

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

# Iowa

## Project Highlight: *Optimizing Organic Oat Production and Profitability*

**O**rganic corn and soybean growers in Iowa often plant small grains as a third crop for a variety of benefits. Small grains can provide grain or straw for on-farm use or sale, help disrupt ground pest and disease life cycles and more evenly distribute farm labor over the cropping season.

Oats is a common small grain, yet Iowa farmers hesitate to plant this crop because a combination of inferior price, yield and grain quality makes it less profitable than corn and soybeans. To make oats a more viable option, Iowa State University graduate student David Weisberger used a SARE grant to generate much-needed data about simple low- or no-cost management strategies involving an oat rotation.

Weisberger used station research and trials on seven farms to explore questions with respect to oat yield, test weight, forage legume biomass and weed biomass. Weisberger's on-farm trials quantified the effects that practices such as crop density and planting date can have in oat production. This gives farmers an honest assessment of both the potential opportunities for management improvements, as well as the limitations that farmers may face with growing oats. Weisberger's outreach included workshops, tours and publications that reached at least 250 farmers.

For more information on this project, see [www.sare.org/projects](http://www.sare.org/projects), and search for project number GNC15-216.

## 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 over \$287 million to more than 7,000 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 in Iowa

[www.northcentralsare.org/iowa](http://www.northcentralsare.org/iowa)

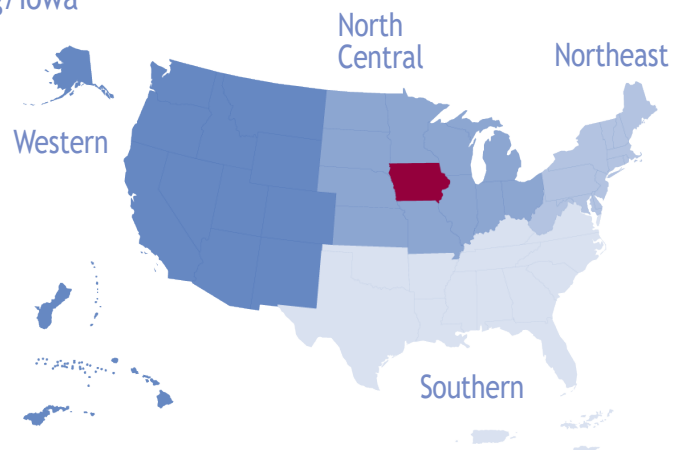
**\$8.2 million in total funding**

**213 grant projects**

(since 1988)

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

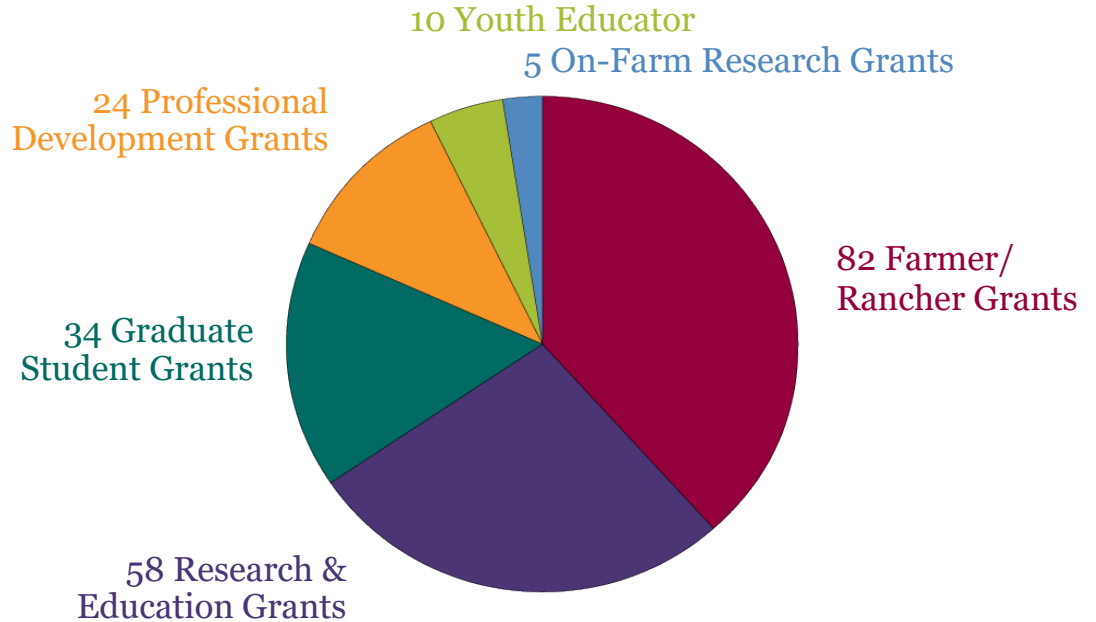
[www.sare.org/state-summaries](http://www.sare.org/state-summaries)



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

# SARE Grants in Iowa

SARE has  
awarded a  
total of  
**213 grants**  
in Iowa  
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.northcentralsare.org/iowa](http://www.northcentralsare.org/iowa) to learn more.

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