriately describe the primary focus of the project.

Project leader—this should be you, the applicant. Have ready the baseline contact information of your technical advisor and, if applicable, other farmer cooperators.

Begin with a project summary (250 words). Here you have up to 250 words to outline the project content. This summary should briefly describe the issue, the objective(s), the key components of your study’s plan of work, and your outreach strategy. You may want to compose this after you have written the rest of proposal. This is the first thing reviewers see, so take some time to make it compelling.

Specific project questions. Respond to the following questions with regards to the corresponding review criteria. For those who would like more explanation on what SARE is looking for, please refer to Appendix C.

Proposal questions and Review criteria

Proposal questions	Review criteria
<p>1. What is the problem and why is it important? 500 words. Briefly state the problem, issue, or opportunity and explain why it matters. Reviewers want to see whether farmers, farm groups, or experts in the field have expressed interest or need for this type of investigation. SARE values the project’s potential contribution to sustainability as related to the themes listed in Appendix C.</p>	<p>1. A direct link to agricultural sustainability and identified need and interest. Sustainability is defined as farming practices that are profitable, good for the environment, and beneficial to farm communities. All projects must have a direct link to at least one of the six key themes. The applicant has provided convincing testimony that there is a need for this inquiry.</p>
<p>2. What is your project’s objective(s)? 200 words. State your project’s objective(s). Add to that what improvement or impact you foresee if the project is successful. Make it clear how you and other farmers will benefit from the results.</p>	<p>2. Clear proposal objective(s). The proposal should state the project objectives it will achieve that will lead to useful information for farmers.</p>
<p>3. What efforts have been made by others to solve the problem or take advantage of this opportunity? 750 words. Tell us how your project builds on what is currently known and how it is different. If the practice is known but not applied in your region, explain how you will test an approach that has worked elsewhere or make adaptations for your site.</p>	<p>3. Builds new information based on an understanding of related work. Proposals should build on current knowledge and avoid merely verifying that an established sustainable practice really works.</p>

Proposal questions	Review criteria
<p>4. What will be your project’s methods, measurements and timeline? 1500 words. Describe what you will do and how you will do it. Be very specific in describing the techniques for treatments, sampling, testing, surveying, etc. Outline the activities in a chronological timeline that states the steps, including outreach activity described in the next section. Specify in a month/year format (e.g., April 2019) when events happen and say how long each step will take and who will do them.</p>	<p>4. Sound methods, measurable results, and clear and workable timetable. The methods should align with the project concept and there should be evidence of thoughtful planning and consultation with advisors and collaborators. The timetable should be realistic and should include descriptions of who will do what, when and how long each step should take.</p>
<p>5. What is the outreach plan? 250 words. Describe how other farmers and agricultural service providers will learn about your results. Outreach can take place during the study but the final results and lessons learned must be publicized in some way before your project is concluded. Be specific on your proposed outreach plan.</p>	<p>5. Outreach. There should be a thoughtful yet simple plan for sharing project results over as wide a geographic area as possible by a specified event or written publication.</p>
<p>6. What is your farm business and what experience and skills do you and your technical advisor bring to this project? 300 words. Describe your farming experience and your farm business. Details like years in the business, what you produce and amount of production (e.g. acres, head of livestock), your markets, whether you farm full- or part-time, gross sales, and other key information about the enterprise help reviewers understand your farming operation. Describe any key collaborators (consultants, trainers) involved. Name your technical advisor and describe their role in the project. If there are to be partner farms in this project, talk about their role and make sure they and your technical advisor provide you with a letter of commitment to include with the application. If other farm resources are going to be dedicated to this project, describe them here. For example, you may already own an essential piece of specialized equipment or may have received other funding to cover related expenses not funded by SARE.</p>	<p>6. Suitability of the farm to the proposal and capacity for success. Experience is a key element in any project, as is access to the basic tools that will make it work. Proposals should describe the farm’s commercial activity in detail and describe key people in terms of the skill, time, and commitment they will bring to the project and their capacity to see the work through to conclusion. This includes the technical advisor’s contribution.</p>

