



Western SARE
Host Institution:

Utah State University

<http://wsare.usu.edu>

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News

For immediate release

Contact: Phil Rasmussen, Western SARE Coordinator,
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More than 100 key players in the Hawai'i agricultural community, including farmers and people in ag-support agencies, will meet Sept. 23 and 24 at the Outrigger Keauhou Beach Resort in Kona to assess the sustainability of island agriculture.

The gathering is sponsored by the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, or Western SARE, through a grant being conducted by Jonathan Deenik, a soil scientist with the University of Hawai'i.

The conference will provide an overview of Western SARE's grant activities in Hawai'i and offer participants a chance to engage in directed discussions to help chart the future of sustainability and Western SARE grant programs.

Since its founding as a program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1988, Western SARE has funded 52 competitive grants in Hawai'i totaling \$2.55 million and 14 grants for professional development totaling nearly \$160,000.

"As Western SARE begins its third decade, it aims to reflect on what it has accomplished and challenges it should be addressing in the future," says Phil Rasmussen, program coordinator at Western SARE's host institution, Utah State University. "As a government program, Western SARE is distinctive in asking its customers to reflect on its past and help shape its future."

Results and feedback from the conference, one of six being held in the Western region through summer 2009, will be shared with participants and posted on the web at <http://wsare.usu.edu>.

Western SARE is one of four regions in the national SARE program providing competitive grants that typically explore, develop or promote some aspect of agricultural sustainability. SARE advances sustainable solutions to the whole of American agriculture, focusing on profit for the long term, protection of our nation's land and water and people – farmers, ranchers and their communities. The Western region includes 13 states and four U.S. Pacific island protectorates.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

We invite you to attend any of the events outlined in the enclosed schedule and to interview any of the people who are attending and conducting the conference. See the other side of this news release for contacts.

The conference will be moderated by:

Jerry DeWitt, Director
Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture
Iowa State University
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jdewitt@iastate.edu
www.leopold.iastate.edu/

Jerry is moderating all six Western SARE subregional conferences to achieve continuity. He is available for interview before, during or after the conference. Dewitt, who will be the keynote speaker and a participant the Farmer Chef Conference Sept. 24-25 at the Keauhou Beach, has twice served as acting director of the National SARE program.

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Phil, a soil scientist at Utah State University, has been coordinator of Western SARE since 1994, when the program moved to USU from the University of California, Davis. Phil is also available for interview through noon Sept. 24.

Jonathan Deenik, Soil Scientist
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As Hawai'i State Professional Development Program Coordinator, Jonathan coordinates and extends education about Western SARE and agricultural sustainability to the Hawai'i agricultural community.

Western SARE has a board of directors, also known as its Administrative Council, that oversees its activities and makes the final judgment on which grants are funded. Several AC members will be attending the conference, and two former AC members from Hawai'i will be attending:

- Dennis Teranishi, former CEO of Hawaiian Host Macadamia.
- Susan Matsushima, who runs Alluvion, a commercial nursery, on the O'ahu's North Shore