Pennsylvania

Project Highlight: Better Practices, Better Dairy Farms

Pennsylvania abounds with dairy farms, and with milk ranking as the state’s most valuable agricultural product, these farms are an integral part of the state’s economy and communities. Yet volatility in prices for milk and production inputs makes it difficult to earn a reliable profit. At the same time, dairy farmers face pressure to be good environmental stewards.

Fortunately, more sustainable systems are in reach, thanks to a large-scale, multidisciplinary research effort led by a Penn State University team. The effort, funded through multiple SARE grants, focuses on developing cropping systems that help dairy farmers cut costs by reducing off-farm inputs such as feed and fertilizer while maintaining productivity.

The project, ongoing since 2010, compares the performance of a standard, two-year rotation of corn and soybeans with a six-year, no-till rotation that includes perennial and annual forages on a simulated 65-cow, 240-acre dairy farm. It includes other comparisons of manure applications and herbicide treatments.

The project has generated a wealth of information. For example, researchers have found that by injecting manure instead of broadcasting it, farmers can save up to 70 pounds of nitrogen per acre. They were also able to reduce herbicides in corn with banding and high-residue cultivation.

For more information, see www.sare.org/projects, and search for project numbers LNE09-291, LNE13-329 and LNE16-354.
SARE Grants in Pennsylvania

SARE has awarded a total of 314 grants in Pennsylvania since 1988.

- 64 Research & Education Grants
- 105 Farmer/Rancher Grants
- 26 Professional Development Grants
- 57 On-Farm Research Grants
- 9 Community Innovation Grants
- 51 Graduate Student Grants
- 2 Research Only Grants
- 51 Graduate Student 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.nesare.org/pennsylvania to learn more.

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