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The Administrative Council of the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program announces the call for proposals for Research to Grass Roots Grants for 2019.

Research to Grass Roots Grants are aimed at helping agricultural professionals, farmers, ranchers and others in the Western Region increase their understanding and proficiency in sustainable agriculture.

Proposals are evaluated by a Review Panel against the criteria outlined in this call and in comparison with other grant proposals. The Western SARE Administrative Council – a board of agricultural producers, scientists, educators and business leaders – will then make the final selections of projects to fund. The council typically selects proposals diverse in subject matter and geography and that demonstrate outcomes farmers and ranchers in the region can successfully adopt.

Important note: Congress mandates that the SARE grant program depart from “business as usual.” To that end, the Administrative Council requires that agricultural producers be involved from start to finish in the planning, design, implementation and educational outreach of any SARE-funded project.

These SARE projects should:
- Increase sustainable agriculture knowledge, skills and action.
- Have outreach plans that demonstrate how the project will effectively deliver this knowledge.

Congress has defined sustainable agriculture as an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will over the long-term:
- Satisfy human food and fiber needs
- Enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agriculture economy depends
- Make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls
- Sustain the economic viability of farm operations
- Enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

-- U.S. Code Title 7, Section 3103

Research to Grass Roots Grant Information
- Deadline for submitting Professional Development Program grant proposals: 12:00 NOON MST November 28, 2018
- Western SARE Administrative Council makes final selections in March 2019. Principal investigators of funded grants are informed by April 1, 2019.
- Funds for selected projects disbursed summer/fall 2019.
Background and Purpose

Research to Grass Roots Grants (R2GR) are built on the SARE concept that results of applied research are used to train agricultural professionals and farmers/ranchers in the latest principles of sustainable agriculture. Successful R2GR projects will take the research results from previously funded SARE project and bring those results out into the field through education to ag professionals and producers. These R2GR proposals should focus on a topic that has been researched by SARE. Results from the previous SARE-funded research must be the basis of the project, and the tie to the previous research must be documented in the proposal. Examples of possible educational projects under R2GR grants would include, but it are not restricted to, local demonstrations, trainings, focus groups, and application of research results by farmers or ranchers on their own operations. Funds may also be used to support travel for previous principal investigators or others of the underlying SARE research project to come to the location(s) of the R2GR project and assist with education or demonstration efforts.

Each R2GR proposal must include a team made up of producers, ag professionals, and possibly researchers. Representatives from land grants, NGO’s, agency employees or producers may lead the project. The team must have a structured plan indicating activities such as meetings, trainings, outreach, and/or demonstrations. The role of each team member should be well explained in the proposal.

$300,000 has been set aside for these Research to Grass Roots Grants for 2019.

Proposal Review

Project proposals are evaluated by a panel of educators, scientists, producers, and others with expertise in sustainable agriculture. The Western SARE Administrative Council, a board of representatives with strong knowledge and interest in sustainable agriculture, makes the final selection regarding which projects receive funding.

The criteria required in the proposal provide the basis for reviewer evaluation. These criteria should be incorporated into all nine items in the proposal format on page 5 and 6. The six items below are the content, and content is the most important aspect of your proposal. Proposal format items 1-9 on pages 5-6 are the structure, and the application system will ensure that you follow the structure. The criteria are:

1) **Sustainable Agriculture Relevance (20%)**: All SARE proposals should focus on issues that relate directly to sustainable agriculture goals listed on page 5 of this CFP. Research to Grass Roots proposals must target critical issues that have a high likelihood of impacting the sustainability of agriculture in our region. Topics should be carefully selected to ensure that they address a current need.

2) **Collaborative Involvement (20%)**: Proposals should illustrate the meaningful involvement of agricultural producers, personnel from land grant universities, nonprofit organizations, and/or other entities in the project’s development, implementation, and outcomes
3) **Appropriate Objectives and timetable (10%)**: The objectives should be specific measurable achievable and realistic. The timeline for achieving the objectives should be clear and reasonable.

4) **Appropriate Methods (20%)**: The activities and methods described must be appropriate for meeting project objectives and outcomes. This includes having the proper expertise and organizations involved.

5) **Feasibility and Evaluation of Project Outcomes (20%)**: Proposals must address the desired outcomes in each of the following areas, describing how they will be assessed, measured, and documented:
   - Improving the knowledge base of project participants and/or others in a sustainable agriculture topic or area.
   - Increasing the likelihood that project participants will use what they learn (intention).
   - For multi-year projects, demonstrating that project participants used new knowledge and skills in subsequent educational activities in sustainable agriculture.

