



Western SARE  
Host Institution:

Utah State University

<http://wsare.usu.edu>

Contacts:

Phil Rasmussen  
Regional Coordinator  
Western SARE  
Utah State University  
Ag Science Rm 305  
4865 Old Main Hill  
Logan, Utah 84322-4845  
(435) 797-2257  
[Philip.Rasmussen@usu.edu](mailto:Philip.Rasmussen@usu.edu)

Professional  
Development  
Program

Jim Freeburn  
PDP Coordinator  
Western SARE  
University of Wyoming  
SAREC  
2753 Highway 157  
Lingle, WY 82223  
(307) 837-2674  
[freeburn@uwyo.edu](mailto:freeburn@uwyo.edu)

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

## News

For immediate release

Contact: Phil Rasmussen, Western SARE Coordinator,  
(435) 797-2257, [philr@ext.usu.edu](mailto:philr@ext.usu.edu)  
Ron Daines, Communications Specialist  
(435) 770-3063, cell, [rjdaines@msn.com](mailto:rjdaines@msn.com)

CHEYENNE – Key players in the mountain and plains agricultural community will meet Oct. 28 and 29 at the Plains Hotel in Cheyenne to assess the sustainability of the region's agriculture.

"The conference is a grassroots approach to gathering information from farmers, ranchers, scientists and professionals in ag support agencies on the state of agriculture and its needs for the future," said Phil Rasmussen, coordinator of the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, or Western SARE, which is sponsoring the program.

Included will be an overview of Western SARE's grant activities in Wyoming, Montana, Colorado and Utah and a chance for participants 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 more than 200 grants worth nearly \$10 million in the four-state area.

"As Western SARE begins its third decade, it aims to reflect on what it has accomplished and challenges it should address," said Jim Freeburn, who oversees Western SARE's Professional Development Program from the University of Wyoming Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Center in Lingle. "As a government program, we are distinctive in asking our customers to reflect on the past and help to shape our 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 attached agenda and to interview any of the people who are attending and conducting the conference. See the other side of this news release for several contacts.

The conference is being moderated by:

Jerry DeWitt, Director  
Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture  
Iowa State University, Ames  
(515) 294-3711  
[jdewitt@iastate.edu](mailto:jdewitt@iastate.edu)  
[www.leopold.iastate.edu/](http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/)

Jerry is moderating all six Western SARE subregional conferences to achieve continuity. He has served as acting director of the National SARE program on several occasions and is well known throughout the country for his work in sustainability.

Phil Rasmussen  
Coordinator, Western SARE  
Utah State University, Logan  
(435) 797-2257  
[philr@ext.usu.edu](mailto:philr@ext.usu.edu)  
<http://wsare.usu.edu>

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. In addition to his duties with Western SARE, Phil will serve as the acting director of the National SARE program beginning Nov. 3, 2008.

Jim Freeburn  
Coordinator, Western SARE PDP  
University of Wyoming SAREC  
(307) 837-2674  
[freeburn@uwyo.edu](mailto:freeburn@uwyo.edu)

Jim is headquartered at the University of Wyoming Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Center in Lingle.

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, including:

Deborah Young, Western SARE Administrative Council Chair, 2008-2010  
Vice President of Extension, Colorado State University

Karl Kupers, Western SARE Administrative Council Chair, 2006-2008  
Principal in Shepherds Grain, marketer of sustainably produced flour