Western SARE Competitive Grants
Research & Education
2020 Call for Pre-Proposals
Submission Deadline: May 28, 2019 12:00 pm (noon) MDT

The Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program announces the Call for Pre-proposals for Research & Education grants for 2020.

Producer Involvement
Congress mandates that the SARE grant program departs from "business as usual." To that end, the Western SARE Administrative Council requires evidence that agricultural producers are involved from inception to finish in the planning, design, implementation and educational outreach of any SARE-funded project.

Application Process
Applications are submitted online at http://projects.sare.org The application process for this competitive grant program consists of two stages: 1) submission of a pre-proposal and, 2) after notice of selection, submission of a full proposal at a later date. The pre-proposal step assists the WSARE Administrative Council in selecting projects to cover diverse subject matter, geography, and support original and innovative research that can be readily adopted by producers. Applicants who submitted promising pre-proposals will be invited to develop full proposals.

Requirements for Research & Education Pre-Proposals
- Incorporate both *research and education*.
- Bring together a *team of researchers, ag professionals, and producers to plan and implement* the project.
- Include a minimum of *three separate producers*.
- Outline *educational outreach plans* for producers and agricultural professionals.
- Produce quantifiable *scholarly and educational products* for producers and agricultural professionals
- Address the goals of Western SARE.

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All proposals are submitted online
http://projects.sare.org

Research & Education Grant Schedule
- May 28, 2019 – Pre-proposals due at 12:00 pm (noon) MDT.
- August 2019 – Principal Investigators are informed of pre-proposal status. Selected applicants are invited to submit full proposals.
- November 8, 2019 – Full proposals of selected pre-proposal are due.
- January 2020 – A Technical Review Panel reviews and recommends full proposals for funding.
- March 2020 – Western SARE Administrative Council selects full proposals for funding.

WESTERN SARE
Sustainable Agriculture
Research & Education

Western SARE Host Institution

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

207 Linfield Hall
Bozeman, MT 59717-2840
Phone: 406-994-4785
e-mail: wsare@montana.edu

Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Micronesia, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

USDA United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture
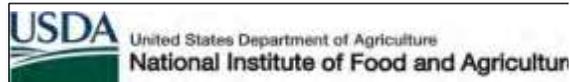
Sustainable Agriculture

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 agricultural economy depends;
- Make the most efficient use of non-renewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls;
- Sustain the economic viability of farm operations; and
- Enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

– U.S. Code Title 7, Section 3103

Western SARE Goals

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 groundwater.

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.

Protect the *health and safety* of those involved in food and farm systems by promoting food sovereignty and 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.

Promote crop, livestock, and enterprise *diversification*.

Examine the regional, *economic, social and environmental implications* of adopting sustainable agriculture practices and systems.

Western SARE Research and Education Pre-Proposal Applications

Overview: The Western SARE Administrative Council funds proposals that present creative and innovative research and extension/outreach approaches, and technologies that advance Western SARE goals (above) that are economically viable, protect the environment and are socially responsible. Western SARE projects must contain *both* research and education components and involve agricultural producers from inception to finish in the planning, design, implementation, and educational outreach of any WSARE-funded project.

Eligible Applicants: Applicants need to reside in the Western region of the United States and should have the capability to conduct both research and extension/outreach activities. Proposed projects can be located at any institution, including nongovernmental organizations, that has demonstrated fiscal responsibility and expertise in sustainable agriculture, and is able and qualified to receive funds from the U.S. Government. Multi-state and multi-agency collaborations within the Western region are encouraged.

**Funding:** Projects may be 1 to 3 years in length. Total funds requested may not exceed $350,000 over the entire budget period.

**Long-Term vs. Short-Term:** Some research/extension work is complex and may require a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that takes many years to complete. To be effective, these projects are likely to exceed the time limits of Western SARE normal one-to-threeyear funding cycle. Projects that are long-term (more than 3 years) should identify themselves as a long-term project by checking the appropriate box in the online pre-proposal application. Short-term projects are those that can be completed within the three-year funding cycle.

Long-term projects that are funded will receive their funding in three-year increments. Each additional increment (up to 3 years) of funding will still go through a competitive full proposal process but will bypass the pre-proposal process. Long-term projects are eligible for additional increments of funding if the following reporting criteria are met and approved, and funding is available:

- Reports are submitted in a timely manner;
- Yearly objectives are reported and met (as listed in the approved proposal);
- Yearly measurable milestones are reported and met (as listed in the approved proposal).

**Public Domain:** While pre-proposals, proposals and reviews will remain confidential, the Western SARE program considers all funded proposals, subsequent reports, and related information to be in the public domain. See details of this stipulation in the special notes in [USDA Grant Policies.]