6) **Budget (10%)**: A reasonable budget and justification are necessary. Please ensure the narrative explains line items so they may be fully understood.

**Key Points to Consider in Project Development and Implementation**

1) **Collaborative participation**: A goal of the program is to foster the development of a broad-based team to address one or more key issues in sustaining agriculture. Multidisciplinary and multi-state efforts that include private or public entities are encouraged. A leader/PI of a previous SARE project, agricultural producers, NGO reps, agency people and community leaders as well land grant personnel should preferably all be included as part of the planning/trainer/educator team.

2) **Integrated training and education**: SARE encourages applications that integrate multiple aspects of sustainable agricultural production, marketing/economics, families, rural communities, and quality of life.

3) **Training and educational methodology**: Projects must demonstrate enhanced knowledge and skills of participants, and trainer/educator teams are encouraged to develop new and innovative ways for learning to take place. Projects that create electronic or written educational products (e.g. manuals, web-based tutorial or databases, podcasts, videos, etc.) should have an accompanying training component for use of that product, such as training sessions or tutorials.

4) **Impacts and outcomes assessment**: It is important to provide evidence that educational objectives have been fulfilled, with desired outcomes clearly defined, evaluated and documented. Grantees should build in a reasonable timeline and approach to properly complete evaluation of project impacts. **Please use the WSARE PDP logic model as a reference point as you develop your proposal.** The Western SARE PDP logic model can be found under “Proposal Preparation Documents” on the Western SARE web site at [westernsare.org](http://www.westernsare.org).

5) **Location**: Funds may flow to any entity that is eligible to receive federal funds. Subcontracts to other institutions eligible to receive federal funds are allowed.

6) **Letters of support**: Letters of support are not mandatory; however they are encouraged and may be included in the proposal under “Optional – letters of support and references.”

Criteria for 2019 Research to Grass Roots Program Grants
Research to Grass Roots Grants are designed to educate agricultural professionals and producers about critical issues in sustainable agriculture. Projects must be based upon related and previously completed research by the SARE program.

Projects must improve the ability of agricultural professionals, farmers, and ranchers to put in place systems or methods that will enhance the sustainability of agriculture.

Approaches may include, among others:
- Workshops
- Conferences
- Development of materials or curricula
- Demonstrations
- Web-based courses, educational activities, and materials (podcasts, videos, self-thought lessons, etc.)
- Tours

Multi-faceted proposals are encouraged. Projects using multiple techniques or methods are preferred, as are efforts whose results can be applied to diverse audiences.

Subject matter can include any sustainable agriculture endeavor, including animal agriculture, agronomic or horticultural crop production, or the effects of sustainable practices on quality of life for producers or rural communities as well as the economic impacts of agricultural practices or changes in practices. Each R2GR project must be based upon previously completed SARE research.

A list of high priorities identified includes, but is not limited to:

- Ag resiliency and climate change
- Cover crops and soil health
- Local food systems
- Grazing and range issues
- Integrated crop-livestock operations
- System and enterprise diversification
- Water for agriculture
- Invasive species and integrated pest management
- The human element of agriculture including families and communities
- Enhancing the profitability of agriculture

Strong teamwork is critical to the success of these grant applications and selected proposals. Teams should include broad-based and diverse representation. Team members should preferably include farmers, ranchers, NGO representatives, agency personnel, land grant employees and any other relevant contributors. Contact with a the PI or lead researcher of the previous research project is not mandated, but documentation of involvement and support from researchers on related and previously funded SARE research projects will significantly strengthen the application.

**Funding is capped at $50,000 for each Research to Grass Roots project. Projects requesting significantly less than the maximum allowable amount generally have a greater likelihood of being funded.**
Funding for Research to Grass Roots Grants is based upon the idea that these grants will “complete the circle” in the following Western SARE strategic plan chart, below. Please review the chart to ensure your project does indeed “connect” Chapter 1 (SARE research grants) to one of the other circles in the chart, and explain how your grant will strengthen the connection between SARE research and the farmers and ranchers, agricultural families, and rural communities SARE strives to serve.

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Program Goals for Western SARE Projects

1. Promote good stewardship of the nation’s natural resources by providing site-specific, regional, and profitable sustainable farming and ranching methods that strengthen agricultural competitiveness; satisfy human food and fiber needs, maintain and enhance the quality and productivity of soil; conserve soil, water, energy, natural resources and fish and wildlife habitat, and maintain and improve the quality of surface and ground water.

