

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

Mississippi

Project Highlight: *Giving sweet potato growers an organic option*

In Mississippi—the country’s third largest producer of sweet potatoes—SARE-funded research is opening the door to low-cost sustainable production practices that could help growers cash in on organic sales.

Only one grower in Mississippi currently produces organic sweet potatoes, yet organic can fetch a premium at fresh markets and through sales to processors, particularly for baby food, says Mississippi State University researcher Ramon Arancibia. “Companies like Gerber don’t want pesticides, or even a lot of fertilizers.”

Midway through a 2009 SARE grant, Arancibia was conducting trials with three farmers around Vardaman to evaluate how cover crops and conserva-

tion tillage can be used to improve soil fertility and manage pest challenges.

So far, he found that an organically grown crop suffered far less pest damage than a conventionally grown one.

In addition, he focused on showing the soil building qualities of cover crops.

“Sweet potatoes are root vegetables, so they need a very healthy soil,” Arancibia says.

To help get the word out, Arancibia shared his findings with the 104-member Mississippi Sweet Potato Council, which represents nearly all the state’s growers.

For more information on this project, see www.sare.org/projects, and search for project number LSo9-215.

SARE in Mississippi

www.southernsare.org/mississippi

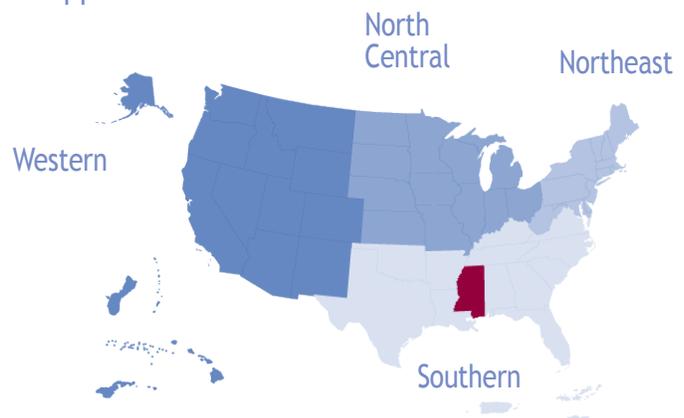
\$1.8 million in total funding

33 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

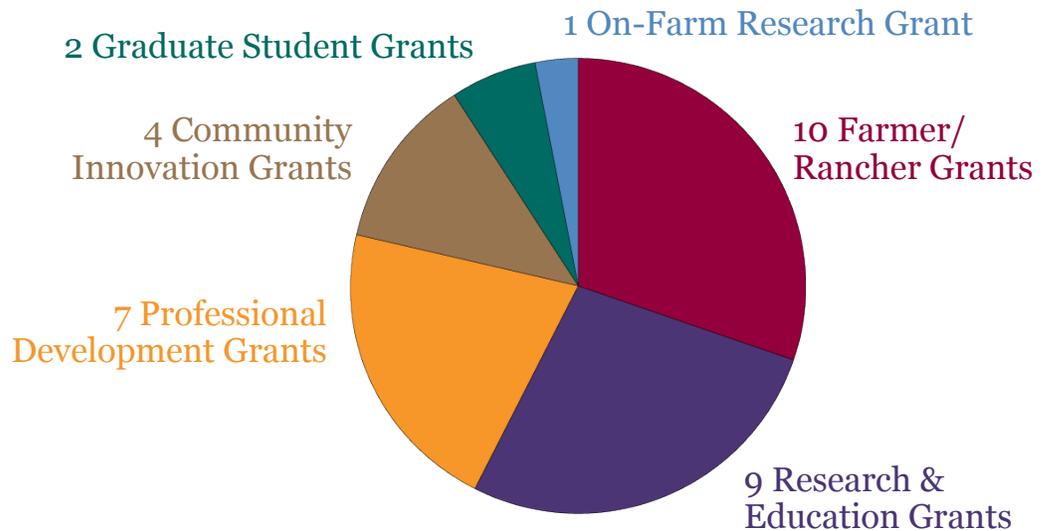
SARE shares project results by requiring grantees to conduct outreach and grower engagement; and by maintaining the SARE Learning Center—a library of practical publications, grantee-produced information products and other educational materials.



www.sare.org

SARE Grants in Mississippi

SARE has awarded a total of **33 grants** in Mississippi 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.southernsare.org/mississippi to learn more.

Franklin Chukwuma
Alcorn State University
(601) 877-2312
franklinc@alcorn.edu

Mark Crenshaw
Mississippi State University
(662) 325-3516
markc@ext.msstate.edu



SARE is funded by the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

For detailed information on SARE projects, go to

www.SARE.org