

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

Florida

Project Highlight: *Grafted Speciality Tomatoes More Resilient*

Demand for organic heirloom and specialty tomatoes grown in high tunnels is rising, making them high-value crops. Unfortunately, growers of such tomatoes in Florida face challenges in managing soil-borne diseases. Due to Fusarium wilt, one farm faced the complete crop failure of a tomato popular in the local market. University of Florida researcher Xin Zhao partnered with the farm, Frog Song Organics, to see if grafting with resistant rootstocks would control soil-borne diseases in organic high tunnel production systems.

Their experiment compared grafted and non-grafted specialty tomatoes for soil-borne disease resistance, yield and fruit quality. They found that grafting was an effective tool for managing Fusarium wilt and improving the

overall health of tomato plants. Yields significantly improved in grafted tomato production compared with non-grafted controls. Even with higher production costs associated with the grafting, the grafted plants resulted in increased net profits.

One hundred professionals and 450 farmers learned of the rewarding research findings at workshops and presentations. Zhao views this on-farm research project as a successful demonstration of technology transfer through a collaborative and productive partnership with local growers to address production issues.

For more information on this project, see www.sare.org/projects, and search for project number OS13-083.

SARE in Florida

www.southernsare.org/florida

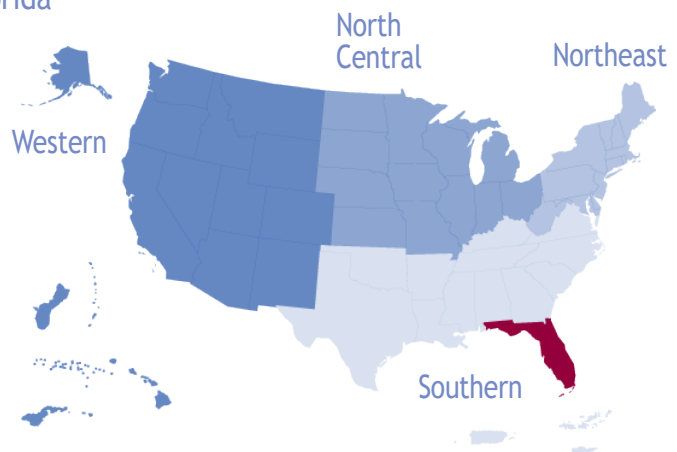
\$5.1 million in total funding

131 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

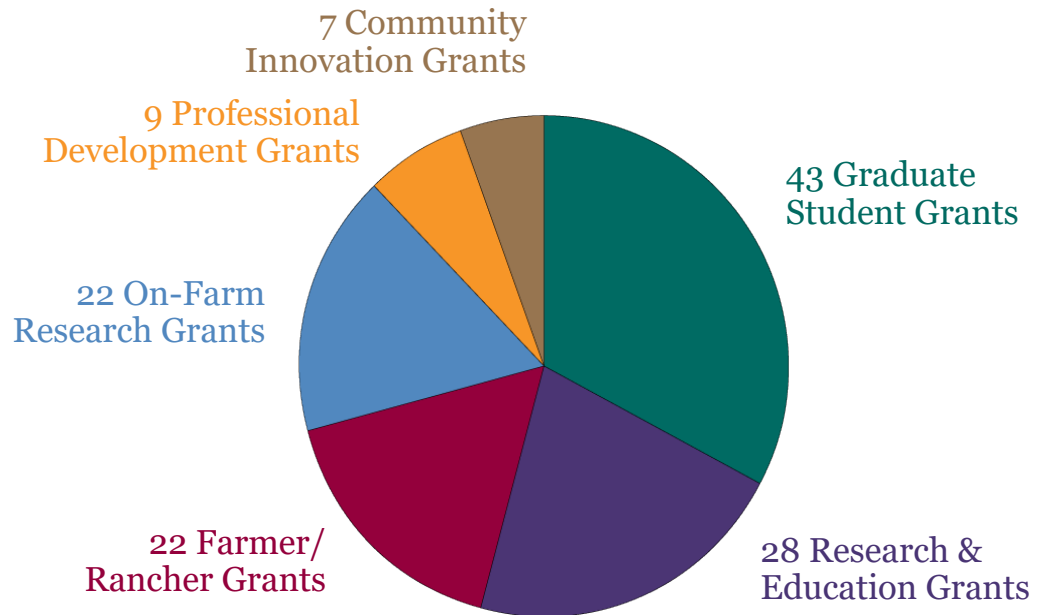
SARE shares project results by requiring grantees to conduct outreach and grower engagement; and by maintaining the SARE Learning Center—a library of practical publications, grantee-produced information products and other educational materials.



www.sare.org

SARE Grants in Florida

SARE has
awarded a
total of
131 grants
in Florida
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.southernsare.org/florida to learn more.

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