

Western SARE Competitive Grants Farmer/Rancher Research & Education 2020 Call for Proposals

Submission Deadline: November 11, 2019, 12:00 pm (noon) MST

The Administrative Council of the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program announces the Call for Proposals for Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grants for 2020. With a Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grant, a producer, working with a technical advisor, develops a proposal to **conduct research and education** (outreach) on a sustainable agriculture topic. Outreach may include on-farm/ranch demonstrations, farmer-to-farmer educational activities, and other approaches to assist in the education and producer adoption of sustainable agricultural practices. The goal of this program is to find ways to protect the environment, enhance farm income, and improve the quality of life for farming/ranching families, communities, and society as a whole.

Farmer/Rancher Involvement: Congress mandates that the SARE grant program depart from “business as usual.” To that end, the Administrative Council requires that agricultural producers (farmers/ranchers) be involved from start to finish in the planning, design, implementation and educational outreach of any SARE-funded Research and Education project.

Western SARE Farmer/Rancher projects must:

- Design innovative on-farm/ranch experiments that will lead to a more sustainable agriculture.
- Conduct on-the-ground research and education (outreach) within the scope of the project. **Both research and education components must be distinct elements of the proposal.**
- Identify how the results of this project could advance sustainable agriculture.
- Detail creative educational outreach plans that deliver this new knowledge to other producers and agricultural professionals in the Western region.

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Submit proposals online at:

<https://projects.sare.org>

Look for proposals under “Western” [region]

Farmer/Rancher Program Schedule

- November 11, 2019 – Proposals are due by 12:00 p.m. (noon) MST.
- January 2020 – A Technical Review Panel reviews and recommends proposals for funding.
- March 2020 – Western SARE Administrative Council makes final selections.
- April 2020 – Applicants will be notified of the status of their submission.



Western SARE Host Institution



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Bozeman, MT, 59717-2860

Phone: 406-994-4789

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



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 ground water.
- 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 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 Farmer/Rancher Grants in Sustainable Agriculture

Overview: Farmer/Rancher projects can be funded for up to three years. All proposals **must have at least one producer (farmer/rancher), who is the applicant, and a technical advisor**. A technical advisor should assist in the development of the on-farm field trial and the outreach components of the project. For proposals with one producer, a maximum budget of \$20,000 may be requested. Proposals with three or more producers may request a budget up to \$25,000.

Eligible Applicants: Only producers (farmers or/and ranchers) with a for-profit operation and who have no conflict of interest (see [Conflict of Interest](#)) are eligible to apply for a Farmer/Rancher Grant. The producer must be the applicant. If the proposal involves three or more producers, one producer must be designated as the applicant who will be responsible for both fiscal and project management of the grant. Non-profit organizations are not eligible for this grant program. If funded, the applicant will be required to provide a taxpayer identification number (TIN) in order to receive payments from Montana State University (MSU). Each producer involved in the project must be associated to an independent and separate operation. To be considered a producer:

- Your primary occupation is farming or ranching, and you have a farm/ranch TIN; **or**
- You are a part-time producer with at least \$1,000 documented annual income from farming or ranching activities.

Note: Applicants from Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, Marshall Islands, and Palau, please see this [Special Farmer/Rancher Note: Pacific Islands](#).

Technical Advisor: All proposals **must** have a qualified technical advisor who should assist with the planning, on-farm field trial, evaluation, outreach, and reporting. Technical advisors may be Cooperative Extension educators/agents or specialists, University faculty or researchers, USDA-NRCS field staff, agricultural consultants, nonprofit organization staff members, or other agricultural professionals assisting producers at the local level. The technical advisor's resume (two-page maximum) **must** be included in the Supporting Documents section. The technical advisor cannot be one of the producers and should not submit the application on behalf of the producer applying for the grant.

Funding: Up to \$20,000 may be requested for a one (1) producer project. Proposals with three (3) or more producers may request up to \$25,000. Funding is paid as a fixed-price contract via a Subaward Service Agreement, with 50% of the award being paid upon execution of the Agreement. The remainder is paid in fixed increments after submission and approval of annual progress and final reports.

Public Domain: While 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 Public Access of Research Data section in [the NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide](#)

Following Directions: An important and practical element of the proposal submission process is following directions. ***Western SARE disqualifies proposals before review because applicants do not follow the instructions of the Call for Proposals or submit incomplete Supporting Documents.***

Writing the Proposal

Proposals must be completed and submitted online at <https://projects.sare.org>. The submission includes seven sections: 1) acknowledgement of reading the Call for Proposal, 2) project's basic information, 3) information about the project team, 4) project summary, 5) project narrative, 6) budget and budget justification, and 7) Supporting Documents.