Proposal questions	Review criteria
<p>7. What is your budget? <i>No word limit.</i> The completed budget justification and narrative must be uploaded as an attachment in Excel spreadsheet format. The major category subtotals from the spreadsheet will be entered in the online system to create a budget summary. In the online system, you'll enter subtotals taken from the spreadsheet into the budget summary. See Appendix A for a sample budget spreadsheet and budget summary and Appendix B for more detailed instructions on budget items.</p> <p>Budget detail. Use the Excel worksheet found in the "For applicants" box on the Northeast SARE website. Add rows and expand row heights or column widths as needed to accommodate your narrative and justification. For all items, give a brief, clear description of the purpose. Use only the categories in the template (personnel, materials and supplies, travel, printing/publications, other direct costs, and indirect costs). Justify each expense with narrative description. Show how the requested amount was determined by giving a unit cost times the quantity needed.</p> <p>Budget summary. In the online submission system, enter the budget subtotal for each of the categories of personnel, materials and supplies, travel, printing and publications, other direct costs, and indirect costs (if applicable) making sure that your dollar amounts exactly match those in your budget justification. Only submit one total expense in each category; the detailed information is not needed in the online summary.</p>	<p>7. Sensible budget. The proposal budget should be clear, internally consistent, and justify how the money will be spent. Budget items should be allowable and reasonable, and the overall budget request should be appropriate to the scale, scope, and expected results of the project. A budget lacking sufficient detail can decrease the chances for funding.</p>
<p>Project categories and Demographics. Before the final submission page, you will be asked to identify the topic and commodity that your project addresses. In addition, you will be asked for some confidential demographic information about you. You'll have the option of selecting "choose not to reply" to these questions.</p>	<p>Not part of review criteria. Topic and commodity are used to help assign reviewers. Demographic information is not applicable to the review process and not shared with reviewers nor linked to a proposal.</p>

Attachment checklist

Supported formats are .pdf, .doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx

Required attachments to upload. Failure to upload any of the required documents will result in disqualification. Attachments must be directly related to the proposed work. Do not attach extraneous materials such as brochures, resumes, or general letters of support.

- Letter of commitment from your technical advisor (.doc, .docx, or .pdf)
- Budget justification/narrative spreadsheet (.xls, xlsx)

Attachments required in specific situations:

- If there are other farmers participating, a letter of commitment from each
- Plot plans or diagrams for experimental design (hand-drawn is acceptable)
- If the proposal is for an invention or prototype, include diagrams, sketches, or explanatory images
- If the project is a feasibility study or economic viability study, include a proof of concept or pro-forma budget
- If your project measures changes in human learning or behavior, include sample surveys
- If a hired farm manager is the applicant, either at a privately owned farm or at an institution, include the sign-off sheet verifying approval of the farm owner or Institution/organization – contact nesare@uvm.edu to get this.

Appendix A: Sample budgets

Budget justification/narrative (to be included as attachment)