2. Enhance the quality of life of farmers and ranchers and ensure the viability of rural communities, for example, by increasing income and employment, especially profitable self-employment and innovative marketing opportunities in agricultural and rural communities.

3. Protect the health and safety of those involved in food and farm systems by reducing, where feasible and practical, the use of toxic materials in agricultural production, and by optimizing on-farm resources and integrating, where appropriate, biological cycles and controls.

4. Promote crop, livestock and enterprise diversification.
Proposal Format

The online format of the proposal is comprised of a narrative Details section, a Budget section, Project Cooperators, and Supporting Documents. The Details section is constrained by word counts. Documents produced in Microsoft Word or other word processing format will be stripped to bare text when you copy and paste content to the online system. You may wish to avoid spending too much time on document markup (bold, underline, tables, etc.) because those things will be removed when transferred to the online template.

A. Project Basic Information. List the starting and close dates of the proposed project, and the project primary state.

B. Summary: (250 words) A concise summary of the project proposal.

C. Narrative (3,250 words total)

1) Relevance to Western SARE Goals/Sustainable Agriculture: (300 words) How does your proposal directly address the Western SARE goals found on page 5? All goals do not need to be addressed, but all proposals must address at least one goal. Proposals that address multiple goals are usually scored higher by reviewers.

2) Introduction: (500 words) Please describe the context and needs that justify your project.
   - An assessment with defined or documented need from the target audience is necessary to effectively justify the proposal.
   - Please ensure that your project is based upon previous SARE research and document the completed projects and topics in your justification. This justification is critical in R2GR proposals.
   - Describe the factors that influence the implementation and success of the project, including climate, politics, regulations, socio-economic conditions, or market forces.
   - At least one in-text citation (e.g., Smith 2007) should appear in your narrative to indicate where each reference was used.
   - Please list any related previously funded SARE projects related to your proposal and explain how your project is based upon this previous work. Sources to search include:
     - National SARE database (http://www.sare.org/projects)
     - National Agricultural Library (http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic)

3) Objectives and Timetable: (300 words) A list of what you hope to accomplish and when it will be done (this is required in the reports and needs to be matched with the application).

4) Team Members and Roles: (200 Words) Please list the members of your team, their roles and affiliations in the project using short descriptions. Each team must have producers and ag professionals meaningfully involved to receive funding.

5) Methods: (1000 words)
   - List and explain the principles, assumptions and beliefs you have about the project, the way you expect the project to operate and what it will achieve. (Faulty assumptions may scuttle expected outcomes.)
   - Describe the resources, contributions and investments (inputs) that will be used in the project. Resources can be financial (requested funds), human (volunteers, partnerships, contributions of farmers, ranchers and other practitioners) and physical (technology, equipment, etc.).
   - Describe your methodology and activities, and provide a timeline of these activities.
6) **Products/Outputs: (250 words)** What will the project produce? Products may include educational materials, workshops, conferences, demonstrations, tours, curricula and partnerships.

7) **Outcomes: (400 words)** These are the results and benefits for individuals, groups, communities and systems. Outcomes should include increased awareness, knowledge and capacity of participants to provide educational programs and evidence of changed intention or behavior of project participants.

8) **Evaluation: (300 words)** Show how you intend to measure outcomes stated in your proposal. What outcome indicators will be measured, who will conduct the evaluation, how will the evaluation be done, what will it cost and at what time intervals during the project will evaluation take place?

Also include in the proposal:

**D. Budget and Budget Justification.**
Enter the budget online following the prompts of the online application system. If multiple institutions are involved, the online system will prompt for separate budget(s) for each institution. Funds may not be requested for research, tuition reimbursement or the purchase of major depreciable items. A well explained budget clarifies and strengthens the proposal. Matching funds are not required and if included, we request that they only be mentioned in the narrative portion of the proposal and not on the budget page. Indirect costs up to 10 percent are allowed. Please review “Budgetary Details”, under the “Proposal Preparation Documents” on the Western SARE website at [https://www.westernsare.org/Grants/Proposal-Preparation-Documents](https://www.westernsare.org/Grants/Proposal-Preparation-Documents)

**E. Supporting Documents**

1) **Signature Page:** Signatures from all relevant parties (e.g., PI, Co-PIs) are required. You should print the Signature Page provided here, at the end of this CFP, or from the online application site. Have all relevant parties sign the signature page, scan (as a PDF) and upload it into the Supporting Documents section of the online application.

2) **Vitae:** A brief vita (brief resume) is required for the Principal Investigator and each major participant. The limit is three pages for each. Attach each vita as a PDF document into the Supporting Documents section of the online application.