You can write each section of the proposal in a word processor (e.g., Microsoft Word) and copy and paste it into the fields of the online application (be aware that some formatting features might be lost when you transfer the text in the online form). In addition to text, you can insert a table or graph in all Narrative sections. Tables and graphs do not count against the word limits. It is best to insert tables as a table (see: "[Inserting Tables](#)") and not as an image. Following these instructions, makes your text searchable and the text will wrap and display properly when viewed on different devices. More importantly, it makes it ADA compliant. Attachments are preferred in pdf format but images in jpg or png formats are accepted.

Please review the documents located in [Proposal Preparation Documents](#) section of Western SARE website to strengthen your proposal.

Proposal Application

A. Project Basic Information

This section prompts for general information about the project including: the primary subject matter of the project, proposed starting and ending dates, the primary state where the project will be conducted, and the primary commodities and practices that will be involved in the project. **Note: choose a start date that corresponds with the first-of-the-month. Start dates must be no earlier than April 1, 2020 and no later than October 1, 2020.**

B. Project Team

The project team must be a minimum of two (2) people and must include the following roles: A producer (applicant) and a technical advisor. You may also identify other collaborators, if applicable. (See “Other members” below.)

For each team member named, you will be required to identify which role they fulfill, the name of the organization or operation, and contact information (address, email and phone number). For each project objective and activity, you will be required to indicate which team member(s) is responsible for the objective, and be involved in the proposed activities.

Each team member must provide a signed letter of cooperation explaining their commitment (resources, time, etc.) and role in the project at the time of submission. The applicant **must** attach letters of cooperation in the Supporting Documents section of the online application. **Failure to provide signed letters of cooperation will disqualify the proposal before review.**

Other members: The team *may also include* additional producers, researchers/educators, and others with appropriate expertise for the project scope.

C. Summary (250 words maximum)

The summary should include a brief description of the problem or need and the creative approach to solving it. Describe the research and outreach components of your proposal and how your project will disseminate your results among producers. Identify the potential significance of the project and the expected project outcomes. A clear and concise description of your proposal is important for the review process.

D. Project Narrative (3,000 words total)

The project narrative includes the following sections: 1) Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture, 2) Objectives, 3) Research Materials and Methods, 4) Educational Outreach Activities and Materials, 5) Evaluation of Producer Adoption, 6) Timeline, 7) Innovativeness, and 8) Benefits and Impacts to Sustainable Agriculture.

Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture: (15% of review criteria, 500 words maximum)

Explain why this project is needed and how it addresses a critical need in sustainable agriculture. Clearly identify any limitations in the current system and how your project will address those limitations. Articulate how the project and its potential 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.

Objectives (5% of review criteria, 200 words maximum)

List the project objectives. Each objective should be a clear statement describing an intended achievement. Objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. For more details see [Successful Objectives](#).

Research Materials & Methods (30% of review criteria, 900 words maximum)

Describe how you will design and conduct your research project. What treatments or new technique(s) will you be testing? What materials will be used? What data will be collected? Justify your choice of methods and data to be collected. How will you determine if your project was successful? **NOTE:** It is helpful to list the objectives and describe the materials and methods you will use for the achievement of each objective.

Educational Outreach Activities and Materials (20% of review criteria, 600 words maximum)

Explain how you will communicate your project and its findings to producers (specifically) and the general public. Create a yearly plan for outreach (see Timeline part below). This plan should identify dates, locations and activities, using networking techniques such as field days, workshops, demonstrations, or other events. Provide a list of any educational materials such as factsheets, PowerPoint presentations, handouts, articles, brochures, or social media you plan to produce. Digital outcomes (e.g., podcasts, videos, and social media) are encouraged but should not be the sole outreach approach. Should your proposal be selected for funding, proper citation of Western SARE in all materials produced from your project will be required. Information pertaining to citing Western SARE will be included in the Subaward Service Agreement

Evaluation and Producer Adoption (5% of review criteria, 150 words maximum)

Indicate how the project outputs and outreach activities will be evaluated. This section should describe how changes in producers' knowledge, awareness, attitudes, and practices will be measured (e.g., using a before-and-after outreach activity survey). An approved survey (see [WSARE Survey](#)) is expected to be filled out by **every participant at each outreach event in addition of any other evaluation form**. Western SARE requires evaluation results as part of the annual progress and final reports.

