

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

# South Carolina

## Project Highlight: *Improving the safety of food-handling practices*

When outbreaks of foodborne illness are traced to their source, the economic consequences can be severe for the industries and states involved. SARE-funded researchers in South Carolina are helping protect local farmers from such a scenario by encouraging safe food-handling practices.

Using a 2009 SARE grant, the Clemson University research team analyzed bacteria levels on fruits and vegetables bought at seven farmers' markets in two regions of the state, and at a peach processing facility. The team found, for example, that vegetables had higher bacteria levels than fruits, presumably because most vegetables grow close to the ground, whereas most fruits do not. In the processing facility, they found that while workers' hands had high bacteria levels, the peaches did not when

processing was finished, suggesting that sanitation procedures were adequate.

The team is now using the findings from their analysis to identify specific risk factors and effective control strategies that can be shared with farmers through food safety training sessions. During the course of the SARE project, they gave presentations at four food safety workshops organized by the South Carolina Department of Agriculture.

Sharing this information with local farmers to help them avoid a foodborne illness outbreak will benefit all South Carolinians: Agriculture is the state's biggest industry, and it accounts for 200,000 jobs.

For more information on this project, see [www.sare.org/projects](http://www.sare.org/projects), and search for project number LS09-217.

## SARE in South Carolina

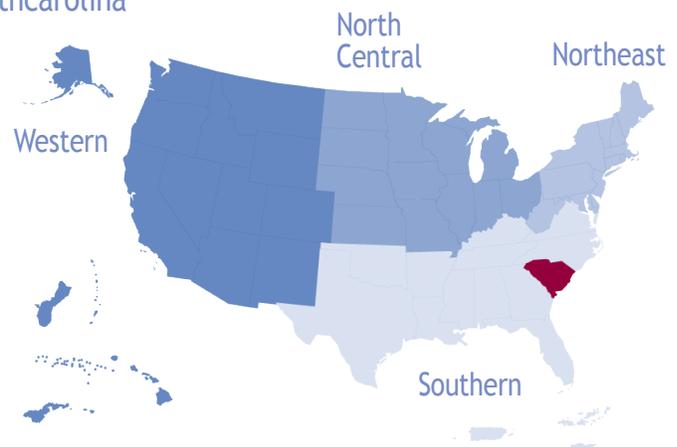
[www.southernsare.org/southcarolina](http://www.southernsare.org/southcarolina)

**\$1.8 million in total funding**

**47 grant projects**

(since 1988)

For a complete list of grant projects state by state, go to [www.sare.org/state-summaries](http://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.

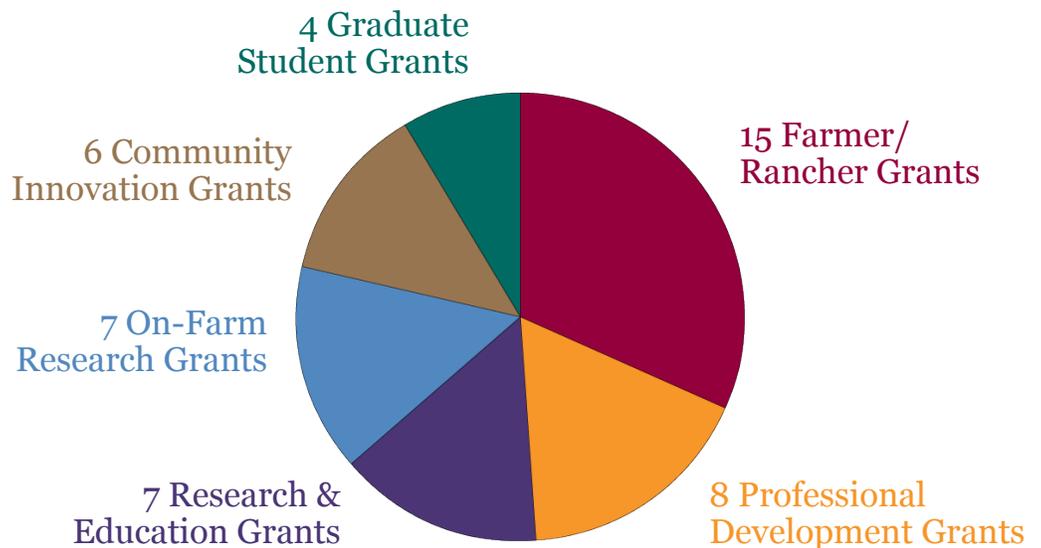


**Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education**

[www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org)

# SARE Grants in South Carolina

SARE has awarded a total of **47 grants** in South Carolina 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.southernare.org/southcarolina](http://www.southernare.org/southcarolina) to learn more.

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For detailed information on SARE projects, go to  
[www.SARE.org](http://www.SARE.org)