<i>Funding Categories / Item Name</i>	<i>Narrative justification of expense</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>\$ per unit</i>	<i>Quantity x \$</i>
PERSONNEL					
<i>Only people employed by the recipient organization or farm should be listed in this category. Those employed elsewhere should be listed under "Other direct costs," or, if individuals are to be paid by another institution via a subaward to that institution, they should be included in a separately detailed subcontract budget and the subcontract total should be listed below under "Subcontracts" in "Other direct costs."</i>					
Salaries and wages.					
<i>Provide narrative detail of each person's role in the project or the services they are providing through their work on the project. Show full-time equivalency as a percentage and salary for each year, or provide hourly wage times number of hours, to equal total \$ requested.</i>					
Project leader(s)					
Maria Sanchez	manage grant, data collection and analysis, do outreach and reporting	hrs	120	\$ 28.50	\$ 3,420.00
Student wages (tuition remission unallowable).					
					\$ -
Support staff.					
Bashir Ibrahim , employee	plant and manage experiment within crops, set up trial plot	hrs	120	\$ 12.00	\$ 1,440.00
Other hired labor.					
					\$ -
Subtotal: Salaries and wages (rounded to the nearest dollar)					\$ 4,860
Fringe benefits.					
<i>If applicable, provide the fringe rate that will be applied to wages above and the total for each wage line or category. (Academic institutions that include tuition remission in their fringe rate must remove the tuition remission portion of the rate.)</i>					
SS, Medicare, FUTA	Employers matching portion only	percent	0.0825	\$ 1,440.00	\$ 118.80
					\$ -
Subtotal: Fringe benefits (rounded to the nearest dollar)					\$ 119
PERSONNEL TOTAL (salaries, hourly labor, and fringe benefits)					\$4,979
NON-PERSONNEL					
Materials and supplies.					
<i>Indicate each item with quantity and estimated cost. Include narrative justification on how the item fits the project, its direct need and why not otherwise available through the organization. Items must be project-specific and able to be tracked as being used for the project. General-use items such as office supplies are not allowable unless the items can be tracked and itemized for a project-specific purpose.</i>					
Clover/grass seed for study	12# per acre for 10 acres	lbs	120	\$ 4.00	\$ 480.00
Insect traps	10 per acre for 10 acres plus 10 spare replacements for damaged traps	each	110	\$ 4.45	\$ 489.50
Subtotal: Materials and supplies (rounded to the nearest dollar)					\$ 970
Travel.					
<i>Provide detail as to the destination, purpose of the travel, who is traveling, number of travelers. For mileage reimbursement provide miles x rate (not more than federal rate). For lodging provide rate x number of nights. For travel meals, provide per diem or allowance used.</i>					
Maria Sanchez	5 round trips to cooperating farms @ 100 miles	miles	500	\$ 0.535	\$ 267.50
Maria Sanchez	1 round trip to Exp. Station @ 62 miles	miles	62	\$ 0.535	\$ 33.17
Maria Sanchez	travel to regional crop meeting to present results	miles	334	\$ 0.535	\$ 178.69
Maria Sanchez	2 nights lodging at conference	night	2	\$ 122.500	\$ 245.00
Subtotal: Travel (rounded to the nearest dollar)					\$ 724

