

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

Nebraska

Project Highlight: *Dryland cover cropping boosts yields*

Every drop of water counts for farmers who practice dryland cultivation, which relies on rainfall without the benefit of irrigation. So, when it comes to incorporating cover crops into a dryland rotation, many farmers hesitate, wondering: “How much moisture is the cover crop going to demand, and will I pay for it later in lost cash-crop yields?”

This is the “first question and major concern any dryland farmer has about cover crops,” says Bladen, Neb., farmer Keith Berns, who raises corn, soybeans and wheat. But thanks to SARE-funded research he and his brother conducted on their 2,000-acre farm—about two-thirds of it dryland—they now have an answer to share with their peers.

Keith and Brian Berns found that, in

fact, cover crops can significantly boost corn yields in a non-irrigated setting. In one trial, they planted corn after a cover crop mix of grasses, legumes and brassicas, and saw a corn yield that was about 10 percent better than planting straight into wheat stubble.

Now, the brothers are known as local experts in cover crops: During their SARE-funded work, they hosted two on-farm field days and spoke at nearly 25 events, reaching about 1,500 people.

Also, the grant helped the Berns brothers launch a new cover-crop seed business and start an annual cover crops workshop they host on their farm.

For more information on this project, see www.sare.org/projects, and search for project number FNC07-653.

SARE in Nebraska

www.northcentralsare.org/nebraska

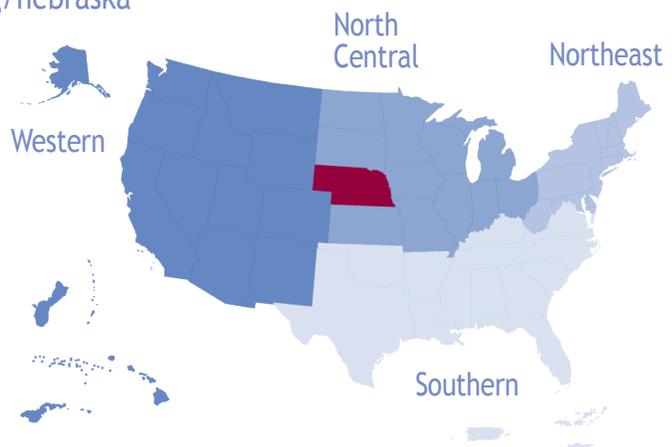
\$5.3 million in total funding

149 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

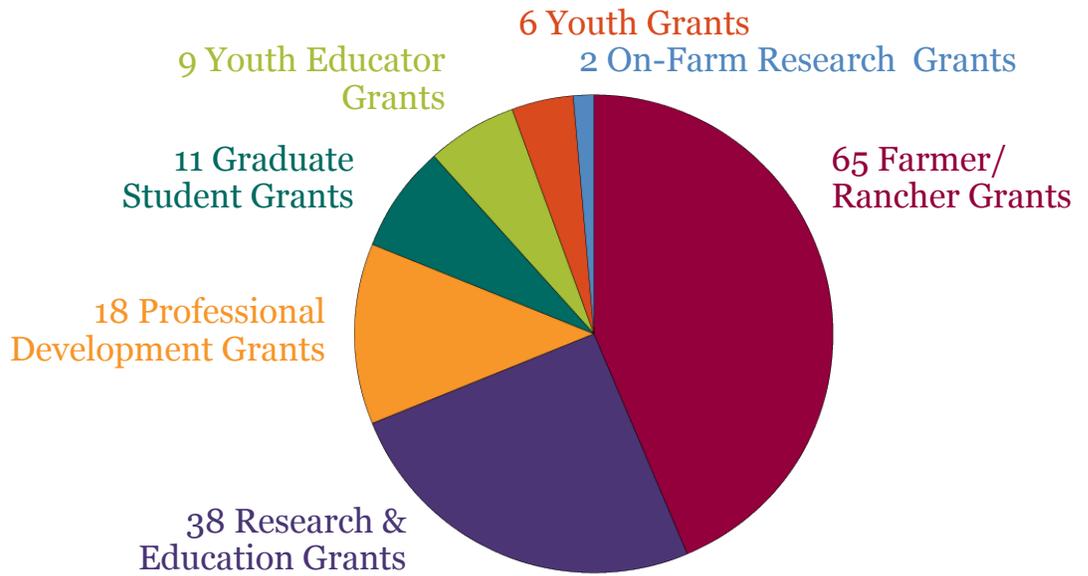
SARE shares project results by requiring grantees to conduct outreach and grower engagement; and by maintaining the SARE Learning Center—a library of practical publications, grantee-produced information products and other educational materials.



www.sare.org

SARE Grants in Nebraska

SARE has
awarded a
total of
149 grants
in Nebraska
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/nebraska to learn more.

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For detailed information on SARE projects, go to

www.SARE.org