Timeline (5% of review criteria, 150 words maximum)

Provide a timeline, such as a [Gantt chart](#) for accomplishing each objective. Identify the major milestones or activities that will be completed, and when each of those milestones/activities will occur.

Innovativeness (5% of review criteria, 200 words maximum)

Explain how the project, methods, and activities are novel and creative.

Benefits and Impacts to Sustainable Agriculture (10% of review criteria, 300 words maximum)

Describe the potential benefits and impacts of your project and its findings to other producers (local, state, and regional) and sustainable agriculture in general. For example, provide an economic analysis or address how the outcomes of your project would affect overall farm/ranch productivity levels, operational profits, soil or water quality or quantity, rural communities, and society as a whole. Where possible, use specific estimates of benefits – such as dollars saved per acre, tons of soil protected from erosion, pounds of chemical reduced, number of acres or people affected, markets expanded, jobs created, etc.

E. Budget and Justification (5% of review criteria)

Provide a detailed budget and budget justification that are appropriate to the proposed project using the *Western SARE Budget Worksheet* found on the online application, budget section. Applicants MUST use this document for budget submission; no other document will be accepted. **NOTE:** you are still asked to enter the TOTAL funds requested; this amount must match the total funds indicated on the *Western SARE Budget Worksheet* document. ***Failure to utilize the Western SARE Budget Worksheet will disqualify the proposal before review.***

Farmer/Rancher Grant funds must be budgeted in the following categories

- **Salaries and Benefits:** compensating yourself and/or employees performing work directly related to the project. Provide base salary, FTEs, fringe benefit rates, and salary/benefits amounts requested.
- **Contracted Services:** includes paying for professional services (e.g., testing and analysis services, survey development and administration, computational services, website development or maintenance, professional production services (videographer to produce educational electronic media), consultants, honoraria, speaker fees, producer labor, etc.
- **Supplies:** Includes basic supplies and materials needed to carry out the project. Examples include: agricultural supplies (fencing, seeds, plants, fertilizer), field and laboratory supplies, minor equipment and tools (individual items that cost less than \$5,000), paper/envelopes, in-house photocopying of materials for workshops/meetings, software, books, shipping materials. Any shipping costs associated with the purchase of supplies/materials should be included as supply costs. The purchase of food/refreshments for meetings/field days (**must** be necessary to maintain the continuity of a project activity/meeting) is also considered a supply cost.
- **Communication:** includes postage and mailing expenses (including shipping samples for analysis), printed materials (flyers, brochures, posters). This category also includes expenses for outreach publications or for commercial photocopying (Note: in-house photocopying falls under supplies).
- **Travel:** includes estimated mileage reimbursement, airfare, lodging, meal per diem; car rentals, taxi, bus, shuttle expenses and parking; conference fees and registrations, etc. [Please note, travel per diems and mileage need to correlate with the Federal Government rates listed on the U.S. General Services Administration. **NOTE:** foreign

travel is typically NOT allowed under the SARE program except in cases where sufficient justification has been provided and requires Western SARE approval. All foreign travel must be directly related to the project, must be essential for project completion, and well justified (*i.e.*, explain why this activity cannot be done in the USA, relevance to Western agriculture sustainability, provide foreign institution and colleagues qualifications, etc.). USDA-NIFA requires that foreign travels should be done in an U.S. flag air carrier.

- **Rent:** includes fees associated with renting equipment, facilities (e.g., meeting rooms) and user fees.
- **Capital Equipment:** Defined as a single, autonomous piece of equipment that costs \$5,000 or more and has a useful life of more than one year. Capital Equipment purchases are generally not allowed under the SARE program and should be *essential* for the completion of the proposed activities. Equipment expenses beyond \$5,000 may be leveraged by non WSARE funds. Purchasing multiple components of single equipment that cost under \$5,000 in an attempt to circumvent the \$5,000 cap **is not allowed**. Purchase of equipment under \$5,000 is allowed. **Please include minor equipment and/or leveraged capital equipment purchases in the Supplies budget category.**

More information about each budget category is provided on the *Budget Categories and Guidance* tab found on the *Western SARE Budget Worksheet*. Please note, however, there are some restrictions for what Farmer/Rancher grant funds may be used. See below.

