

Simply Sustainable

working to sustain western agriculture



quarterly newsletter
from Western SARE

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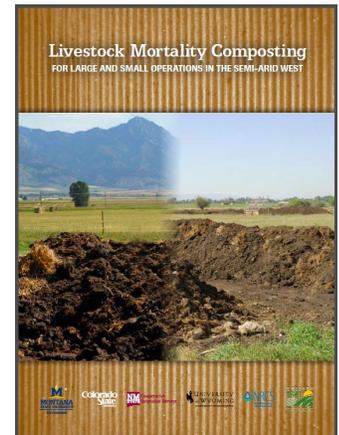
LIVESTOCK MORTALITY COMPOSTING INFORMATIONAL PRODUCTS

A WESTERN SARE PROJECT PROFILE

According to Jessica Davis, professor of soil and crop sciences at Colorado State University, the management of livestock mortalities can impact the sustainability of livestock production in many ways. Concerns about mad cow disease have reduced the availability of rendering services and increased the cost of disposing of dead

animals. Other disposal methods, such as burning, incineration, or burial at landfills can be expensive. Other burial methods are time-consuming, illegal or unpopular where farms are located in close proximity to residences. Ranchers and managers need cost-effective alternatives which will protect water and soil from contamination and prevent the spread of pathogens from mortalities to living, productive animals. Davis and

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STRENGTHENING AGRICULTURE'S INFRASTRUCTURE CONFERENCE: Distinguished Speakers Confirmed

Nearly 40 renowned speakers, including Fred Kirschenmann of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture; Ken Meter of Crossroads Resource Center; and Lisa Sedlar of New Seasons Market, are slated to address topics focused on increasing the economic viability of food producers of all sizes at the **Strengthening Agriculture's Infrastructure: Adding Value, Breaking Down Barriers, Increasing Profits**

conference. The conference, to be held in Portland Ore. December 3-5, will provide participants with real-world examples of profitable and feasible food enterprises, information on how challenges were overcome and opportunities to discuss potential new initiatives with speakers and peers.

"By the end of this conference, attendees will have had many opportunities for deep discussion with speakers and

fellow participants, time for networking, education through poster presentations and communication with leaders of Western SARE," said conference organizing committee member and Wyoming rancher Larry Cundall. "All of us will be closer to creating initiatives that bring consumers closer to farmers and ranchers and expand the marketplace for sustainably-produced food."

A top priority for the conference planning committee has been to ensure that producers' experiences and knowledge are fully integrated into the program; therefore at least 25 percent of the speakers currently confirmed are farmers or ranchers, with

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STRENGTHENING AGRICULTURE'S
INFRASTRUCTURE

ADDING VALUE, BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS, INCREASING PROFITS

THE HISTORICITY OF SARE...

by V. Philip Rasmussen, Coordinator
Western Region SARE Program

I sit here, in a new office, necessitated by the condemnation and demolition of our old asbestos-laden SARE offices. I cannot help but ponder the implications of our past actions (historicity) as we look to the future. The physical packing and moving of many years of SARE records was not trivial. Nevertheless, the requisite sorting through boxes and boxes of SARE materials has allowed me to take an extensive look back at Western SARE's 24-year history. Presently, I am likely the oldest professor continuously involved in the SARE program. Yet, age has its advantages. I was able to witness the birth of the SARE program and its bumpy adolescence. Now, I remain with SARE for a few years to witness the bounteous fruition of the efforts of many extremely dedicated SARE pioneers. One of those pioneers was the late Dr. Patrick Madden (who served as the founding director of the national Low-Input Sustainable Agriculture [LISA] program). Dr. Madden wrote a brief history of the SARE program (available on our website: <http://www.westernsare.org/About-Us/About-Western-SARE/The-Early-Years>) as it neared its 10-year anniversary. As we approach the 25-year anniversary of the USDA-SARE program, the tumultuous elements of that history come strikingly into my mind. As Madden once commented: "Those first years were, at once, full of both significant successes and significant challenges." Perhaps SARE's formative years were similar to Microsoft's first years of massive ups and painful downs that Bill Gates characterized as "riding the bull."

Initially, the USDA-SARE program was called USDA-LISA. It emphasized several key elements of sustainable agriculture research and extension education. Specifically,



WESTERN SARE
COORDINATOR'S COLUMN

V. Philip Rasmussen, Ph.D.

it stressed:

1. A direct involvement of farmers and ranchers in the administration of the program, the ranking of competitive proposals and direct involvement in funded projects. This has been most heartening to watch.
2. A holistic, systems view of the entire food system (from "farm to fork").
3. Both the physical and the social effects on- and off-farm (local communities).

There are other essential elements, but these three were paramount in our minds as LISA matured into SARE, and the program rolled forth into a robust research and extension education organization. I feel so fortunate to have personally viewed and participated in the very beginnings of SARE as well as continuing to be involved today. We are now witnessing the Western Region SARE program's Administrative Council (AC) roll forward with several ground-breaking initiatives—all of which directly address the same three essential elements listed above. Let me paint a word picture for you of these new initiatives...

