



**North Central Region  
Sustainable Agriculture  
Research and Education**

# **2007 Call for: Farmer Rancher Proposals**

**Deadline for Receipt of Proposals:**

**NCR-SARE Office in Lincoln, NE**

**4:30 p.m., Monday – December 3, 2007**

**ATTENTION**

**The proposal content has changed from last year.  
Be sure to follow the guidelines in this Call for Proposals.**

North Central Region SARE  
13A Activities Bldg.  
1734 N. 34<sup>th</sup> Street  
PO Box 830840  
University of Nebraska  
Lincoln, NE 68583-0840

402 - 472 - 0809  
402 - 472 - 0280 (FAX)

[jbenjamin2@unl.edu](mailto:jbenjamin2@unl.edu)  
[www.sare.org/ncrsare](http://www.sare.org/ncrsare)

# The SARE Program

## **The National SARE Program and the Farm Bill**

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) is funded through the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES). SARE was created in the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (1990 Farm Bill, Title 16, Subtitle B). The purpose of the SARE program is to generate and disseminate sound and practical information about alternative farming systems believed to have the potential to increase sustainability of agriculture. Sustainable Agriculture is good for the environment, profitable, and good for communities.

The SARE program works primarily through competitive grant programs administered by four regions: North Central, Northeast, South, and West.

## **North Central Region - Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NCR-SARE)**

The mission of NCR-SARE is to strengthen rural communities, increase farmer/rancher profitability, and improve the environment by supporting research and education.

### **NCR-SARE Goals**

- Foster site-specific, integrated farming systems;
- Satisfy human food and fiber needs;
- Enhance environmental quality, natural resource conservation and the integration of on-farm and biological resources;
- Enhance the quality of rural life and support owner-operated farms;
- Protect human health and safety; and
- Promote crop, livestock and enterprise diversity and the well-being of animals.

## NCR Farmer/Rancher Grant Program

### • *WHAT*

The North Central Region (NCR) SARE program of the USDA has allocated about \$400,000 for the 2007 Farmer/Rancher Grant Program. Competitive grants of up to \$6,000 are available for individual farmers and ranchers, and grants up to \$18,000 are available for groups of three or more farmers from separate operations who are interested in exploring sustainable agriculture.

Farmers/Ranchers are invited to submit proposals that test, evaluate, and adapt sustainable agriculture practices for their operations; conduct learning circles, educational events, field days or demonstrations to further disseminate information to farmers/ranchers; develop new technologies; or create or modify equipment.

- Applicants must identify specific problems and potential solutions to those problems.
- Maximum duration for grant projects is 21 months.
- **These grants are for sustainable agriculture research and education projects; they are NOT for everyday farming expenses.**
- Projects that involve whole farm systems research and education are encouraged.
- Projects that include a youth component are welcome and encouraged.
- Livestock projects need to comply with reasonable animal care requirements to insure that animals are properly cared for.

During the past fifteen years of the Farmer/Rancher Grant Program, 635 grants were awarded to Farmers/Ranchers studying a variety of topics, such as rotational grazing, livestock systems, crop production systems, urban and rural waste management, weed control, alternative uses for CRP land, biological weed and pest control, organic farming, marketing, quality of life, water quality, and soil conservation.

### • *WHO*

**Any farmer/rancher or group of farmers/ranchers whose project will benefit the North Central Region at least as much as other parts of the world may apply.** Applicants may be just beginning the transition to a more sustainable operation or may already be using some sustainable practices and want to implement additional changes.

Groups of farmers/ranchers (**three or more independent and separate operations**) submitting proposals must designate one individual **farmer/rancher** as group leader. The group leader will submit and sign the application, be responsible for reporting requirements, and assume any tax liability associated with the grant.

Grant recipients will be limited to one grant annually. Previous farmer/rancher grant recipients are eligible to apply if project reports from previous grant projects are up to date. Applications from previous grant recipients will be evaluated on a competitive basis along with all other applications. Proposals based at educational or research institutions are not eligible for this program, but can be submitted to the SARE Research and Education (R&E) Grant Program. Contact the NCR-SARE office in Minnesota at 612-626-3113 or [ncrsare@umn.edu](mailto:ncrsare@umn.edu) if you are interested in the

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R&E grant program.

## • *WHERE*

The North Central Region (NCR) consists of 12 states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Farmers and ranchers from these states are eligible to apply for grants from the NCR-SARE program. Farmers and ranchers from other states are eligible to apply if their proposed projects benefit the NCR at least as much as they benefit other regions.