Sample budget justification/narrative, continued

Publications/printing. <i>Publishing of an article in a scientific or technical journal or other type of field/program related publication or for commercial printing of brochures and program materials. Photocopying costs should be included under "Other direct costs."</i>					
Ready Copy, LLC	300 flyers for announcing workshop	each	300	\$ 0.25	\$ 75.00
Subtotal: Publications (rounded to the nearest dollar)					\$ 75
Other Direct Costs		Unit	Quantity	\$ per unit	Quantity x \$ =
Communications. Mailings, postage, conference calls. Cell phone charges are unallowable.					
Postage for field day outreach	300 flyers sent in mail @ \$0.46 each	each	300	\$ 0.46	\$ 138.00
Photocopying. In-house photocopying.					
Photocopying of handout for field day	Six page handout with experiment description and results, copies for 25 people	page	150	\$ 0.05	\$ 7.50
Speaker / trainer fees. Include name, fee, and description of the services they are providing.					
					\$ -
Consultants. <i>Name of those receiving stipends or payments for services and their organization or farm, statement of work or description of what is being done to earn the payment, and breakdown of number of days or hours of service, rate of pay, etc. Add attachment if necessary.</i>					
Insect Specialist/Consultant	identification of pests-2.5 hrs/month for 4 months @ \$35/hr	hrs	10	\$ 35.00	\$ 350.00
Mira Gaba-Dodge, research associate, Shepherd University	analyzing data; evaluating results; assist in report preparation - 20 hrs	hrs	20	\$ 30.00	\$ 600.00
Services. For non-contracted services rendered for the project. Provide details (fees or hired payments, purpose and quantities).					
LabTech, LLC.	Lab Tissue Analysis, sampled twice per summer over 2 years	samples	4	\$ 125.00	\$ 500.00
Jerry Gray, subcontractor, Wonder-Spray	fee for custom treatments: @ \$280	trtmts	5	\$ 280.00	\$ 1,400.00
Conferences/meetings/workshops. Note that costs for project personnel to get to conferences should be included under "Travel".					
					\$ -
Trainee support (participant support costs). <i>A subsidy payment to or on behalf of those who receive training, usually for registration fees, lodging, meals, and associated travel. (N.B.: payments for services rendered should be listed above in speaker/trainer fees or consultant payments. And conference/meeting/workshop expenses may be listed in that category above.)</i>					
					\$ -
Off-site office rental. only allowable if necessary for a project specific purpose.					
					\$ -
Equipment purchase or the cost of fabrication of equipment.					
					\$ -
Equipment and land-use charges or rental.					
Microscope for insect identification; from www.microscopes.com, model GW168, The Microscope Store.	Purchase needed for project at \$1565 plus \$35 shipping, to be used for two years on SARE project. \$1600/10 year life = \$160. For 2 year project, \$320 would be the SARE share of purchase price.	microscope with farm paying \$1480	1	\$ 320.00	\$ 320.00
Extra land rental for experimental plots	land	acre	10	\$ 100.00	\$ 1,000.00
Other / miscellaneous. These costs must always be identified in order to be allowed.					
Quik Sign Company	Signage for field day; one road sign from print shop to direct attendees to the farm	each	1	44	\$ 44.00
Subcontracts. <i>List institution, project leader's name, and amount of subaward. Attach a proposed plan of work and a budget justification/narrative with detail for each subaward institution or organization.</i>					
					\$ -

Sample budget justification/narrative, continued

Subtotal: Other direct costs (rounded to the nearest dollar)		\$ 4,360
NON-PERSONNEL TOTAL		\$ 6,129
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS		\$11,108
Indirect costs. Complete the check-off below . Indirect should not exceed the allowed cap, so round down when necessary.	<i>de minimus rate calculated as no more than 10% of direct costs, $0.10 \times 11,108 = \\$1,110$</i>	\$ 1,110
TOTAL SARE REQUEST		\$ 12,218
Acknowledge that indirect has been offered through the application instructions by checking off (✓) one of the boxes below.		
Indirect is requested, based on the de minimus rate (our organization has never had a federally negotiated indirect cost rate).		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Indirect is requested, based on having a federally negotiated indirect cost rate (subject to USDA/NIFA cap of 10% federal funds).		<input type="checkbox"/>
No indirect is requested.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Applicants are informed that they may be eligible to claim indirect cost recovery as follows:		
<p>An organization or private business not having a federally negotiated rate for indirect costs, and never having had one previously, may claim up to 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) as de minimus to cover overhead.*</p> <p>An organization having a current federally negotiated rate for indirect costs may request indirect up to the USDA/NIFA cap for this program, which is 10% of the total SARE request.**</p> <p>You may choose to not receive indirect funds. Or if your organization previously had a federally negotiated rate but it is no longer in effect, your organization is not eligible for indirect funds.***</p>		
<p>* De minimus. USDA/NIFA allow s organizations and private businesses that have never had a federally negotiated rate agreement to use a de minimus rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). MTDC includes all direct costs except for subaward amounts above \$25,000 for each subaward organization (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award), and also excludes trainee/participant support costs, long-term rentals, and equipment purchases.</p>		
<p>** Current negotiated rate. For institutions having a current federally negotiated rate, to calculate the cap (10% of total funds), divide total direct costs by nine and round down (or multiply direct costs by 11.11%).</p>		
<p>*** Ineligible for indirect. If your organization's previously negotiated rate is no longer in effect, your organization is not eligible to receive indirect costs. Organizations with previously negotiated indirect cost rates may not use de minimus.</p>		