Hybrid Systems Calls for Proposals

One of these AC initiatives is a new, totally reformulated, multi-discipline research and education proposal call. The

call features a "hybrid" mix of essential elements which approaches a total "systems" approach. We certainly realize that true "farm-to-fork" systems projects cannot be adequately addressed by SARE's typical three- to four-year projects. Nevertheless, the AC will now, after these initial hybrid systems proposals are selected, seriously evaluate ways to renew selected, stellar projects to ensure that a larger systems view can be emphasized.

Graduate Student Calls for Proposals

The AC has continued to emphasize and add funding to Western SARE's Graduate Student Grants program. The AC's hope is to ensure that we build a cadre of future academic faculty and researchers who will confront and solve the sustainability challenges of the future.

Subregional Results—Addressing Sustainable Agriculture's Infrastructure

The AC has also chosen to prioritize several of the recommendations that came from the seven SARE subregional conferences. The most recent project is the infrastructure conference that the Western SARE program will be hosting in Portland, Ore., December 3-5, 2012. This conference will take a wide, systems view at elucidating, exploring and posing possible solutions to the many and varied infrastructure problems of a truly sustainable food system.

Addressing the Social Science Issues in Sustainable Systems

The AC now welcomes a new council seat for an acknowledged expert in social capital and societal effects. We welcome Dr. Jessica Goldberger of Washington State University as the newest member on the Western SARE AC. Dr. Goldberger will represent the often-overlooked, social side of true

"I am ever so grateful that we are now a mature program with a stronger focus on the entire food system, a long-term view of sustainable agriculture research and education and a time-tested set of policies and procedures."

— V. Philip Rasmussen,
Western SARE
Coordinator

2012 WESTERN SARE FUNDED PROJECTS

The Western SARE Administrative Council approved funding for 30 grants totaling \$2,174,186 in the 2012 grant cycle. The four grant programs providing the funding are Research & Education (six grants at \$1,150,893), Producer (seven grants at \$130,771), Professional + Producer (eight grants at \$397,671) and Professional Development Program (nine grants at \$494,851).

The total R&E funded amounts were slightly lower this year, and will be slightly lower next year as well, as Western SARE sets aside funds for a one-year calendar change as we implement the modifications to the R&E-Cooperative Projects program.

Full descriptions of each grant and contact information for the Principal Investigator can be found at <http://www.westernsare.org/Projects/Funded-Projects-by-Year/2012-Projects>.

The 2012 Graduate Student grants were awarded



last fall and summaries can be found at <http://www.westernsare.org/Projects/Funded-Projects-by-Year/2012-Graduate-Student-Projects>.

The funded grants by state are:

Alaska

Producer Grant: FW12-046, "Monitoring Impacts of High Tunnels on Growing Conditions and Season Extension in Southcentral Alaska," Principal

Investigator: Rachel Lord, \$19,615.

Arizona

Producer Grant: FW12-068, "On-Farm Pollinator Habitat Restoration," Principal Investigator: Gary Nabhan, \$25,000.

Professional + Producer Grant: OW12-010, "Production, Milling and Marketing of Arid-Adapted Heritage Grains in the Desert Borderlands to Increase Food Security," Principal Investigator: Chris Schmidt, \$49,950.

California

Professional + Producer Grant: OW12-008, "Water Management in Sonoma County Grape Production," Principal Investigator: Nick Frey, \$49,200.

Research and Education Grant: SW12-110, "The Interaction of Rangeland Management and Environ-

mental Conditions in Regulating Forage Quality & Quantity and Other Ecosystem Services," Principal Investigator: Valerie Eviner, \$265,414.

Professional Development Program

Grant: EW12-017, "Training Manuals and Professional Development Activities for Teaching Organic Farming and Marketing," Principal Investigator: Jonathon Landeck, \$98,782.

Professional Development Program Grant: EW12-033, "Farming Strategies for Coping with Climate Change," Principal Investigator: Renata Brillinger, \$19,000.



Colorado

Producer Grant: FW12-076, "Development of a Digitally Integrated, Low-cost Farm-to-Consumer Product Tracking System for Small-scale Farmers and Grower Networks," Principal Investigator: Brett KenCairn, \$24,965.

Professional Development Program Grant: EW12-009, "Integrating Birds in Range Management Across the Sagebrush Steppe," Principal Investigator: Laura Quattrini, \$60,000.

Hawaii

Producer Grant: FW12-034, "Grapes for Tropical Hawaii," Principal Investigator: Ken Love, \$17,370.

Professional + Producer Grant: OW12-041, "Effectiveness of Beauveria Bassiana on Coffee Berry Borer in Different Agroclimatic Zones," Principal Investigator: Elsie Burbano, \$49,403.

Research and Education Grant: SW12-040, "Low-input Integrated Management of Tomato Viruses in Hawaii," Principal Investigator: Mark Wright, \$297,296.