## • *WHEN*

**The 2007 Grant Cycle** – In spring 2008, grant recipients can request an initial payment of 50% of their grant funds to start their projects. Grant recipients will receive a payment of 35% of grant funds after submitting a satisfactory progress report, and a final 15% payment when their project is completed and their final report is submitted and approved. Grant projects must be completed by December 31, 2009 and final reports are due two months after the project end date.

<i>August 20, 2007</i>	Farmer/Rancher grant applications available
<i>December 3, 2007</i>	Deadline for receiving Farmer/Rancher grant applications
<i>Spring, 2008</i>	Administrative Council recommends Farmer/Rancher grant recipients
<i>Spring, 2008</i>	Budgets are reviewed by University accountants for compliance with USDA guidelines and grant contracts are sent out
<i>Early summer 2008</i>	Approximate date of first payment of grant funds (50%)
<i>December 31, 2008</i>	Progress report due. Grant recipients are eligible for a 2nd grant payment (35%) once their progress reports are approved.
<i>December 31, 2009</i>	Project end date
<i>February 28, 2010</i>	Deadline for submitting final report. Grant recipients are eligible for a final payment (15%) once their final reports are approved.

## Application Requirements

### • *CONTENT*

There are three main parts to the application: A) Project Proposal, B) Budget, and C) Reference Letter. All three parts must be submitted as a part of your grant proposal.

#### A) Project Proposal

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This consists of general information and questions for you to answer.

- Proposals are limited to five pages, single-sided, excluding the budget and Reference Letter. Proposals exceeding page limits will not be reviewed. Do not include attachments or photos – they will not be considered.
- Applications should be typed using a font no smaller than 12-point, similar to the text in this invitation for proposals. Applications legibly printed in dark ink are also acceptable.

Please complete the budget form that is included with this document. Be sure to adhere to these important points:

## **B) Budget**

- **Personnel Costs.** Include the name of each participant and briefly explain how they will contribute to the grant project. Include an estimate of the amount of labor and the cost for each participant being paid with grant funds. If the participants are not being paid with grant funds, include their name and role, but leave the grant funds request blank. NCR-SARE does not require or ask for matching funds, but reviewers like to know if you or others are making contributions to the project.
- **Other Costs.** List the items you will need and provide a brief explanation of why each item is necessary for your project.
- **Grant Funds Request.** Use this column to show the amount of grant funds you intend to spend on each item of labor and other costs. Grant recipients are paid for actual project expenses. Any unspent funds must be returned.
- **The 50% Rule.** Grant funds can be used to pay for up to 50% of the cost of equipment, permanent fencing materials, and perennial seeds and plants that are essential for completion of the project.
- **Supplies and Equipment.** Contracts for this program are administered by the University of Minnesota. At the University of Minnesota, items that cost less than \$2,500 are considered supplies and items that cost \$2,500 or more are considered equipment.
- **Calculating Costs.** Labor, facilities, and supplies should be calculated on an annual cost-equivalent basis. (For example, operator labor per year at \$20 per hour; \$75/acre cash rent equivalent; \$10/acre rental of tillage equipment, etc.)
- **Unallowable Expenses.** Grant funds cannot be used for construction and remodeling of buildings, purchase of livestock, or to buy motorized vehicles, but these items may be leased or rented with grant funds, if they are needed for the project.
- **Food Expenses.** Light refreshments at field days, e.g. coffee, cold drinks, fruit, pie, cookies, etc. can be paid for with grant funds, but typically meals cannot.
- **Investigate Cost-Sharing.** Many of the practices used in sustainable agriculture may be eligible for cost-sharing from other federal or state government agencies or local soil and water conservation districts, local businesses, private non-profit groups, etc. Please contact these agencies to check on the availability of funds that may be used to supplement your grant.

## **C) Reference Letter**

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Applicants **must** submit a letter or letters (no more than two) of reference from community contacts that explain why the project is needed and how it will benefit the community. The letter

should also include any other information that will support the application. (For example, if the reference will help you with outreach, that information should be included in the letter.) The letter should include the address and phone number of the reference. Such references might come from, for example, an Extension educator or agent; banker; Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), local soil and water conservation district, or Farm Service Agency (FSA) personnel; network coordinator; implement dealer or co-op manager; farm organization or other non-profit organization staff.

