Kentucky

Project Highlight: Training Ag Professionals on Sustainable Vegetable Production Methods

Kentucky is home to numerous small, limited-resource farms. More than 75 percent of the state’s 85,000 farms are smaller than 180 acres and 80 percent have an annual income under $25,000, according to the USDA Census of Agriculture. Tobacco used to be an attractive option for these growers because it was highly profitable at small acreages compared to other crops, but that has changed with the elimination of price supports and marketing quotas.

Extension professionals at state universities in Kentucky and Tennessee are working to fill the void left by tobacco by increasing the acreage of sustainably farmed and certified organic vegetables. For this to happen, training in sustainable and organic vegetable farming for agricultural professionals who work closely with small-scale farmers is critical. With a SARE grant, a team led by the University of Kentucky collaboratively sponsored hands-on workshops, regional farm tours, training materials, videos and websites for farm educators.

The team trained 150 ag professionals and 150 growers. Prior to the training, many of the participants expressed their discomfort with organic vegetable production. Yet nearly 200 attended a field day heavily featuring organic production just a few years later, indicating a growing interest on their part.

For more information on this project, see www.sare.org/projects, and search for project number ES10-101.
SARE Grants in Kentucky

SARE has awarded a total of **88 grants** in Kentucky since 1988.

- **15 Research & Education Grants**
- **13 On-Farm Research Grants**
- **7 Graduate Student Grants**
- **26 Farmer/Rancher Grants**
- **21 Professional Development Grants**
- **6 Community Innovation Grants**

For detailed information on SARE projects, go to [www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org).

**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 SARED 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/kentucky](http://www.southernsare.org/kentucky) to learn more.

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