Farmer/Rancher grant funds may NOT be used for the following purposes

- Capital Equipment purchases above \$5,000– see above for more information.
- Starting or expanding a farm or farm operation.
- Major renovations/permanent improvements to a farm or ranch, such as constructing or remodeling a building.
- Repairs/maintenance of equipment and buildings/facilities.
- Providing meals during events that are not necessary to maintain the continuity of a scheduled meeting/activity; breakfasts and dinners typically do not qualify.
- Testing of commercial products.
- Indirect Costs.

Additionally, matching funds are not required or requested of Western SARE grant recipients. Please do NOT include matching funds in your budget or justification.

F. Supporting Documents

All supporting documents should be attached into the Supporting Documents section of the online application. PDF documents are preferred but images in jpg and png formats are accepted. ***Failure to provide all the required supporting documents will disqualify the proposal before review.***

Technical Advisor's Resume: The application **must** include a resume (two-page maximum) for the technical advisor. The technical advisor cannot be one of the producers. This is not

needed for the producers. ***Failure to provide the technical advisor's resume will disqualify the proposal before review.***

Letters of Cooperation: Each team member (with exception of the applicant) who is part of the project team must submit a signed letter of cooperation. This letter should verify their willingness to participate in the project and outline their role in it. ***Failure to provide Letters of Cooperation will disqualify the proposal before review.***

Animal Welfare Assurance Statement: This form ***must*** be completed by all applicants to identify whether or not their proposed project involves any animals. This form may be downloaded from the online application site and is also included in the following section of the Call for Proposal. ***Failure to provide Animal Welfare Assurance Statement will disqualify the proposal before review.***

Institutional Review Board Approval: For projects dealing with human subjects, applicants ***must*** provide evidence of review and acceptance or exemption by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or its equivalent. At the time of submission proof that you initiated the IRB process is acceptable; however, if awarded, the Subaward Service Agreement will not be executed until IRB approval/exemption documentation is provided to MSU. If the applicant does not have access to an Institutional Review committee, she/he must work with an accredited institution to obtain IRB approval. ***Failure to provide Institutional Review Board Approval, evidence of review, approval, or exemption will disqualify the proposal before review.***

Citations (Optional): Citations should be attached in the Supporting Documents section of the online submission (and are not part of the word number limitation). Attach a list of cited sources.

Other Documents (Optional): Here you will be able to attach any other document that you think might strengthen your proposal.



Animal Welfare Assurance Statement

The applicant acknowledges that work may require Institutional Animal Care and Use Oversight and that Montana State University (MSU), and thus Western SARE, is subject to the [Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching](#). This includes, but is not limited to: beef, swine, poultry, fish, etc. If awarded the applicant acknowledges that it is his/her responsibility to ensure that a USDA-acknowledged IACUC reviews, approves, and oversees the animal welfare issues of the project.

_____ Date: _____
Signature: Applicant

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

Not Applicable [] _____ Date: _____
Signature: Applicant

The Review Process

Eligible proposals received by the due date with all supporting documents will be evaluated by a Technical Committee, a diverse group of people from the Western region with broad agricultural production, scientific, and educational expertise. The Technical Committee evaluates the proposals based on the review criteria stated below and meets to discuss and appraise the merits of each proposal. Their recommendations are forwarded to the Western SARE Administrative Council for additional review and final selections. As you develop your proposal, keep in mind that funded projects should clearly define an opportunity or issue in sustainable agriculture and propose innovative and specific solutions.

Proposals are evaluated based on the following criteria:

Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture	15%
Objectives	5%
Research Materials & Methods	30%
Educational Outreach Activities and Materials	20%
Evaluation & Producer Adoption	5%
Timeline	5%
Innovativeness	5%
Benefits and Impacts to Agriculture	10%
Budget Justification	5%
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 100%

Reporting Requirements (for awarded proposals)

Annual progress and final reports should describe the progress made on the project, detail the observed results, describe the produced educational material, and document impacts. All educational activities should include an evaluation component that measures changes in knowledge or awareness, attitudes and opinions, and/or the adoption of new practices by producers or other agricultural professionals.

Please review the documents located in WSARE [Reporting Documents for Grantees](#) section to understand what will be expected if your project is awarded:

- [Farmer/Rancher Grantee Reporting Expectations](#) table shows which results you should report during the project, and what Western SARE may assess two to four years after the project's completion.
- The [Survey Instrument](#) is a tool for grantees to gather results from a project's outreach activities. This survey is one important way for collecting required data to measure changes in producer knowledge, attitude, skills and awareness.

