



#### Western SARE

Phil Rasmussen, Coordinator  
Utah State University  
Agricultural Science Building  
Room 305  
4865 Old Main Hill  
Logan, Utah 84322-4865  
phone: (435) 797-2257  
fax: (435) 797-3344

#### Professional Development Program

Cinda Williams  
Idaho PDP Coordinator  
Latah Co. Extension Educator  
P.O. Box 8068  
Moscow, Idaho 83843  
(208) 883-2267  
cindaw@uidaho.edu

...

#### Western SARE Grant Categories

- Research & Education
- Professional Development
- Farmer/Rancher
- Professional + Producer
- Graduate Student
- Sustainable Farm Tours

Go to <http://wsare.usu.edu>  
Click on: Apply for a Grant

## TARGETING SMALL PRODUCERS

### Situation

In Washington and Idaho, small-acreage farmers and ranchers, and those who would like to begin farming and ranching on small parcels, comprise a large audience for which extension and academic programs are often limited. This is especially true in the areas of resource evaluation, financial planning, business management and direct marketing strategies.

Extension educator experience has found that people pondering the start of a small farm or ranch want information on goal planning, resource evaluation, an overview of options and a 'real life' look at what other farmers and ranchers are doing.

Cultivating Success – a collaborative program of Rural Roots, the University Idaho and Washington State University – was initiated in 2002 to



Cultivating Success participants take a wheat tour.

provide beginning and existing farmers with the planning, decision-making and research skills needed to develop sustainable small-acreage agricultural enterprises.

This Western SARE-funded project seeks to propel the Cultivating Success goals by expanding agriculture professional capacity for serving current and beginning small-acre farmers and ranchers.

### Objectives

1. Increase agricultural professional knowledge of concepts and issues related to a sustainable food system and the role that sustainable small acreage producers play in that system
2. Develop and disseminate an integrated set of sustainable small acreage farming and ranching educational materials to increase the number of sustainable small acreage farming programs
3. Increase the capacity of

agricultural professionals to establish meaningful, experiential and community-based programs in sustainable small acreage farming and ranching

4. Increase the local impacts of sustainable small acreage farming and ranching programs by providing ongoing support and technical assistance to extension and other agricultural professionals

### Actions

#### Course Materials

Comprehensive student and instructor manuals (with CDs) were developed for the *Sustainable Small Acreage Farming and Ranching* (SSAFR) and *Field Analysis of Sustainable Food Systems* courses. Instructor manuals include: learning objectives, lesson plans and assignment activities. The SSAFR instruc-

### Professional Development Program Grant

**Title:** Expanding Opportunities for Community-Based Educational Programs in Sustainable Small-Acreage Farming and Ranching

**Project Number:** EW03-009

#### Project Coordinator:

Cinda Williams  
Latah County Extension Educator  
University of Idaho  
P.O. Box 8068  
Moscow, Idaho 83843  
(208) 883-2267  
[cindaw@uidaho.edu](mailto:cindaw@uidaho.edu)

**SARE Grant:** \$98,143

...continued on next page



*Western SARE, a USDA organization, funds grants for research and education that develop or promote some aspect of agricultural sustainability, which embraces*

- *profitable farms and ranches*
- *a healthy environment*
- *strong families and communities.*

*The Western Region, one of four SARE regions nationwide, is administered through Utah State University.*

**Western SARE:**  
<http://wsare.usu.edu>

**National SARE**  
[www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org)

## TARGETING SMALL PRODUCERS

tor guide also includes teaching tips for each of 13 modules; an extensive resource list; 18 PowerPoint presentations; and worksheets that help students complete a Whole Farm Plan for their farm-based enterprise.

The *Field Analysis of Sustainable Food Systems* manual includes the course syllabus, field schedule, discussion topics, logistical information and evaluations needed for course instruction.

With leadership from a farmer with 10 years experience training apprentices, a *Farmer-Mentor Manual* was developed, to train farmers interested in mentoring beginning farmers/students or hosting apprentices. Chapters are: Adult Learning Styles, Project Planning, Agreements and Contracts, One-on-One Teaching, Conflict Resolution, Liability Insurance, Evaluations, Resources.

### Training and Support

Three Cultivating Success Instructor Training workshops were conducted for ag professionals seeking increased to improve their capacity for delivering effective, participatory educational programs on sustainable food systems.

The project worked one-on-one to mentor new instructors and redesigned and enhanced the Cultivating Success website, [www.cultivatingsuccess.org](http://www.cultivatingsuccess.org), to better serve their needs for access to curricula and course marketing materials.

### **Outcomes**

#### Training

Three instructor training workshops hosted 46 agricultural professionals. Ten of

those professionals offered the Sustainable Small Farming and Ranching classes at a new location and another 10 assisted in some capacity.

Of workshop evaluations, 80% said their knowledge of sustainable food systems "greatly increased"; 90% rated their interest in offering the class as "high." In follow-up surveys, 100% of course instructors said they found the teaching manual and training manuals very useful.



Twelve farmers attended two Farmer-Mentor trainings. Five completed a curriculum for their farm production and marketing systems, becoming certified as Cultivating Success Farmer-Mentors.

### Courses

From September 2003 to December 2005, 263 producers and students attended the 12-15-week course, *Sustainable Small Acreage Farming and Ranching*, at 13 locations in Washington and Idaho.

All students said the course "exceeded expectations" and "increased my knowledge skills in this subject area." Overall learning was rated an average of 4.45 out of 5, and the quality and value rating averaged 4.8.

### **Impact/Benefits**

Increased capacity of agricultural professionals to understand and offer courses on sustainable agriculture systems will:

- Help farmers become more informed on alternative practices, value-added products and direct marketing options
- Foster farmer and rancher sustainability and success
- Engender farmer understanding of whole-farm systems and the impact of farming practices on the environment
- Encourage improved stewardship practices on new and existing farms
- Show how input reduction and value-added products, crops and marketing diversification can increase returns

### **Building on Success**

This Western SARE Professional Development Program Grant has stimulated application for and funding of two more related Western SARE grants:

**SW05-039**, Using Farmer-Rancher Input to Develop and Implement Experiential Educational Opportunities for Beginning Farmer and Ranchers

**EW08-005**, Training and Connecting Agricultural Professional Through an Immersion Field Course and the Cultivating Success Instructor Training Program in Washington

### Cooperators

- ⇒ Cathy Perillo, Washington State University
- ⇒ Colette DePHELPS, Rural Roots
- ⇒ Diane Green, Greentree Naturals
- ⇒ Marcy Ostrom, Washington State University