Sample Budget summary

(subtotals from budget spreadsheet, to be entered into the on line application system)

Personnel total	4,979
Materials and supplies total	970
Travel total	724
Printing and publications total.....	75
Other direct costs total.....	4,360
Indirect cost*	1,110
<hr/>	
Total grant funds requested (rounded to nearest dollar)	\$12,218

*Up to 10 percent of direct costs as a *de minimus* rate

Appendix B: Budget detail instructions

General format. For example, if under “materials” you are proposing to buy cover crop seed, your budget line should specify how much and cost per unit (“Cover crop seed for 10 acres, 12 lbs. per acre = 120 lbs. @ \$4 per pound = \$480.”), and a brief description of how it will be used. For “travel,” include who, where, and the purpose and distance of each trip (“Mary Sanchez, project leader, car travel to experiment station for insect identification training, one 62-mile round trip @ 0.54/mile = \$33.48”). Under “personnel,” show the cost of your time or the time of employees dedicated to the project as an hourly rate times the anticipated time needed to complete the project. Consultant time – these are payments to people who are not your employees – should be put under “other direct costs.”

Indirect costs. USDA/NIFA allows grant recipients to include indirect costs in their budget. This helps grantees recover costs for overhead that cannot be directly attributed to your grant project, to contribute toward routine expenses like utilities, general supplies, and other carrying costs that would be there whether this project happened or not.

Most Farmer Grant applicants will likely use what’s known as the *de minimus* rate, which allows for indirect costs up to 10 percent of direct costs. In the example above, the requested direct costs total \$11,108, so the *de minimus* rate of 10 percent would be \$1,110, making the total request \$12,218. The total request, including the indirect cost, cannot exceed \$15,000. Enter this on the “indirect cost” line of the budget spreadsheet and in the budget summary. In rare cases, often involving non-governmental, academic, and service organizations, a slightly different rate will apply. If your organization has an established federal indirect rate, contact Northeast SARE for guidance on how to complete this budget line.

Equipment. Equipment refers to tangible, nonexpendable property having a useful life beyond the project period. Farm applicants are expected to possess the equipment needed for normal farming operations such as tractors, tillage implements, and product handling equipment and that is why a *de minimus* indirect is available to contribute to some of those overhead expenses of ownership. Applicants from institutions or organizations are also expected to have essential equipment such as copiers, cameras, computers, video equipment, and other items that could have a wide range of uses beyond the boundaries of the project, so any requests for these items must be clearly justified and the equipment must be essential and directly related to the project activities.

Any requests for funds to rent or purchase equipment should describe why the equipment is not part of a farm’s normal inventory and why it is essential to the project. When possible, equipment should be rented, but if the equipment is relatively inexpensive or not available for rent, an applicant can propose to buy the equipment and request that SARE share the cost based on the time it will actually be used for the project. The allowed expense would be calculated as the purchase price divided by expected useful life times the number of years used on the project. Choose a useful life that is appropriate for the equipment and how it will be used.

Equipment purchase costs are entered in the budget under “other direct costs,” along with any delivery or shipping costs.

Examples of allowable equipment expense calculations. If a \$6,000 scale (plus a shipping fee of \$200) is needed to weigh cattle being raised under different feed regimens and one is not available for rent (www.cattlescales.com, Model AP600), and it will be used over two years in the project with a useful life of 10 years, the allowable SARE portion of the purchase price would be $\$6,200/10 \text{ years} = \620 per year . $\$620 \text{ times two years} = \$1,240$. This is the allowable expense charged to SARE; the \$4,960 balance would be paid by the farm.

A dewatering screw press is needed to remove moisture from the byproduct brewer’s grains for a one-year feed study (<http://www.vincentcorp.com>, model Issue #215). The purchase price (including shipping) is $\$5,200/10 \text{ year useful life} = \$520/\text{yr. times one year of project use} = \520 ; this last number is the allowed expense that could be charged to the grant.

