

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

Wisconsin

Project Highlight: *Evaluating the Value of Composted Manure*

Wisconsin is home to more dairy farms than any other state. The milk they produce has a market value of \$5 billion and is a huge contributor to the state's economy. But the industry also generates a lot of manure, and there is only so much dairy farmers can spread on nearby fields before excess phosphorus begins to leach into and impair the region's waterways.

This problem prompted three Wisconsin dairy farmers in the Yahara River watershed to collaborate on a SARE-funded project looking at composting as a means to deal with manure in a cost-effective, environmentally friendly manner. The idea was to experiment with the composting process on their farms and then analyze the final product's moisture level and nutrient

content. Comparing the cost to produce it with its market value would tell them whether it made economic sense to compost manure.

In the end, the farmers found that composting can be a viable alternative to directly applying manure on fields. They estimated the value of their compost at \$24 to \$37 per ton. Compost is beneficial for the soil and for water quality because it improves many soil characteristics that reduce the likelihood of nutrient leaching.

For more information on this project, see www.sare.org/projects, and search for project number FNC15-991.

SARE in Wisconsin

www.northcentralsare.org/wisconsin

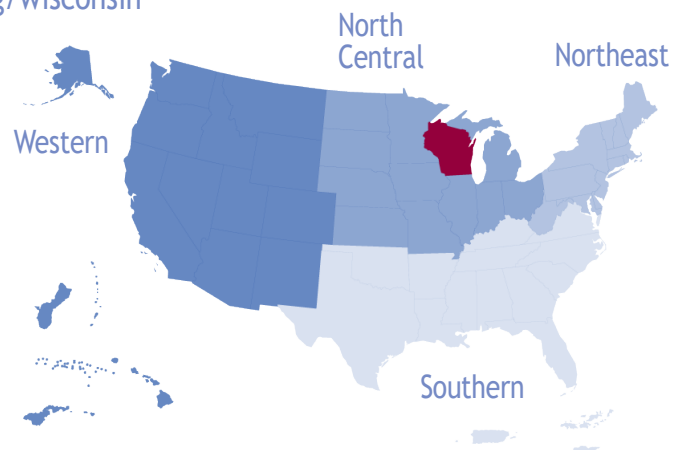
\$9.7 million in total funding

285 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 over \$273 million to more than 6,800 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

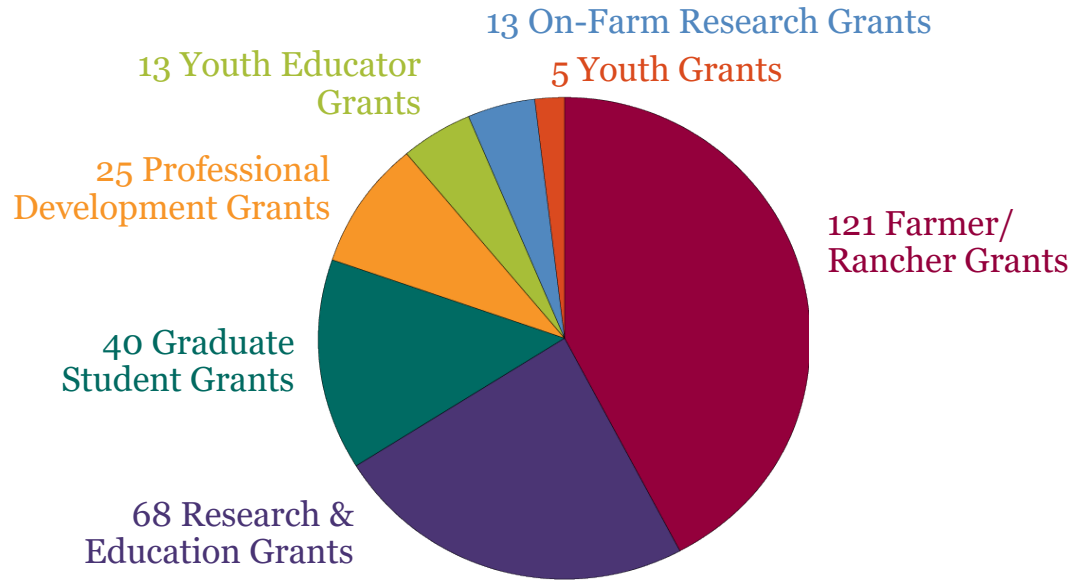
SARE shares project results by requiring grantees to conduct outreach and grower engagement; and by maintaining the SARE Learning Center—a library of practical publications, grantee-produced information products and other educational materials.



www.sare.org

SARE Grants in Wisconsin

SARE has awarded a total of **285 grants** in Wisconsin 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/wisconsin to learn more.

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