



## WESTERN SARE SOUTHWEST SUBREGIONAL CONFERENCE

~June 10-11, 2008 ~  
Best Western Rio Grande Inn  
Albuquerque, New Mexico



8-5-08

# Needs, Issues in Southwest U.S.

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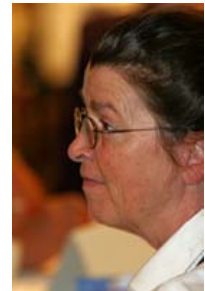
What follows is a list of the highest priorities among the many needs and issues identified by the Southwest Subregional Conference participants on Day 1. This more focused list served as the basis for discussion and reports from the tabletop groups on Day 2.

The issues and needs are clustered under each of the six key questions posed at the subregional conference.

Based on the input received at the Albuquerque conference, there were three resounding issues/topics to where Western SARE should direct its future investments in this subregion: water (quality, quantity, efficiency of use and legal protection), redevelopment of processing and marketing infrastructure and youth involvement in sustainable ag and food systems.

*I. What will be needed to create stronger local food systems that are less reliant on imports from elsewhere?*

- 1) Water: Quantity and quality (better coordination among federal agencies)
- 2) Availability of *animal* processing facilities
- 3) Make public policy accommodating/encouraging of local food systems, followed very closely by:
- 4) Educate how to buy grow, cook and eat local/seasonal food
- 5) A distant 5th – integrate regional production systems





Followed by: improve local marketing and distribution systems, reduce overregulation of certified kitchens and local livestock processors, spur community involvement (education, schools, promotion, carbon footprint, taxes), and publicize Western SARE to producers.



*II) What are the local food production trends in your area? Do you think your local farmers will produce enough food for your area 5-10 years from now? What areas of production need improvement?*

- 1) Local processing facilities/infrastructure
- 2) Improved efficiency (e.g., variety development, water use, soil fertility)
- 3) Legal protection (water rights) plus efficient use of water
- 4) Cooperative production and marketing
- 5) Full product cycle – from furrow to fork?



Followed by crop diversification, soil quality issues/crop rotations, water quality/quantity, season extension, storage facilities and access to all resources (knowledge, land, water, etc.).



*III) The SARE program was commissioned, by Congress, to get its research results to the farmer and rancher. Has this been a success in your area of influence? Why or why not?*



[Suggestions for improvement]:



- 1) Add youth education component to grants
- 2) A distant second – SARE should fund centers like Alcalde in New Mexico and producers should apply the results on the ground
- 3) Technical/clerical support to farmers who lack skills to submit proposals
- 4) tie -- Researchers should play a larger and more significant outreach role
- 4) tie -- Not aware of how and where to access SARE information
- 5) More local news releases to: radio, newsletters and newspapers



Followed by site visits to share information about SARE projects, ensure SARE offerings are relevant to farmers' interests, target additional \$\$\$ for post-project promotion, use new technologies such as podcasts, talk casts, DVD, website, texting, etc, and PIs need extra assistance or \$\$ to do outreach.

*IV) What type of research, education and development will be necessary over the next 10 years to help economically sustain farming*

*and the environment?*

- 1) Water conservation/quality/quantity/storage/efficiency
- 2) A distant second – On-farm energy and availability
- 3) Close third – increase local, small scale food production systems
- 4) A distant fourth – K-12 on-farm education
- 5) Increase research and education on whole farm systems



Followed by: educating people on sustainable practices; how to affect change and live with public policy; college curriculum on land ethics; question sustainability of biofuels; increase water use efficiency and nutrient potential; increase food safety and biosecurity

training.



*V) If Western SARE received (from Congress) an additional \$1 million per region, what types of projects should be targeted or emphasized?*



- 1) Youth-based programs and education of kids and youth
- 2) Tied at a distant second –Energy research, alternative energy, energy efficiency, local/renewable energy
- 2) Fund grants for longer periods (such as long-term cropping and crop animal

systems)

- 3) Distant third -- Fund outreach to socially disadvantaged and underserved populations
- 4) Water use – Quality and quantity
- 5) Tie – Nutrition and nutritional value of sustainably grown food products
- 5) Fund bigger and larger FRG projects because of frustration with



\$15K limit

Followed by fund top priorities in Question 4 (water, marketing, education, and energy) and funding for marketing the SARE program (such as mass media campaign).

*VI) What barriers are in place that prevent underserved groups, including socially disadvantaged groups, from applying for and receiving SARE funding, and how can those barriers be removed?*

- 1) Develop partnerships with organizations serving underserved/disadvantaged communities
- 2) Distant second – Develop capacity in community to assume project leadership
- 3) Distant third – Have a sample grant (application)
- 4) More PR and mentoring about SARE and writing



grants for underserved audiences

5) More press release about SARE to FSA, Conservation Districts and other agencies/partners

Followed by more feedback, support, one-on-one contact and clarification, and more and different forms of grant-writing instructions.