Research and Education Grant: SW12-114, "Secondary Effects of Behavior-based Pasture Management," Principal Investigator: Matthew Stevenson, \$37,125.



LIVESTOCK MORTALITY COMPOSTING *(continued)*

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her project team aimed to demonstrate that livestock composting can be done effectively in the climates typical to the semi-arid High Plains and Rocky Mountains.

In 2009, Davis and her team were awarded a Western SARE Professional Development Program grant for the project: "In-Service Training and Decision-Making Tools for Optimizing Livestock Mortality Management" (project number EW09-013). The project's objectives were to provide professional development opportunities for land-grant extension faculty, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) field staff and NRCS Technical Service Providers in the area of livestock mortality management. The project was also to develop tools for use by extension and NRCS professionals in extending mortality management information and decision-making tools to livestock producers in the semi-arid High Plains and Rocky Mountains.

Proper management of animal mortalities on the farm,



ranch or feedlot has important implications for nutrient management, water quality, animal health and farm/ranch family and public health. To best ensure human health and safety, as well as reduce regulatory risks and protect environmental resources, livestock producers should become familiar with best



management practices (BMPs) for dealing with dead animals. They should also be aware of state laws related to proper disposal or processing of mortalities. Davis and her team found that composting is practical for larger carcasses. They have also identified BMPs, issues to watch for, economic costs and key regulations in four states.

The project team has produced four educational products: a decision aid spreadsheet that evaluates the costs of mortality composting against other mortality disposal options, a how-to

manual on mortality composting, a video illustrating on-the-ground mortality composting and a PowerPoint presentation describing the spreadsheet. These resources were created by Colorado State University,

Montana State University, New Mexico State University, USDA-NRCS and the University of Wyoming. The resource materials are based on demonstrated research, pertinent reviewed literature and mortality composting systems already in use by regional producers. All will be posted on CSU Extension's website

(www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/ag/animal-compost.html).

The how-to manual for practitioners that covers the basics of livestock mortality composting in the western U.S. has been published and distributed through Extension and NRCS networks. The manual can be downloaded from the Western SARE website (westernsare.org/Projects/Project-Products). Due to the importance of reaching Spanish-reading ranchers and workers directly, the manual has been translated into Spanish. The video, also translated into Spanish, includes footage shot in New Mexico, Colorado and Montana.

On June 20, the project team sponsored a 60-minute webcast "Livestock Mortality Composting for Large and Small Operations in the Semi-Arid West" for professionals who advise livestock producers, such as county Extension agents, USDA-NRCS staff, conservation district staff and private agricultural and environmental consultants. The webcast has been archived and can be viewed at connect.extension.iastate.edu/p93vve5511f/?launcher=false&fcsContent=true&pbMode=normal.

To review the project's reports, search the database at sare.org/projects using the project number.

Jessica Davis and her team found that composting is practical for larger carcasses, and they have determined best management practices, issues to watch for, the economic costs and regulations in four states.

IN THE NEWS

Project-Produced Educational Materials on Website

As SARE's focus is as much on education as it is on research, the program is dedicated to getting out high-quality materials developed by funded projects on a variety of sustainable agriculture topics to a wide audience. At westernsare.org/Projects/Project-Products new books, manuals, databases, websites, webinars and videos are regularly added for viewing and downloading. Topics are searchable.

Recent additions include a sheep grazing-alfalfa economic decision and support tool developed from current research for sheep and alfalfa producers, a comprehensive agritourism website for producers and visitors, a sustainable commercial greenhouse production curriculum, and a sustainable ranch management assessment guidebook. To stay current on SARE-funded educational materials, we suggest bookmarking the page and returning often.

SARE Websites Win Top Award

The SARE program's new suite of websites, which was recently awarded a top honor by the Association for Communications Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Life and Human Sciences

(ACE). The "webplex" of four regional sites and the national outreach site (visit westernsare.org and sare.org) received ACE's Gold Award for website design plus the Outstanding Professional Skill award for the entire information technology category.

"This is a very effective, beautifully designed set of sites," commented ACE judge Lorna Olsen, of North Dakota State University. "The content is easily searchable and discoverable, and the navigation is intuitive and user-friendly."

Users can also browse free books, bulletins, fact sheets, grantee-produced resources and videos spotlighting SARE-funded research. *From the Field* profiles and a searchable database of funded projects invite producers, agricultural professionals and other users

to learn from grantees who have put their innovative ideas to the test.

Pollinator Conservation

The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation is pleased to announce an upcoming *Pollinator Conservation Planning Short Course* in Laramie, Wyo. July 17, 2012. SARE has provided funding toward this training. The full-day training will provide participants with the latest science-based approaches to reversing the trend of pollinator declines and will equip participants with the recipes necessary to protect and manage habitats for these vital insects. More information about this course can be viewed at xerces.org/events.



Western SARE Calls for Proposals

Western SARE's 2013 Calls for Proposals have been released. PDFs of the calls can be downloaded from <https://wsaregrants.usu.edu/grants/>. Hard copies may be requested from the Utah office by calling (435) 797-2257.

