

SARE: Advancing the Frontier of Sustainable Agriculture in...

Rhode Island

Project Highlight: *Soil conservation strategies for vegetable farms*

For most of the 2,000 mixed vegetable farms in southern New England, weeds are a major problem, and tillage is a leading solution. But it is an imperfect one: Along with having a high cost in labor and fuel, tillage degrades the soil over time, which often leads to lower yields.

To give local farmers an alternative, a University of Rhode Island team used SARE funding to establish a three-year research trial on the use of summer cover crops and reduced tillage to battle weeds while enriching the soil.

Started in 2010, the research team has made some important observations. While none of the conservation tillage treatments outperformed the conventional tillage treatment, two of

them produced comparable yields. Soil quality was worst in the conventional treatment plot after three years.

Using a system of year-round cover crops between rows held particular promise for future research—yields, while lower than in other treatments, were acceptable, and soil health improved over three years.

The team is using their research plots for important educational outreach. Quarterly twilight meetings regularly draw 20 to 30 farmers, and dozens of undergraduate and graduate students have gotten hands-on experience in the fields.

For more information on this project, see www.sare.org/projects, and search for project number LNE10-293.

SARE in Rhode Island www.nesare.org/rhode-island

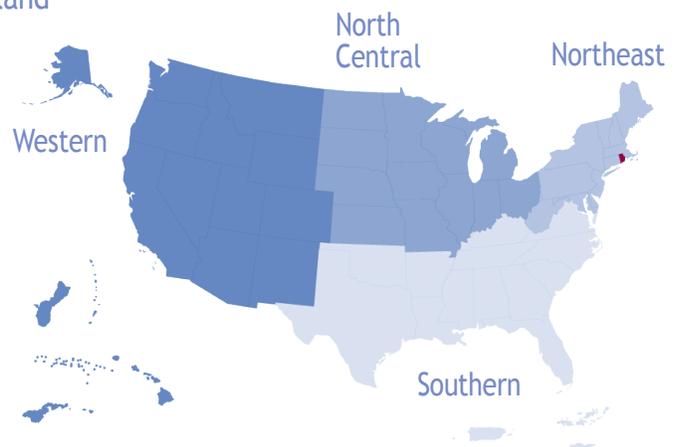
\$1.5 million in total funding

29 grant projects

(since 1988)

For a complete list of grant projects state by state, go to

www.sare.org/state-summaries



SARE's four regional programs and outreach office work to advance sustainable innovations to the whole of American agriculture.

What is SARE?

Since 1988, the Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) program has been the go-to USDA grants and outreach program for farmers, ranchers, researchers and educators who want to develop innovations that improve farm profitability, protect water and land, and revitalize communities. To date, SARE has awarded \$245 million for more than 6,100 initiatives.

SARE is grassroots with far-reaching impact

Four regional councils of expert practitioners set priorities and make grants in every state and island protectorate.

SARE communicates results

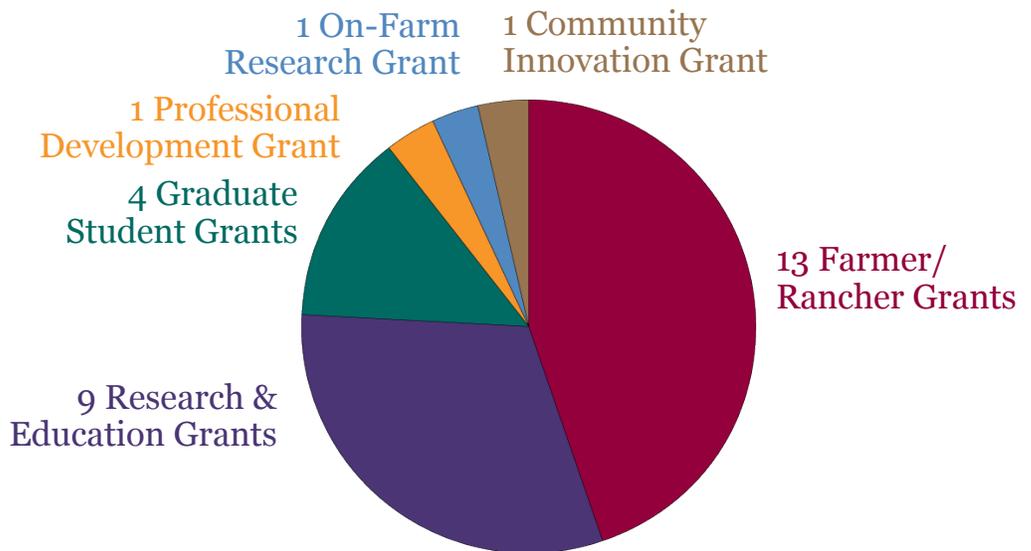
SARE shares project results by requiring grantees to conduct outreach and grower engagement; and by maintaining the SARE Learning Center—a library of practical publications, grantee-produced information products and other educational materials.



www.sare.org

SARE Grants in Rhode Island

SARE has awarded a total of **29 grants** in Rhode Island since 1988



SARE's Impact



53 percent of producers report using a new production technique after reading a SARE publication.

79 percent of producers said they improved soil quality through their SARE project.

64 percent of producers said their SARE project helped them achieve higher sales.

Contact Your SARE State Coordinator

SARE sustainable ag coordinators run state-level educational programs for Extension and other ag professionals, and many help grant applicants and recipients with planning and outreach. Visit www.nesare.org/rhode-island to learn more.

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For detailed information on SARE projects, go to www.SARE.org