A microscope is needed to identify insects for a two-year study. It has a useful life of 10 years (www.microscopes.com, model GW168, The Microscope Store.). If the purchase price (including shipping) is \$1,600, \$320 of the purchase may be charged to the grant ($\$1,600/10 \text{ yr.} = \$160/\text{year times two years} = \320).

Ten electric netting rolls are needed to keep sheep in a hops yard. The netting has a useful life of three years. The equipment is Electro Net 35, 164 foot length each (www.premier1supplies.com). $\$112 \text{ times } 10 \text{ rolls} = \$1120 \text{ plus } \$50 \text{ shipping/ three years} = \390 . Since this is a one-year study, \$390 may be charged to the grant.

Insect screening is needed as a control method vs. spray for a two-year study. Assuming the screening has a five-year useful life, Insect Mesh .0394" x .0335", 13 feet X 328 feet (www.americannettings.com). $\$612 \text{ plus } \$28 \text{ shipping} = \$640/5 \text{ yr.} = \$128/\text{year}$. For this two-year project, \$256 may be charged to the grant.

Perennials and livestock. Perennial crops or livestock are generally unallowable expenses for the purposes of establishing a commercial enterprise. However, if you are conducting a variety trial or testing a new crop unknown to your region and the amount is clearly what would be sufficient for plot trials and not to establish commercial production, the purchase of perennial plants is allowable. The purchase of bees for research is also allowable to when the numbers are in accord with creating a common basis for treatment comparison. The introduction of smaller, shorter-lived animal species as a treatment of a study can be an allowable expense if the cost is low, an example being the use of ducks or chickens as pest or weed control. Feed during the study period is allowed and housing fencing investments are treated as equipment expenses, as describe above in the previous section. If the livestock are a normal part of your farm operation, only request the cost of the livestock if they are in addition to the numbers you usually carry and the study involves a loss of income risk. SARE funds are not meant to subsidize farm expansions.

Appendix C: More explanations, examples, and tips for proposal questions

Note: Time needed to submit. Successful grantees report that it generally takes 20 to perhaps 40 hours to develop a proposal.

1. What is the problem and why is it important? 500 words

SARE lists these themes where improvement of practices can increase sustainability:

- ❖ the reduction of environmental and health risks in agriculture
- ❖ the prevention of agricultural pollution
- ❖ improved productivity, the reduction of costs, and the increase of net farm income
- ❖ the conservation of soil, the improvement of water quality, and the protection of natural resources
- ❖ the enhancement of employment in agriculture
- ❖ the improvement of quality of life for farmers, their employees, and the farm community

2. What is your project's objective(s)? 200 words

An example of an objective is “To determine if barrier strip-cropping will decrease the percentage of bird damage and increase sunflower seed yield per acre as compared to a control.” Note the statement will describe an increase, decrease, or change in something in units or a quantitative or qualitative descriptor. The objective(s) should be related to one of the key themes of sustainable agriculture listed above. It would be useful to add the foreseen impact the results of the study would have if successful. For example, one could say, “Just a 10% decrease in seed losses would increase the value harvest per acre by \$50/acre, on average” or “Controlling avian pests in this way will allow farmers to stop broadcasting loud deterrent sounds which will improve neighbor relations.” When you are finished your study, you will know if you reached your objective.

3. What efforts have been made by others to solve the problem or take advantage of this opportunity? 750 words

Reviewers look for evidence that you are familiar with past work or research and that what you are doing will provide new information and that will help other farmers. Your technical advisor could be helpful in this area. While SARE expects that you will search the [SARE projects database](#), reviewers expect you to continue beyond this and you can find more informational resources website at <http://www.nesare.org/Dig-Deeper/Sustainable-agriculture-links> Some popular sources are [National Agricultural Library](#) and their [Alternative Farming Systems Information Center](#), [Organic Farming Research Foundation](#), and [Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas](#).