Deadlines are:

- Professional Development Program: October 31, 2012, 12 pm MST
- Farmer/Rancher: December 5, 2012, 1 pm MST
- Professional + Producer: December 5, 2012, 1 pm MST

THE HISTORICITY OF SARE... (continued)

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systems-based agricultural sustainability research.

Changing the R&E Funding Calendar

The Council has also chosen to initiate steps toward a funding calendar which can be implemented to minimize constraints placed upon the principal investigators and their time-sensitive projects when Congressional appropriations are past due. In the near future, we will not be affected by his-

torical one- to 10-month delays in the federal appropriations bills. This has meant some very serious belt tightening in the current year's funded proposals. Nonetheless, it will allow the Western SARE program to fund projects immediately after the AC makes their final decisions in mid-March of each year.

The Years Ahead

I can now safely look back at the tumultuous days during the birth of the LISA/SARE

program. In so doing, I am ever so grateful that we are now a mature program with a stronger focus on the entire food system, a long-term view of sustainable agriculture research and education and a time-tested set of policies and procedures. All of these conditions will certainly help engender a continuous flow of research-based information to the farmer, rancher and agricultural professional, now and in the future.

STRENGTHENING AGRICULTURE'S INFRASTRUCTURE CONFERENCE *(continued)*

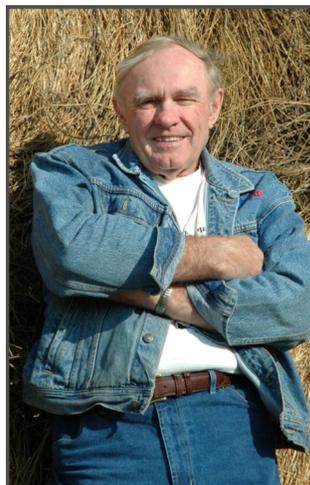
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more invited to speak. A full list of confirmed speakers and their biographies can be found at westernsare.org/infrastructure.

Topics to be addressed and discussed include:

- Opportunities and Challenges for Ag. in the Middle
 - Trends and Economics for Rural Communities
 - Steps Needed to Overcome Identified Barriers
 - Niche Livestock Processing
 - Farm-to-Institution
 - Investment in Communities
 - Adding Value through Food, Fiber and Fuel Processing
 - Successful Marketing and Distribution Models from Across the West
 - Food Development Centers' Role in Developing Local Processing and Marketing
 - Key Farm Bill Programs
- Please see full agenda on page 7.

A longtime national and international leader in sustainable agriculture, Fred Kirschenmann shares an appointment as Distinguished Fellow for the Leopold Center. He also continues to manage his family's 2,600-acre certified organic farm in south central North Dakota. He was one of the first 10 recipients of the James F. Beard Foundation Leadership awards in 2011 and will receive the 2012 Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award from Practical Farmers of Iowa. In April 2010, the University Press of Kentucky published a book of Kirschenmann's essays, *Cultivating an Ecological Conscience: Essays from a Farmer Philosopher*, that trace the evolution of his ecological and farming philosophy over the past 30 years.



Fred Kirschenmann

As a well-respected agricultural thinker and farmer, Kirschenmann offers his audiences practical knowledge about the opportunities and challenges that face America's Ag. in the Middle as well as ideas for further discussion on reforms needed to strengthen our food and farming system.

Ken Meter is one of the most experienced food system analysts in the U.S. Meter has performed statewide (or provincial) food system assessments in Arkansas, California, Hawaii, Indiana, Manitoba, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia. These studies can include data of the economic impacts of food production on the region, the state of local agriculture and a critique of a system reliant on commodity trade. He served as an advisor for the USDA Community Food Projects including managing the proposal review panel, and serves as a contributing editor to the *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems and Community Development*.

Meter will bring his expertise on trends and challenges facing agricultural communities to the conference and discuss with the audience

ideas for building increased resiliency into the food production system.

The final keynote speaker of the conference, Lisa Sedlar, President and CEO of New Seasons Market, will share the perspective of leading a successful retail business founded on sustainable business practices and committed to building partnerships with local farmers and ranchers through their Home Grown program. New Seasons Market, a locally owned grocery store with seven locations in the Portland area, is recognized as a leader in sustainability, building local food systems and being a progressive workplace. The Home Grown program gives the consumer an opportunity to support the regional economy through their buying dollars and the opportunity to support sustainable agriculture.

Karl Kupers, of Shepherd's Grain, and Theresa Marquez, of Organic Valley, will provide a response to the first two keynote speakers from the perspective of leaders of successful businesses. On the second day, Gail Feenstra, University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program; Steve Balling, Del Monte Foods; and Stacy Davies, Country Natural Beef, will share their research and experience in what are the next steps to be taken to build stronger regional food and farming systems.

Early bird registration (\$140 for the 2.5 days and meals) is now available online. Producer scholarship applications are available as well. For registration, scholarship information and regular updates on the conference, please visit westernsare.org/infrastructure.

