



Pacific Northwest Subregional Conference Needs and Issues Summary

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What follows is a draft list of the highest priorities among the hundreds of needs, issues and approaches identified by participants in the Pacific Northwest Subregional Conference February 19-20 in Spokane on the first day. This focused list resulted from group discussions on the second day.

The priorities are clustered under each of six key questions posed at the conference. Numbers in parentheses are final votes for each recommendation or trend, and are listed in instances of wide vote disparity.

The Western SARE Administrative Council will examine these and many other intriguing ideas raised at the conference. That list will later be posted on this web site.

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

- 1) Develop local/regional infrastructures for financing, processing – small- and medium-scale/mobile cleaning, distribution, consulting. (70)
- 2) Teach people to grow food including farmer-to-farmer, young farmers, training, apprenticeships/incubators. (36)
- 3) Consumer education, including schools, on factors such as availability of locally grown foods, price/cost demands, etc., including schools.
- 4) Train farmers to navigate health codes, policies, regulations.

II) What are the local and regional food production trends in your local area?

- 1) New marketing opportunities are growing but there's a lack of supporting infrastructure (storage, mills). (55)
 - 2) Increased "buy fresh, buy local" campaigns and CSAs/CFAs, food delivery, small farm vegetable production farmers markets and direct sales to restaurants and schools. (29)
 - 3) Increased demand for mechanization geared for small/medium size farms, coupled with limited access to equipment.
- Other trends identified – growing trend over locally grown over organically grown; people looking for food safety and security; more interest in home food production, canning, cooking.

III) The SARE program was commissioned, by Congress, to get its research results to the farmer and rancher. How can this process be improved?

- 1) On-farm trials, publications tours, demonstrations, farmer-to-farmer events.
- 2) Package of best practices (content) and delivery tools such as searchable databases, video, web page, YouTube, online courses, modules, lectures, press kit examples, workshops, etc.
- 3) (tie) SARE research results getting into the farm press and popular press as well as FSA, Conservation Districts and NRCS newsletters and publications.
- 4) (tie) SARE should partner with other groups (e.g. presence at tilth or regional conferences).
- 5) Grant projects should truly integrate farmers and ranchers into entire grant process.
- 6) National/regional websites restructuring to compile/organize projects database. Increase search capability.

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

- 1) Mobile and local processing. (51)
- 2) Support projects that develop local foodsheds. (47)
- 3) Systems research on many topics, such as insect management and some systems research that includes urban areas. (40)
- 4) Alternative energy. (30)

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

- 1) Whole-farm energy and nutrient systems. (59)
- 2) Support regional food and farm enterprise and innovation centers. (38)
- 3) Develop and support western Rodale-like sustainable agriculture institutes in every state.
- 4) New farmer and on-farm education.

VI) How can Western SARE overcome barriers that may prevent underserved groups, including socially disadvantaged groups, from applying for and receiving SARE funding?

- 1) Provide funding support for mentors to build community relationships and to collaboratively apply for grants. (67)
- 2) Identify who are the groups, what are the barriers and what are the needs. (28)
- 3) Advisors to assist farmers, community groups, food kitchens and faith groups with good ideas to write and submit proposals.
- 4) Teaming with migrant councils, refugee and tribal centers for linkages and education efforts.