### • *PROCEDURE*

Applications (one copy) must be received in the NCR-SARE office by 4:30 pm (CST) on December 3, 2007. We cannot make allowances for the delays of your delivery service. Faxed applications will not be reviewed. Send applications to the NCR-SARE office in Lincoln NE:

*Farmer/Rancher Grant Program  
North Central Region SARE  
13A Activities Bldg  
1734 N 34th St  
PO Box 830840  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Lincoln, NE 68583-0840*

## Application Evaluation

### • *REVIEW CRITERIA AND EVALUATION PROCESS*

All applications are reviewed by a committee that includes farmer/rancher members of the North Central Region SARE Administrative Council, as well as farmer/rancher representatives, educators, and researchers from throughout the north central region.

#### **Funding recommendations are based on how well proposals meet these five criteria.**

Well-identified problem and specific innovative plan to test possible solutions to that problem (Reviewers are looking for new ideas or an idea that is new to your location.)

Best use of existing knowledge on the identified problem (Be sure to research what work has already been done on this problem, particularly through previous SARE grants.)

Strong outreach plan and cooperation with other farmers/ranchers and with organizations through which information can be shared via workshops, field days, publications, etc.

Contribution to the growth of sustainable agriculture. (Your project should add to existing sustainable agriculture knowledge, and help farmers and ranchers in the North Central region produce positive environmental, economic, and social impacts.)

Appropriateness of the budget (Only expenses that help carry out the project should be included. Grants are not intended to fund everyday farming expenses.)

## •CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

Successful applications will **clearly define a problem** that can be addressed and evaluated within the boundaries of the project. (Don't take on too much – these are small grants.) Most successful proposals **involve cooperators** who can assist with project planning, evaluation, or outreach. Cooperators may include Extension educators, agents, and specialists; staff of non-profit groups, local conservation districts, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); network coordinators; and soil consultants. Many of the successful applicants **belong to local or state groups**, through which they share project results, and extend the educational benefits of their grants. All successful applicants include **outreach components** in their projects (usually more than one) such as field days, demonstrations, workshops, videos, or publications.

### What to Expect...

If you accept your grant, you agree to the following requirements:

- Return signed contract to the NCR-SARE office.
- During the project, you may receive an on-site visit by the Farmer Rancher Grant Program Coordinator or other representatives of the NCR-SARE program.
- For projects that continue more than one year, grant recipients must submit a progress report by December 31, 2008.
- At the end of the project, the grant recipient **must** submit: 1) a final report summarizing the project; 2) a final budget that shows how funds were spent; and 3) photos, when possible, of project activities or outreach events.
- Concerning the budget, grant recipients: 1) will only be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred after the initial funding date; 2) must submit a final report and a final budget documenting the project expenditures before SARE will release final payment; 3) must return unspent funds to the NCR-SARE office; 4) will have a 1099 form automatically filed with the IRS with each payment for tax reporting purposes; and 5) must retain receipts for all project expenditures for a period of three years.
- Funds will be disbursed in the following manner: Grant recipients may request and receive 50% of the grant to start their project. They may request an additional 35% after submitting a satisfactory progress report at the end of the first year of their project, and they may request the remaining 15% upon completion of the project.

### Help with Proposal Writing and Information Sourced

- For assistance in preparing your proposal, contact your NCR-SARE State Coordinator (see: <http://ncr.sare.org/PDP/pdpstco.htm>), local county Extension agent, NRCS or local soil and water conservation district representative, or a sustainable agriculture group in your area. You may also contact the NCR-SARE office in Lincoln, NE.

Joan Benjamin

402-472-0809 / 800-529-1342

Associate Regional Coordinator

402-472-0280 (fax)

North Central Region SARE Program  
 13A Activities Bldg.  
 1734 N 34<sup>th</sup> St  
 PO BOX 830840  
 University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
 Lincoln, NE 68583-0840

[jbenjamin2@unl.edu](mailto:jbenjamin2@unl.edu)

- # Andy Clark, Coordinator of the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), can provide you with information on SAN publications. SAN is the outreach arm of SARE. Contact:

Sustainable Agriculture Network  
 10300 Baltimore Ave  
 Bldg 046, BARC West  
 Beltsville, MD 20705

301-504-6425  
 301-504-5207 (fax)  
[san@sare.org](mailto:san@sare.org)  
[www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org)