4. What will your project's methods, measurements and timeline be? 1500 words

The plan of work should make sense by answering the question and lead to measureable results. Data should be gathered and assessed consistently and logically, with controls or other methods that assure that results will be trustworthy. Give a clear, detailed description of the procedure (how and when) for data collection. For example, if you are trying out a pest control technique, describe the quantities used, the application dates or stage of growth, and how you will set up a control plot versus a treatment plot (a plot design attachment is required in this case). Or, to use a different example, if your project will explore whether a new procedure will decrease mastitis in goats, you will need to describe how you will set up control and treatment groups – you would need to identify the tests (e.g. SCC plus gram + and – plate counts and identification) that verify whether the goats have mastitis or not and explain how this data will be summarized.

The capstone will be how you will analyze and interpret the information you gathered. A study need not be subject to statistical analysis, but it should be unbiased and last long enough to be meaningful and provide results that are more than merely anecdotal. If there are enough sample numbers, perhaps a statistical analysis of that information can be done to verify results. If you don't have the skill needed to do this kind of analysis, recruit a technical advisor or researcher who does.

For the timeline, be sure to include outreach. If you are not sure of the name of a person doing a task, indicate the role, like "farm manager," instead. Some sample timeline partial entries could look like this:

March 2019

- Build screened enclosures and emergence traps –Maxamed Ahmed, 10 hrs.

April 2019

- Build habitat patches in three orchards, Maxamed Ahmed and farmworker, 12 hrs. x 2 people.

-Set up screened enclosures and collect adult bees, Maxamed Ahmed and farmworker, 16 hrs. x 2 people.

-Collect flowering branches to feed caged bees for two weeks, Maxamed Ahmed, 14 hrs.

5. What is the outreach plan? 250 words

SARE is unique in that your project must offer an outreach component of your results and often the technical advisor is helpful in completing this requirement. Be sure to allow enough time and funding to complete this step. Common outreach mechanisms are talks at workshops or conferences, demonstration days, fact sheets, handouts and the like that are made available to other farmers through a producer network, media coverage for your project, or an article for a farmer association newsletter you can write. Your outreach should target farmers and others who will benefit from knowing the results of your project, and should cover as wide a geographic area as possible.

Reviewers look for a plan that will deliver information widely, letting other farmers know what worked and what didn't. It is better to have a short and specific outreach plan (e.g., "I will apply to be a presenter at the annual 2019 NE Herb Grower Symposium in Charleston, WV, that draws around 300 attendees and my technical advisor will post the results on her herb webpage, www.herbherb.com.) than it is to have a longer list of general ideas without a specific proposal (e.g., "I plan to be a presenter at the next medicinal plant conference and ask local grower groups to host me at their member meetings.").

6. What is your farm business and what experience and skills do you and your technical advisor bring to this project? 300 words

This section is where you present not only your farm operation but also all your farming experience before then. Reviewers need assurance that you run a commercial operation and that you have the capacity, labor and land, to carry out the project. Often, the farmer does not have all the skills but enlists others to make a strong team to help ensure success. This team can be a sounding board when challenges arise.

All projects must have a **technical advisor** such as a county extension agent, NRCS staff, a university research or extension specialist, a private crop consultant, a veterinarian, or other technical expert. You will need to get a letter of support from your technical advisor that describes his or her background, expertise and involvement that confirms the level of commitment – you will upload this letter with your online application. Although the technical advisor is required, you, the farmer, should be the one actively in charge of the project. If you find that you prefer your technical advisor be in charge, encourage the advisor to apply for a [Partnership Grant](#) with you as a cooperating farmer.

Before writing anything, it's important to talk your project through with your technical advisor. The role of this advisor is to provide support where needed to the farmer applicant. The technical advisor can review the proposal to give feedback, help with the design of the study, provide technical information on the topic, help troubleshoot any problems that arise during the project, or help promote the results of the completed study. Your answer should make it clear what role the technical advisor will perform and not just their expertise. The letter from the technical advisor will confirm this.