Selected Proposals

If the Western SARE Administrative Council selects your project for funding, you may expect the following:

Notification: The Western SARE Administrative Council will select proposals for funding during its 2020 winter meeting. (The Administrative Council reserves the right to restructure or reduce the budget of any grant proposal before final approval.) Western SARE staff will notify applicants of their proposal's status in April 2020.

Award: If your proposal is selected for funding, the Office of Sponsored Programs at Montana State University will initiate a Subaward Service Agreement to you. The Subaward Service Agreement will identify all Terms and Conditions for the award, including reporting requirements. **NOTE:** If animals or human subjects are involved in your proposal, USDA-NIFA requires review by the appropriate compliance boards before Montana State University (MSU) can issue the Subaward Service Agreement. If the grant recipient does not have access to an Institutional Review Board or an Institutional Animal Care and Use Board, the applicant will need to submit compliance documents to MSU for review and approval prior to receiving their award. MSU will work with the grant recipients to coordinate the process and will provide the necessary reviews of human subject and animal work.

Note: All proposals from Micronesia (Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, Marshall Islands and Palau) are required to have the College of Micronesia (at Pohnpei) act as their fiscal agent in the disbursement of funds.

Funds: Upon execution of the Subaward Service Agreement, an initial payment of 50% of awarded funds will be released. The remaining 50% will be paid incrementally each year upon receipt and approval of the annual/final report, depending on the length of the project. 20% of the awarded amount will be withheld pending receipt and approval of the final report.

Financial Records: Detailed financial records are required. MSU may, at any time, request receipts and backup documentation to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the Subaward Service Agreement and that project-related expenses correspond with the proposed budget.

Photographs and Videos: Grant recipients are required to document their project with photographs, which can be useful to them and help us highlight and promote their work on our website and in publications. Digital photographs and videos are preferred.

Proper Western SARE Citation: The Western SARE program must be credited as the funding source in any publications or outreach materials generated by this project. Please

refer to the Western SARE [website](#) for complete guidelines for acknowledging funds.

Reports: An annual report will be required each year of your project. Additionally, a final report will also be required. Project reports are compiled each year and shared with producers, interested policymakers and leaders at community, state, regional and national levels. All educational materials and products must be produced in electronic format. This format will be required in your reports. ***Annual Reports are due on March 15th of each year of the project. You will have up to 30 days from the Period of Performance end date to submit the Final Report.***

Site visits: Western SARE recognizes there are limits to what can be accomplished, measured and reported during the life of your project. As a result, along with your reporting, Western SARE staff plan to conduct post-project assessments of representative projects to get an in-depth measure of Western SARE program impact in areas such as:

- Who is participating in Western SARE-funded projects?
- What is being created by the projects (e.g., new knowledge, new approaches)?
- What are people learning from these projects?
- What changes are farmers and ranchers making based on the results of your project?
- What economic, environmental, social or productivity benefits are farmers and ranchers experiencing as a result of having made these changes?

Changes: Grantees of funded projects ***must report*** changes regarding project information (e.g., address, phone number, etc.) to the Western SARE office in a timely manner and update their SARE profiles at <https://projects.sare.org>. Significant changes to the project as originally proposed, such as a change in applicant producer, stated objectives, timeline, budget, etc., should be sent as a request via email to the Western SARE Regional Coordinator for consideration/approval.

How to Apply

Go to <https://projects.sare.org>

Look for programs under “Western” [region]

We strongly encourage applicants read the entire Call for Proposals before beginning to write the proposal.

Proposals are due by 12 pm (noon) MST – November 11, 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 WSARE Proposal [Preparation Documents](#). Also see “[How to Conduct Research on Your Farm or Ranch](#).” If you have further questions, please contact our office at 406-994-4789 or

wsare@montana.edu

Information on past projects can be found at westernsare.org/projects. We encourage you to visit this website to learn more about sustainable agriculture and the Western SARE program at <https://www.westernsare.org>. Tips for writing proposals are available under [Writing a Successful Grant](#).

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 background research. AFSIC resources that may be relevant to your proposal are available at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/>; or, contact AFSIC at 301-504-6559 or afsic@nal.usda.gov.

<p>The United States Department of Agriculture and Montana State University are equal opportunity providers and employers.</p>
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