Writing the Pre-Proposal

Pre-proposals are submitted online at http://projects.sare.org. All information pretraining the pre-proposal including basic information about the project, the project team, summary, narrative, and additional supporting documents are entered online.

Text Limitations: Text for the summary section is limited to 300 words. The narrative section of the pre-proposal is limited to 2,500 words and should include: Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture (by identifying a problem(s) and research questions); Stakeholder Involvement and Support; Producer Involvement and Collaboration; Objectives; Materials and Methods; and Innovations and Contributions to Sustainable Agriculture. Citations should be attached in the Supporting Documents section of the online submission site (not part of word number limitation). In addition to text, you can attach a table or graph in all Narrative sections. Tables and graphs do not count against the word limits. Attachments are preferred in pdf format but images in jpg or png formats are accepted. _**Pre-proposals that do not follow the guidelines may be disqualified.**_

PRE-PROPOSAL APPLICATION

A. Project Basic Information

This section prompts for general information about the project including: the _**primary**_ subject matter, proposed starting and ending dates, the state(s) where the work of the project will be conducted, cooperating institutions, the commodities and practices that will be involved in the project, estimate of funds to be requested, and if this submission is a long-term project. Please note that applicants should not choose a start date **prior** to April 1, 2020.

B. **Project Team** (10% of review criteria)

Pre-proposals must identify a Principal Investigator and project team, including Co- Principal Investigator(s) responsible for conducting the research and outreach activities. The project team must include at *least* five (5) members:

- Researcher or equivalent -this person usually serves as the Principal Investigator.

- Extension/outreach representative, educator, or equivalent -may serve as Co-Principal Investigator(s).

- Three producers -with one of the producers designated as the "advisor representative" to be involved in all aspects of the project from inception through completion. Each producer must be an independent and separate operator. Non-profit operations do not count as one of the three required producers. A person qualifies as a producer (farmer/rancher) if they have a for-profit operation *and*:
  - Their primary occupation is farming or ranching;
  - They have a farm/ranch tax number; *or*
  - They are a part-time producer with at least $1,000 documented annual income from farming or ranching activities.

- Other members of the team *may include* additional producers, researchers, and others with appropriate expertise for the project depending on the project scope.

The online proposal submission system will ask for the following information for each team member:

- The organization/position the team member is representing (e.g., producer, nonprofit, land-grant university, etc.).
- Contact information including email and phone number.
- Description of the specific role of the Principal Investigator and all project team members. For each project objective/activity, indicate who will be responsible, and which team members are involved.

C. **Summary** (Limited to 250 words)

The summary should include a brief description of the problem or need and the creative approach to solving it. Clearly identify the research question(s). Describe the research methods and outreach components, and explain how your project will distinctively or creatively address the identified problems. Explain the potential significance of the project and its expected outcomes. A clear and concise description of your pre-proposal is important for the review process.

D. **Narrative** (Limit to 2,500 words total)

Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture: (20% of review criteria, limited to 500 words)

Explain why this project is needed and how it addresses a critical need in Sustainable Agriculture in the Western region, as defined in page 2. Describe the potential benefits and impacts for producers and agriculture in general. Clearly articulate how the project and its measurable outcomes are relevant to the goals of Western SARE (see page 2). Projects should address how they:

- sustain and improve the environmental quality and natural resource base on which agriculture depends;
- improve the profitability of farmers/ranchers and associated agricultural businesses; *and*
- enhance the quality of life for farmers/ranchers, communities, and society as a whole.

Stakeholder Involvement and Support: (10% of review criteria, limited to 250 words)
Western SARE is committed to addressing the needs of diverse agricultural stakeholders (both on-farm/ranch and off-farm/ranch). Pre-proposals must include documentation that stakeholder-identified needs are being addressed by the project. Sources of stakeholder identified needs include, but are not limited to:

- Recommendations from stakeholder groups such as grower organizations or commodity commissions. Applicants are encouraged to attach letters of support in the Supporting Documents section.
- Needs and issues from Western SARE sub-regional conferences (westernsare.org)
- Other documented need assessment evaluations

Explicitly citing such sources demonstrates both that a project is important and that the applicants are engaged with their respective stakeholders.

Producer Involvement and Collaboration: (10% of review criteria, limited to 250 words)
WSARE requires the involvement of producers throughout the project by actively collaborating in the project. Identify the level of involvement of each producer at all stages – from inception to completion of the project. Producer collaboration letters stating their role in the project ***are required*** for each producer. Attach the signed producer collaboration letters in the Supporting Documents section.

Objectives: (10% of review criteria, limited to 250 words)
Provide a list of project objectives. Each objective should be a statement describing an intended achievement. Objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, and time-bound. For more details see *Successful Objectives* .