- # The Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC) at the National Agricultural Library (partially funded by SARE), specializes in locating, organizing, and providing information about sustainable agriculture. Information specialists can answer questions, conduct literature searches, provide access to appropriate materials, supply linkages to experts and organizations, identify pertinent researchers and projects in the USDA, and furnish free bibliographies and reference briefs. In addition, AFSIC has a number of documents on its website that may be relevant to your proposal. Contact:

AFSIC  
 National Agricultural Library, USDA  
 10301 Baltimore Ave, Room 132  
 Beltsville, MD 20705-2351

301-504-6559  
 301-504-6927 (fax)  
[afsic@nal.usda.gov](mailto:afsic@nal.usda.gov)  
[www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/](http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/)

- # Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA) will provide information packets on various agricultural issues. If you are contacting ATTRA via e-mail, please describe your role in sustainable agriculture. By mail or fax, please include "ATTRA Information Request" near the top of the correspondence. (Preferred method of contact is telephone.) Contact:

ATTRA  
 P.O. Box 3657  
 Fayetteville, AR 72702

800-346-9140, 7am to 7 pm, Central Time  
 800-411-3222 (Español), 8 am to 5 pm Pacific Time  
 501-442-9842 (fax)  
[www.attra.ncat.org](http://www.attra.ncat.org)

### Final Checklist

- **Signed proposal**
- **Signed budget**
- **Letter of reference**
- **Letter from your financial institution (only if your project requires a loan)**
- **Application (one copy) received by the NCR-SARE office in Lincoln, NE by 4:30 p.m. (CST) on December 3, 2007**

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## 2007 Farmer/Rancher Grant Application

Please type or print legibly in dark ink. There are five pages to the application (not including the budget). Do not exceed the page limit. If your proposed project requires assistance from a financial institution, please enclose a letter from them indicating their commitment. (This letter is only necessary if you must take out a loan in order to carry out your project.)

**Project Title:** (The title lets reviewers know what your project is about at a glance – be descriptive but not too wordy.)

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**One or Two Sentence Description of Project** (This will be posted on the SARE website if your project is selected for funding.):

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**Project Leader:**

**Address:**

**Phone:**

**Fax:**

**E-Mail:**

**Is the applicant a Farmer/Rancher?** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Is this an Individual \_\_\_\_\_ or Group \_\_\_\_\_ Project?**

**Grant Funds Requested:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(This must not exceed \$6,000 for an individual grant or \$18,000 for a group grant.)

**Have you previously received a SARE Farmer/Rancher Grant?** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**If yes, was the project successfully completed?** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**If project was not completed, explain why not.** \_\_\_\_\_

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**1) Describe the problem your project will address, and provide a detailed description of the innovative plan you are proposing to test possible solutions to the problem.**

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**2) Describe how you will add to or build on previous work done on this problem.**

**3) How will you share information from your project with other farmers/ranchers? Be innovative in your outreach. (Each project must include outreach – the more the better.)**

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**4) SARE defines sustainable agriculture as good for the environment, profitable, and good for your family and community. How will you evaluate the environmental, economic, and social impacts of your project and how will those impacts contribute to the growth of sustainable agriculture?\***

**PAGE 4**

\*Environmental, economic, and social impacts can be evaluated in a variety of ways, depending on your personal goals and farming/ranching operation. Impacts could be evaluated, for example, by anticipated effect on water resources, soil erosion, wildlife, cash flow, community, and quality of life. Call the NCR-SARE office if you have any questions about these indicators, which are an

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important part of this application.

**5) Describe your farm or ranch operation if you are submitting an individual proposal. If you are submitting a group proposal, describe your operation and provide names, addresses and a brief description of the other farmer/rancher members of the group.**

**6) List the names, addresses, and phone numbers of any cooperators. Include how they will participate or what they will contribute.**

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Applicant (**must** be a Farmer/Rancher)

Please read the budget instructions and the review criteria on pages v and vi before you complete this section. Use realistic cost estimates – not guesses. Make sure all expenses are project expenses. Grant funds are for research and education projects, not day-to-day farming expenses.