“By the end of this conference, attendees will have had many opportunities for deep discussion with speakers and fellow participants, time for networking, education through poster presentations and communication with leaders of Western SARE.”

— Larry Cundall,
Wyoming Rancher
and
Conference Organizing
Committee Member

AG INFRASTRUCTURE CONFERENCE AGENDA

<p>December 3: 4:30: Registration opens 5:30: Reception with local foods, no host bar December 4: 8:00: Welcome 8:15: Why Western SARE is interested in agriculture's infrastructure 8:45: Fred Kirschenmann, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture 9:45: Break to visit posters 10:30: Ken Meter, Crossroads Resource Center 11:15: Karl Kupers, Shepherd's Grain and Theresa Marquez, Organic Valley: Response to prior two presentations. 12:00: Lunch and Keynote speaker - USDA-NIFA leader, TBA 1:30: Small Session A 3:00: Break, visit posters</p>	<p>3:30: Small Session B 5:00: Reception 6:00: Dinner 7:15-9:00: Discussion sessions with speakers December 5: 8:00: Setting the stage - what was learned the day before 9:00: What is Needed to Meet Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gail Feenstra, UC SAREP • Steve Balling, Del Monte • Stacy Davies, Country Natural Beef 10:30: Break 11:00: Small Session C 12:30: Lunch and Keynote speaker - Lisa Sedlar, New Seasons Market, Portland 2:00: Closing Session: What did we learn/next steps 3:30: Adjourn</p>
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Ag Infrastructure Conference Small Session Tracks

Confirmed speakers as of June 6, 2012, more TBA

	SESSION A	SESSION B	SESSION C
1. Creating Successful Producer-Partnerships	<p><u>Shared Storage and Equipment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theresa Showa, <i>Ganado Family Farms, Navajo Nation</i> 	<p><u>Niche Livestock Processing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruce Dunlop, <i>Lopez Island Farm</i> • Joel Huesby, <i>Thundering Hooves</i> • Mike Kloft, <i>Lonely Lane Farms</i> • Darin Saul, <i>University of Idaho</i> 	<p><u>Community Processing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Janie Burns, <i>Homegrown Poultry</i> • Jan Tusick, <i>Mission Mountain Food Enterprise</i>
2. Adding Value through Food, Fiber and Fuel Processing	<p><u>Animals / Mixed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeanne Carver, <i>Imperial Stock Ranch</i> • Dawn Thilmany, <i>McFadden, Homestead Beef, Colorado State University</i> • Mike Ridenour, <i>Meadow Maid Foods</i> 	<p><u>Fruits / Vegetables</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Margaret Campos, <i>Comida de Campos</i> • Larry Thompson, <i>Thompson Farms</i> 	<p><u>Oilseed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA, <i>Montana State University</i> • Kent Wasson, <i>Peaks & Prairies</i> • Bret Hess, <i>University of Wyoming</i> • Manny Encinias, <i>New Mexico State University</i>
3. Successful Marketing and Distribution Models	<p><u>Businesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karl Kupers, <i>Shepherd's Grain</i> • Stacy Davies, <i>Country Natural Beef</i> • Bo Maurer, <i>Wheat Montana</i> • Theresa Marquez, <i>Organic Valley</i> 	<p><u>Distribution</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lynea Newcomber, <i>Idaho Bounty</i> • Diane Dempster, <i>Charlie's Produce</i> • Amanda Obourne, <i>FoodHub / Ecotrust</i> 	<p><u>Retail and Restaurants</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gail Feenstra, <i>UC SAREP/ASI</i> • Lisa Sedlar, <i>New Seasons Market</i>
4. Public Sector and Community Response	<p><u>Farm-to-Institution</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don Bustos, <i>Santa Cruz Farm</i> • Jim Dyer, <i>Southwest Marketing Network</i> • Clark Seavert, <i>Portland Metro Foodshed</i> 	<p><u>Community-Based</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan Tusick, <i>Mission Mountain Food Enterprise, MT Food Dev't Center</i> • Pati Martinson and Terri Badhand, <i>Taos Food Center</i> 	<p><u>Investing in Communities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glenda Humiston, <i>Rural Dev't</i> • Jerry DeWitt, <i>Slo-Money</i> • Larry Yee, <i>Food Commons</i>
5. Repeating Panels	<p><u>Niche Livestock Processing</u> (see above)</p>	<p><u>Animals / Mixed</u> (see above)</p>	<p><u>Fruits / Vegetables</u> (see above)</p>
6. Repeating / Special Panels	<p><u>Community Processing</u> (see above)</p>	<p><u>Farm-to-Institution</u> (see above)</p>	<p><u>Farm Bill Programs</u> (TBA)</p>



FOURTEEN COLORADO FARMS AND RANCHES HOST SARE FELLOWS

Eight County Agriculture Agents from around the nation viewed and accessed examples of sustainable agriculture practices at 14 Colorado sites during a three-day set of tours as part of the SARE Sustainable Agriculture Fellows Program May 15-17. These members of the National Association of County Agriculture Agents (NACAA) were invited into the Fellows Program to enhance their understanding of sustainable agriculture and give them a broad-based, national exposure to successful and unique sustainable agriculture programs. Upon their completion of the fellowship, each Fellow creates a plan to educate other ag agents in their area about sustainable agriculture practices.

