Iowa

Project Highlight: Optimizing Organic Oat Production and Profitability

Organic 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, and search for project number GNC15-216.

SARE in Iowa

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

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 Grants in Iowa

SARE has awarded a total of 213 grants in Iowa since 1988.

- 58 Research & Education Grants
- 82 Farmer/Rancher Grants
- 24 Professional Development Grants
- 34 Graduate Student Grants
- 10 Youth Educator
- 5 On-Farm Research Grants

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 to learn more.

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

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