<b>PERSONNEL COSTS</b> (List participants and how they contribute to the project. Include a realistic estimate of the amount of labor and the cost for each participant being paid with grant funds. If participants are not being paid with grant funds, include their name and explain their role in the project in detail, but leave the grant funds request blank.)	<i>Grant Funds Request</i>
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	

<b>OTHER COSTS</b>		<i>Grant Funds Request</i>
<i>Travel</i>		
<i>Operating costs and Supplies</i>		
<i>Lease of land and equipment</i>		
<i>Outreach</i>		
<i>Miscellaneous</i>		
<b><i>Equipment, permanent fencing, perennial seeds &amp; plants</i></b> <i>(These items are subject to the 50% rule [see page v] – NCR-SARE only pays for 50% of the cost of these items.)</i>	<b><i>Total Cost of Item</i></b>	<b><i>Grant Funds Request</i></b> <i>(Amounts must be 50% or less of the total cost of each item.)</i>
	<b><i>SUBTOTAL (from above)</i></b>	
	<b><i>SUBTOTAL (from pg. 6)</i></b>	
	<b><i>TOTAL</i></b>	

[1] \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of Applicant (**must** be a Farmer/Rancher)

### **Example Budget, page 1**

The following information does not represent a single project. These are examples of line items from many different projects. The dollar amounts are to provide examples only.

<b>PERSONNEL COSTS</b> (List participants and their role. Include a realistic estimate of the amount of labor and the cost for each participant being paid with grant funds. If participants are not being paid with grant funds, include their name and explain their role in the project in detail, but leave the grant funds request blank.)	<b><i>Grant Funds Request</i></b>
JoAnn Smith, farmer: conduct pollinator trials, take honey samples, record findings, evaluate test results. 20 hrs. @ \$20/hr. = \$400	400
David Hay, neighbor and cooperating farmer: take crop samples, 9 hrs. @ \$20/hr. = \$180	180
John Adams, Extension Service: assist with field day and workshop	
Tammy Black, University researcher: 3 days data analysis to determine worm resistance of livestock breeds	
Ken Jones, private crop consultant: scouting insect pests, 18 hours @ \$15/hr. = \$270	270
Bob Allen and Henry Hedge, field day speakers on organizing new direct marketing techniques with farmer co-op. Travel: 285 miles @ .485 per mile = \$138.23 or \$138	138
Teresa Alias, marketing consultant: special market survey, develop marketing plan for alternative grain crop, 12 hours @ \$50/hour = \$600	600
Ward Smith, son: input test data into computer and prepare report, 25 hrs. @ \$10/hr = \$250	250
Jay Brown, hired hand: help collect seed samples, 14 hrs. @ \$10/hr = \$140	140
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,978</b>

**Example Budget, page 2**

<b>OTHER COSTS</b>		<i>Grant Funds Request</i>
<b>Travel</b>		
Visit University farm conducting whole farm system research (320 @ .485/mile)		155
Pick up: native plants and seeds for pasture planting (76 miles @ .485/mile)		37
<b>Operating costs and Supplies</b>		
Plumbing supplies for a solar-powered multi-species pasture watering system		260
Cover crop seed to prepare area for alternative grain crop (2 acres buckwheat @ 70 lbs/acre @ .73/lb)		102
Manure analysis to determine worm load (4 @ \$15)		60
Equipment modifications to harvest small native seed		342
<b>Lease of Land and Equipment</b>		
Land lease, 4 acres @ \$85 per acre to provide organic buffer		340
Weigh wagon rental to measure crop yields		50
Lease of a no-till drill (\$9 /acre x 5 acres = \$45)		45
<b>Outreach</b>		
Film and developing		24
Writing, printing field day handout, making workshop poster		192
Sustainable Ag Society (conduct, promote workshop)		150
<b>Miscellaneous</b>		
Tissue test to determine meat quality (15 tests @ \$25 per test)		370
Market research for alternative grain crop		1,095
<b>Equipment, permanent fencing, perennial seeds &amp; plants</b> <i>* These items subject to the 50% rule [see page v]. NCR-SARE only pays for 50% of the cost of these items.</i>	<b>Total Cost of Item</b>	<b>Grant Funds Request</b> <i>(Amounts must be 50% or less of the total cost of each item.)</i>
High-tensile wire to contain orchard hogs (\$490 x .50 = \$245)	490	245
150 perennial flowers and trees for border to attract beneficial insects @ \$7 - \$25 per quart pot. (\$2,600 x .50 = 1,300)	2,600	495
	<b>SUBTOTAL (from above)</b>	\$3,962
	<b>SUBTOTAL (from pg. 6)</b>	\$1,978
	<b>TOTAL</b>	\$5,940

☺ \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Applicant (must be a Farmer/Rancher)