The Fellows participating in this year's program are Marlin Bates, University of Missouri; Jack C. Boles, Jr., University of

Arkansas; Brad Burbaugh, University of Florida; Aaron Esser, Washington State University; Lauren Hunter, University of Idaho; Thomas R. Maloney, Cornell University; Jim Ochterski, Cornell University; and Suzanne Mills-Wasniak, Ohio State University. Biographies can be found at

<http://www.westernsare.org/Professional-Development-Program/Fellows/Fellows-Biographies>.

Dennis Lamm, Colorado State University Agriculture Extension Education Director and State SARE Coordinator, in collaboration with many other colleagues, located 14 Ft. Collins, Colo.-area farms and ranches employing first-rate sustainable agriculture practices where the Fellows viewed firsthand the application of these principles. According to Lamm, "It was certainly our pleasure to host the eight SARE Fellows from diverse regions of the

country. While it was a great opportunity to showcase the diversity and productivity of Colorado agriculture, we also gained the perspectives and insights of our guests. It was truly an educational experience for all involved."

The featured farms and ranches include La Luna Dairy, Seaworth Farms, Quatrix Aquaponics, Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch, Sakata Farms, Isabelle Farms, Lookout Ridge Farm, Herston Hay and Cattle, Hazel Dell Mushrooms, JBS Kuner, Fagerberg's, Croissant Red Angus, Shortgrass Steppe and Terry Bison Ranch. Size of operations range from small-scale operations to operations with 3,200 acres, and the farms grow crops such as wheat, onions, beans and mushrooms, among other produce. Ranches include bison, dairy cows, beef cattle and A1

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"I have truly enjoyed my time on the Western SARE Administrative Council. It has been professionally and personally rewarding to work with such a dedicated group of like-minded, yet diverse people."

— Rick Melnicoe,
Western SARE
Administrative Council
Alumni

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL CHANGES

Western SARE welcomes its newest member to the Administrative Council, Jessica Goldberger, and announces the departure of long-time member, Rick Melnicoe.

Jessica Goldberger is an associate professor of rural/agricultural sociology in the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences at Washington State University. She was appointed to the newly-created Rural Sociologist seat for the Council and will attend her first meeting in July. She has participated as a grant reviewer previously.

Jessica states, "As the newest mem-



Jessica Goldberger

ber of the Administrative Council, I am excited to bring my rural sociological expertise to Western SARE strategic planning and project reviews. I especially look forward to sharing my knowledge of social sustainability, agriculture-community interactions and social science research methods."

Jessica has been with Washington State University since 2006. Her research program falls within the sociology of agriculture and food systems and focuses on transitions to social, environmental and economic sustainability within conven-



Rick Melnicoe

tional and organic agrifood systems. She has conducted research on organic farming in semi-arid Kenya, agricultural biotechnology adoption in the Upper Midwest and sustainable pest management (tree fruit, potatoes) in the Pacific

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2012 FUNDED PROJECTS *(continued)*

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Micronesia

Professional Development Program Grant: EW12-036, "Training Toward Transition of Subsistence Farmers to the Market Economy," Principal Investigator: Jim Currie, \$60,000.



Program Grant: EW12-031: "Organic Conservation Training for Western Region Conservation Professionals," Principal Investigator: Sarah Brown, \$98,288.

Utah

Montana

Professional + Producer Grant: OW12-044, "Best Management Practices for Livestock Protection Dogs," Principal Investigator: Jeff Mosley, \$49,998.

Professional + Producer Grant: OW12-024, "The Rocky Mountain Survivor Queenbee Cooperative," Principal Investigator: Melanie Kirby, \$50,000.

Professional + Producer Grant: OW12-020, "Feedlot Performance, Feed Efficiency, and Profitability of Cattle Fed Either a Complete Mixed Ration or Allowed to Voluntarily Select Their Diet," Principal Investigator: Beth Burritt, \$49,976.

Research and Education Grant: SW12-108, "Low Glycemic Potatoes, A Value-Added Crop for Montana," Principal Investigator: David Sands, \$154,000.

N. Mariana Islands

Professional Development Program Grant: EW12-034, "Building Capacity within the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Island's (CNMI) Aquaculture Development Program (ADP) in Marine Finfish Hatchery Production to Create Opportunities for Farmers and Alleviate Pressure on Wild Fish Stocks," Principal Investigator: Michael Ogo, \$47,407.

Washington

Producer Grant: FW12-035, "Comparing Organic No Till with Conventional Tillage Methods When Direct Seeding Vegetables and Incorporating Cover Crops," Principal Investigator: Gary Miller, \$14,701.