3) **Animal Welfare Assurance Statement:** If the project includes warm-blooded vertebrate, the Animal Welfare Assurance Statement must be signed by the PI and an IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee) representative or attending veterinarian. If no warm-blooded vertebrate is involved in this project, mark the option Not Apply of the Animal Welfare Assurance Statement and have the PI sign it. You should print the Animal Welfare Assurance Statement document provided here, at the end of this CFP, or from the online application site. The signed document should be attached in the Supporting Documents section of the online application.

Funds are expected to be available no later than October, 2019.

**For more information about this call for proposals or for hard copies:** Contact Jim Freeburn or Jill West at (307) 532-2436 or e-mail – freeburn@uwyo.edu. You may also contact Al Kurki at (406) 494-8655 or e-mail – akurki@ncat.org.
About Western SARE: Information can be found at the Western SARE website, www.westernsare.org, or by emailing wsare@msu.edu.

Submission and Funding: Go to http://projects.sare.org and apply. Please remember that the proposal form is character sensitive. Be careful if you are cutting and pasting. Visually review your proposal before hitting the submit button.

Hard copies of this CFP are available by contacting the Western SARE PDP office.

Proposals must be received by 12:00 pm, NOON MST, November 28, 2018.

All Western SARE calls for proposals (Research & Education, Farmer/Rancher, Ag Professional + Producer and Professional Development Program) are listed on the website, as are previously funded proposals.

The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program (SARE) is funded through the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) under Chapter 1 of Title XVI of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 and extended by the 1995 Farm Bill reauthorization. The purpose of the subtitle is to encourage research with education and on-farm demonstration projects designed to increase the producer knowledge base and assist in the adoption of sustainable practices on the land. Ideally, projects will integrate research, education and on-farm demonstrations within whole-farm sustainable agricultural systems involving plants and animals, demonstrating tangible outcomes and addressing Western SARE goals.

RESOURCES

Information on sustainable agriculture can be found at the National SARE website, www.sare.org (the database of nationwide SARE projects can be searched under “Project Reports”).

Another source of information on sustainable agriculture is the Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC), funded in part by SARE. AFSIC specializes in locating, collecting and providing information about alternative systems, crops and production systems. Information specialists can answer questions, provide access to materials, provide references to individuals or organizations; identify researchers and research projects within USDA and furnish free bibliographies and reference briefs. Contact AFSIC at (301)504-6559 or afsic@nal.usda.edu.

The following are listed under “Proposal Preparation Documents” on the Western SARE website at https://www.westernsare.org/Grants/Proposal-Preparation-Documents

Special Notes Regarding Western SARE and USDA Policies and Requirements

- Western SARE PDP Logic Model
- Required Budget Details
Note: Please download, print, scan and attach this signature document to the online application process into the “Supporting Documents” section.

Two signatures are required. The first signature belongs to the Principal Investigator (PI). USDA defines a PI as one who has the authority to write and submit a proposal and carry out its contractual provisions. The PI is responsible for all expenditures and achieving the stated research and education objectives of the proposal.

The second signature belongs to the person who has the authority to enter into contractual agreements as the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR, as defined by USDA). These individuals are for the specific institution involved (universities, colleges, non-profits, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO’s), other research/educational institutions, etc.). This is usually the Director of the sponsored programs office or equivalent at colleges and universities, etc.

Project Title:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Signature: Principal Investigator  Date: __________________________

Signature: Sponsored Programs Office Director (or equivalent)  Date: __________________________
The subcontractor acknowledges that Montana State University (MSU), and thus Western SARE, is a governmental entity and is thus subject to USDA-NIFA IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee) guidelines for all warm-blooded vertebrate animal research projects. This includes, but is not limited to: beef, swine, poultry, etc. The subcontractor acknowledges that it is his/her responsibility to ensure that a bona fide research organization, with a USDA-acknowledged IACUC organization and policies, review and oversee the animal welfare issues of the project. Otherwise, the subcontractor guarantees that a qualified veterinarian will visit the project and certify that the project complies with the research animal welfare guidelines prepared by the FASS (Federation of Animal Science Societies), which can be found at: http://www.fass.org/care_guide.htm?dept_id=5001&sku=FASS-CUAAA.

____________________________________________  Date: ____________
Signature: Principal Investigator

____________________________________________  Date: ____________
Signature: IACUC Representative or Qualified Veterinarian

NOTE: If animal welfare is NOT applicable, check and sign below:

Not Applicable [ ] _____________________________  Date