Materials and Methods: (30% of review criteria, limited to 1,000 words)
For each objective, describe the experimental design, research methods, materials, and site (experimental station research plots, private farm/ranch, non-profit demonstration farm, etc.). Explain how the approach will help achieve the objectives. If the project includes surveys, indicate the team experience in survey research and methodology.

Innovations and Contributions to Sustainable Agriculture: (10% of review criteria, limited to 250 words)
Explain how this project is novel and creative. How do the proposed methods and activities represent an innovative approach or idea? How will the project outcomes contribute to Sustainable Agriculture and society as a whole? Does the project utilize methods, designs, and team members from different backgrounds to address the inherently interdisciplinary nature of sustainable agriculture? How a multiple-disciplinary team will address interdisciplinary problems?

E. Supporting Documents
All supporting documents should be attached to the online grant application. PDF documents are preferred, but images in jpg and png formats are accepted.

Current Vita: Attach a current 2-page vita of the Principal Investigator and each cooperator,

except producers.

Letters of Producer Collaborations: Attach signed letters of producer collaboration for each producer of your team project. Letters of collaboration should describe the resources committed for this project (i.e., number of acres, equipment, seeds, etc.) and activities to be conducted. If letters are not available at the pre-proposal submission time, producer e-mail confirmation of collaboration is acceptable.

Letters of Stakeholder Support (Optional): Attach letters of support of agricultural stakeholders.

Citations: Attach a list of cited sources.

The Review Process

Pre-proposals received by the due date will be reviewed by a diverse group of reviewers (stage 1), which includes agricultural producers, scientists, educators, business leaders, and government and nonprofit professionals. The reviewers will make recommendations to the Western SARE Administrative Council, which will select which projects may submit full proposals. Selected pre-proposals are invited to submit full proposals.

Evaluation of the pre-proposal is based on:
- clear articulation of how the project and its potential measurable outcomes are relevant to Sustainable Agriculture and the goals of Western SARE;
- appropriateness of the project design and research methods;
- likelihood of achieving the project objectives in the proposed time;
- applicability of the project findings and outcomes to producers.

Pre-proposals will be reviewed against the following criteria:

Project Team	10%
Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture	20%
Stakeholder Support	10%
Producer Collaboration	10%
Objectives	10%
Materials and Methods	30%
Innovations and Contributions to Sustainable Agriculture	10%
Total	100%

Priority will be given to projects that:
- closely coordinate research and extension/outreach activities;
- indicate how findings will be made ***readily usable*** by farmers/ranchers and other intended audiences;
- maximize the direct and meaningful involvement of farmers/ranchers.
- Use an interdisciplinary team approach;
- include close cooperation between universities/colleges, government agencies,

nonprofit   organizations, and farmers/ranchers.

Reporting Requirements (for awarded projects)

Please review the documents in the WSARE Reporting Documents for Grantees to understand what will be expected of awarded projects:

- The *Research and Education Reporting Expectations* list shows the reporting requirements during the project and what Western SARE may assess two to four years after the project's completion. Annual Reports are due on April 15th of each year of the project. The Final Report can be submitted up to 60 days after the project end date.

- The *Survey Instrument* is a sample tool of how grantees can gather results from a project's outreach activities. This survey is one important way of collecting the required data to measure changes in farmer/rancher knowledge, attitude, skills, and awareness.

Selected Pre-Proposals

The reviewers will make recommendations to the Western SARE Administrative Council, which will select the projects eligible for a full proposal submission. Western SARE staff will notify applicants of the status of their pre-proposals by August 2019.

How to Apply

Go to: projects.sare.org

Applicants are strongly encouraged to read the entire Call for Pre-Proposals before beginning to write the pre-proposal. After writing the pre-proposal, review the Call for Pre-Proposals again to ensure that ***all requested information is provided***.

Pre-Proposals are due by 12 pm (noon) MDT – May 28, 2019

In compliance with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, this material can be made available in other formats upon request.

Resources

See the "Proposal Preparation Documents" at westernsare.org. If you have further questions after consulting these documents, please contact our office at 406-994-4789 or wsare@montana.edu

Information on past projects including summaries, highlights, and reports can be found at westernsare.org/projects. We encourage you to visit this website to learn more about Sustainable Agriculture and Western SARE.

The Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC) at the National Agricultural Library specializes in locating, collecting, and providing information about Sustainable Agriculture. Information specialists can answer questions, highlight resources, and share

search techniques for literature reviews and background research. AFSIC has a number of resources at http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/ that may be relevant to your proposal; or, contact AFSIC at 301-504-6559 or afsic@nal.usda.gov.

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