Professional Development Program Grant: EW12-004, "Tour of Sustainable Small Grain Production in Eastern Washington," Principal Investigator: Jeannie Olmstead, \$7,500.

Producer Grant: FW12-074, "Study and Control of Pseudomonas Syringae on Blueberry Plants," Principal Investigator: Parmjit Uppal, \$14,120.

Professional Development Program Grant: EW12-006, "Montana State University Extension Range Institute," Principal Investigator: Tracy Mosley, \$60,000.

Oregon

Professional + Producer Grant: OW12-034, "Management of Fusarium Wilt of Cucurbits with Vetch Cover Cropping and Grafted Transplants," Principal Investigator: Alexandra Stone, \$49,158.

Professional + Producer Grant: OW12-030, "Companion and Cover Cropping for Eastern Washington Dryland Grain Farms," Principal Investigator: Diana Roberts, \$49,986.

New Mexico

Producer Grant: FW12-039, "Distilling Essential Oils from Southwest Medicinal Plants," Principal Investigator: Tomas Enos, \$15,000.

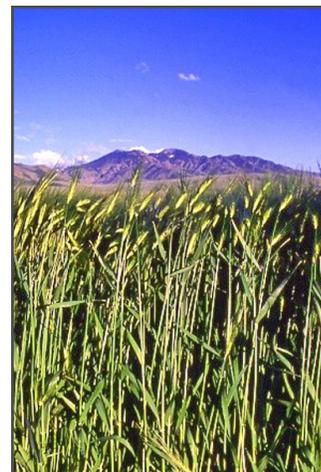
Research and Education Grant: SW12-037, "A Collaborative Phenology Modeling System to Enhance Crop Management on Vegetable Farms," Principal Investigator: Nick Andrews, \$203,610.

Research and Education Grant: SW12-122, "Soil Quality Assessment in Long-Term Direct Seed to Optimize Production," Principal Investigator: Tami Stubbs, \$193,448.

Professional Development Program Grant: EW12-026, "Technical Service Provider Training to Improve Services for Family Forest Landowners," Principal Investigator: Dan Stonington, \$43,874.



Professional Development



WRITING A SUCCESSFUL GRANT PROPOSAL: Insights from a Grant Reviewer

by H. Michael Harrington, Executive Director, WAAESD and AC Member

By participating in a grantsmanship workshop, having several projects successfully funded through grants and by assisting faculty in becoming more successful, I can recognize why proposals either succeed or fail. Over the last 15 years, colleagues and I have conducted grantsmanship workshops for more than 1,000 faculty, government and private sector individuals. Many of these participants have subsequently won grant awards for the first time in their careers; while others have honed their skills by learning the fundamentals of winning grants and improved their success rates.

There are two hard and fast rules: first, you must absolutely follow the instructions and meet deadlines. The term deadline has a very strict connotation; after the line the proposal is dead! If you don't do either of these things, you have no chance of success and your proposal will likely be returned without review. Second, you must submit your best effort by preparing a well-written proposal. Those who volunteer their time as reviewers are offended by authors who have not followed the instructions or by those who exhibit what I call "Irresponsible Authorship" by submitting a proposal that is not ready for prime time.

I have created several lists of tips that, if followed, should help you become more successful.

What makes for a successful proposal?

- A *good idea* that fits the Call for Proposals
- Remember, it's their money (not yours) to be used to address the agency's priorities (not yours)
- Compelling evidence of need – why this work should be supported



H. Michael Harrington

- Clear aim or goal
- Provide the clearest presentation possible - *every word tells*
- Demonstrate that you can get the work done
- Objectives are "SMART" – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound.
- Evidence of collaborator commitments

What irritates this reviewer (and many others)?

- Lack of organization in writing - it reflects poorly on your organization in thinking
- "Leaps of faith" - real and imagined
- Poor grammar, spelling and

- punctuation
- Using two words when one will do
- Dual submissions
- Failure to do a complete literature search (use the web)

Basic questions reviewers ask:

- How high is the intellectual quality and merit of the study?
- What is the potential impact? Are the goals and objectives achievable?
- How novel is the proposal? If not novel, to what extent does potential impact overcome this lack? Is the research likely to produce any new data or concepts or confirm existing hypotheses?
- Is the hypothesis valid and has the author presented evidence supporting it?
- Are the aims logical?
- Are the procedures appropriate, adequate and feasible for the project?
- Are the investigators qualified? Have they demonstrated a level of competence, credentials and experience?
- Are the facilities adequate and the environment conducive to the project?

“There are two hard and fast rules [for submitting grants]: first, you must absolutely follow the instructions and meet deadlines... Second, you must submit your best effort by preparing a well-written proposal.”

— H. Mike Harrington,
Western SARE
Administrative Council

Top 10 Reasons Proposals Fail

I've always been a fan of Dave Letterman's Top Ten lists, so below are the Top Ten reasons why proposals are rejected. This information is taken from across all types of funding agencies, and thus is not specific to any particular agency or program such as Western SARE.