Including collaborators other than the technical advisor makes sense when there is a natural fit between your collaborators and your project design but is not necessary. Collaborators are typically other farmers, consultants, specialists, suppliers, and others who have something specific they can bring to the project. Collaborators can help with replication, marketing, data collection, or other project activities.

7. Budget information. Budget justification and narrative, Budget summary. No word limit. See Appendix A for a sample budget and budget summary and Appendix B for specific budget instructions.

Appendix D: Performance indicators

SARE FARMER GRANT PROGRAM Grantee reporting and post-project evaluation

Logic Model Category	Performance Indicators <i>(When you report you will receive prompts for these indicators.)</i>	Who Collects/When Reported	
		Grantee Collects/ Reports by End of Project	SARE Collects/ Post Project (from <u>F</u> armer and/or Technical <u>A</u> dvisor)
Participants	Number of farmers participating in research	✓	
	Number farmers reached through outreach	✓	
	Number of agricultural service providers reached through outreach	✓	
Outputs: – Activities – Information – Products	Research activities conducted	✓	
	Research results of the project	✓	
	Number and type of outreach activities conducted to share project results	✓	
	Number and types of outreach publications <i>(if produced)</i>	✓	✓F, A
Learning Outcomes	Number of farmers directly involved in project that report changes in KASA <i>(knowledge, attitudes, skills, awareness)</i>	✓	✓F, A
Action Outcomes	Number of farmers that made a change based on the results of the project <i>(including what is changed)</i>	✓	✓F, A
	New collaborations as a result of project <i>(by farmer and/or technical advisor, if occurred)</i>	✓	✓F, A
	SARE grant leveraged another grant <i>(by farmer and/or technical advisor, if occurred)</i>	✓	✓F, A
Condition Outcomes	Economic, environmental, social benefit(s) from farmers making change on farm		✓F, A

Frequently asked questions

Q: How do I preview my application before I submit and print a copy for my records?

A: In the last submission screen, you will see an option to preview a PDF version of your proposal. If you see something that doesn't look right there, you can go back to the relevant section and make edits before submitting. After you submit, you will be able to print out the entire proposal as a .pdf file.

Q: Do I have to finish submitting my application in one online session?

A: No – each section of the application can be saved as you go. You can leave your online session and return to finish up later.

Q: Are the grants competitive?

A: Yes. Last year we had 41 applications and funded 23.

Q: If I am funded, what is reporting like?

A: Our reporting requirements are straightforward. Be prepared to submit a project overview when the project begins, an annual progress report in December, and a final report when the project is over.

Q: If I am funded, is there a lot of paperwork?

A: Before we can send a contract for you to sign, you will need to fill out a W-9 tax form, a form specific to legal/audit compliance, and another form if you will be claiming de minimus indirect costs. We will send you a handbook that explains the project management and reimbursement process, but keep in mind that we cannot reimburse expenses prior to the approval of your award or after the contract ends.

Q: I had a Farmer Grant in the past. Will this affect how my application is reviewed?

A: No. Each application is judged on its merit.

Q: What happens to the reports I send in and the information I uncover?

A: Northeast SARE makes project results available on line and available to other growers, researchers, nonprofits, and the general public. Your reports will become part of a searchable SARE database and may be included in publications and informational campaigns.

Q: Can you tell me more about the role of the technical advisor?

A: These are people who bring technical support and offer access to resources; they are agricultural service providers who support things like outreach, project concept and design, and general consultation. To learn more, you can watch a short video, "Farmers and their technical advisors," on line in the Northeast SARE video vault.

Q: What kind of support is available from Northeast SARE?

A: The Northeast SARE Farmer Grants coordinator (Carol.Delaney@uvm.edu or 802/651-8335 x555) and SARE state program coordinators can help (Go to the Northeast SARE website and select "state programs). Also, "How to Conduct Research on Your Farm or Ranch" is available as a free download or by searching this exact title from the SARE online learning center.