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

Illinois

Project Highlight: *Utilizing Precision Application of Cover Crops to Maximize Benefits to Corn*

Over the 20 years that Ralph Upton has planted cover crops on his Illinois farm, he has built up the health of his soil and reduced his need for fertilizers and pesticides on his corn and soybean crops. However, he knows they can still do more. Allowing the cover crop to develop biomass and roots right up to spring planting would yield even more benefits, but for Upton, who practices no-till, planting corn into the heavy green residue can be difficult.

So, he used a SARE grant to experiment with building a precision, multi-cover crop species seeder and partnered with local educators and researchers to test it. The advantage of such a precision seeder would be the ability to plant a mix of cover crop species at one time, but to place some species within corn rows and others between rows. The species that develop heavier residue would go between rows, hopefully making it easier to plant again the following year

Upton found that precision-planted cover crops are effective and maintained his corn yields. His work prompted interest among Illinois farmers and crop advisors. This precision-planting system could allow for a more flexible transition from a conventional tillage system to a no-till cover crop system, according to Upton.

For more information on this project, see **www.sare.org/projects**, and search for project number FNC15-1018.

SARE in Illinois

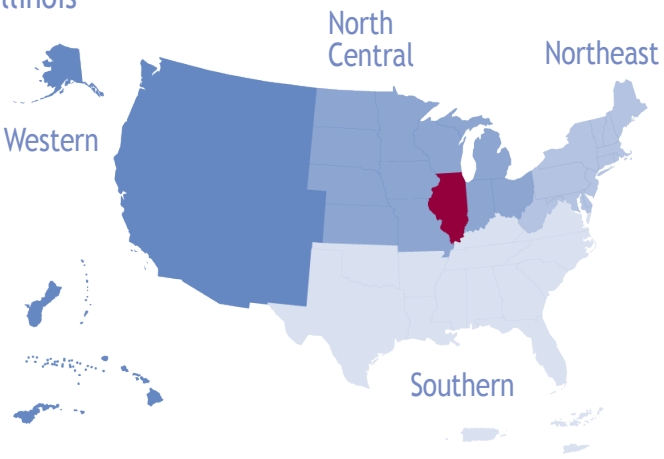
www.northcentralsare.org/illinois

$3 million in total funding

132 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 $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

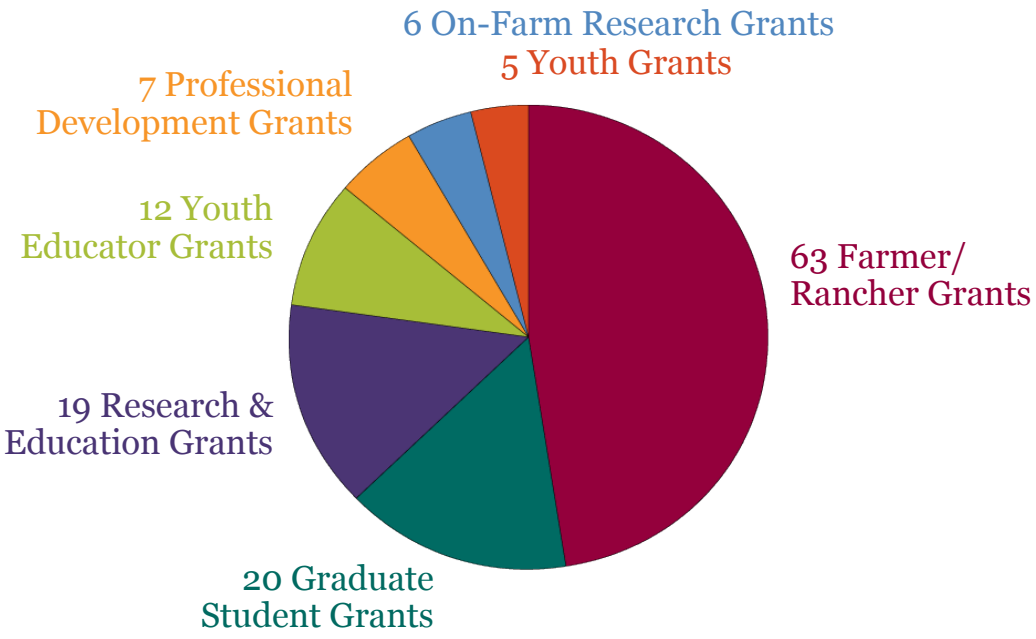
SARE shares project results by requiring grantees to conduct outreach and grower engagement; and by maintaining the SARE Learning Center—a library of practical publications, grantee-produced information products and other educational materials.

SARE
Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education

www.sare.org

SARE Grants in Illinois

SARE has awarded a total of **132 grants** in Illinois 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/illinois to learn more.

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USDA SARE Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education

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**