10. Poorly written
9. Basic flaws in logic, demonstrating a lack of scientific understanding
8. Not innovative – project would result in little new information
7. Resubmission ignored previous review comments
6. Incomplete literature review
5. Unclear objectives or hypotheses
4. The proposed research does not fit the stated interests of the Calls for Proposals
3. PI(s) are inexperienced with the experimental design or methodology
2. Unclear methods or procedures - review panel questions achievability of proposed work
1. Having failed to meet one or more of the above, the proposed work is not a good investment of public dollars

SARE FELLOWS *(continued)*

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sires. Practices observed included minimum tillage, drip irrigation, organic soil-building and pest control, energy efficiency, balance trait selection, GPS and other technology, among others. Profiles of the farms can be found at

<http://www.westernsare.org/Professional-Development-Program/Fellows>.

Fellows expressed the usefulness of viewing so many operations. Upon his return to New York, Jim Ochterski said, "It helps to have so many real-life operations to bank into my professional sustainable farming experience."

Efficient use of water in a region that is experiencing a drought and has low rainfall was a common topic at each of the tour stops. At Seaworth Farms, the adoption of new technology has helped reduce water use and costs, while at Fagerberg's, drip irrigation is used on 600 of their 1,400 acres, reducing water use by 40 percent. Drip irrigation also reduces chemical run-off and requires minimal tillage.

Encroachment from urban development was another concern for many of the producers. For example, La Luna Dairy faces challenges as they cannot expand their herd or grow their own feed due to surrounding housing developments. Owner John Slutsky communicates regularly with the community to dispel concerns and educate on his operation. Many of the producers discussed the general lack of understanding of agriculture by urban and suburban residents and the important need to reach this population as they have an impact on water use, policy and regulations in the region.

Lastly, a need for a passion in order to be successful was a view brought up by many. When Bob Sakata, 82, of Sakata Farms was asked how he meets challenges he stated, "I love what I do," and he ad-



SARE Fellows



Quatrix Green House

vised his son to return to the farm only if he also shared the passion. Another producer who clearly showed his passion was the young operator of Quatrix Aquaponics, Matthew Westenhaver, who enthusiastically gave a tour of his operation growing hydroponic greens with nutrients provided from fish tanks where tilapia are raised. He believes that this unique concept has the potential to provide a large quantity of food.

The Fellows discussed the strengths and weaknesses and the true sustainability of each operation. In addition to the farming and ranching practices, Fellows also looked at the economic sustainability. As Aaron Esser of Washington notes, "Sustainable agriculture has to be economically viable with a strong focus on resource conservation and soil enhancement. Sustainable agriculture also has to feed nine billion people in the near future! This will take all sectors

of agriculture from small organic farmer market operations to the large 'corporate' operations to accomplish such a task with less land and water available for agricultural use."

The SARE Sustainable Agriculture Fellows program is a two-year program jointly sponsored by NACAA and the SARE program with agents being selected on a competitive basis each year. One Fellow is chosen every year from each of the four geographic regions, based on application evaluations by a committee with reviewers from each region. Applicants are scored on information that they provide on their past experience, plans for reaching out to other extension personnel, potential impacts on and benefits for agricultural professionals and their clientele, and evaluation methods.

"While it was a great opportunity to showcase the diversity and productivity of Colorado agriculture, we also gained the perspectives and insights of our guests. It was truly an educational experience for all involved."

— Dennis Lamm,
CSU Agriculture Extension
Education Director
and
State SARE Coordinator



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Western Sustainable Agriculture,
Research and Education Program

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL CHANGES *(continued)*

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Northwest.

Jessica enjoys working in multidisciplinary teams, conducting survey research, mentoring graduate students and helping people understand the concept of “social sustainability” with respect to agrifood systems. She received a B.A. in anthropology from McGill University, and an M.S. in rural sociology and Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Rick Melnicoe, director of the Western Integrated Pest Management Center, has resigned from the Administrative Council due to his retirement as of July 1. An at-large member since 2005, Rick has been a dedicated member. He

attended the majority of the subregional conferences hosted by Western SARE. Rick’s thorough readings and reviews of the grant proposals, and his suggestions for improvements to the review process, were always greatly appreciated. Rick anticipates continuing as a proposal reviewer.

As director of the Western IPM Center, Rick communicated to USDA and EPA the impacts of EPA’s potential regulatory actions. He viewed his role as a facilitator to ensure that pest managers in the West have a voice in decisions affecting them. This can be accomplished by identifying critical or emerging pest management issues and seeking funding for addressing

those issues. Rick was also the University of California State-wide Pesticide Coordinator. In this capacity, he coordinated and reviewed UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources activities pertaining to pesticide research, experimentation and use.

Regarding his tenure on the Administrative Council, Rick states, “I have truly enjoyed my time on the Western SARE Administrative Council. It has been professionally and personally rewarding to work with such a dedicated group of like-minded, yet diverse people. The Western IPM Center greatly benefitted from Western SARE programs, philosophy and leadership. I will miss the camaraderie and challenges we all shared.”