Heather Darby is all about partnering with farmers to advance their cutting edge ideas—in the end, to the benefit of hundreds of producers across the region. A recipient of 13 SARE-funded projects, the University of Vermont Extension specialist has worked with researchers and farmers to help oilseed producers get more value out of biodiesel, organic dairy farmers grow their own feed and other growers tap new local markets for wheat, hops and dry beans.

“I would say that every SARE grant I’ve received was generated because of the questions and interests of the farmers in Vermont and other nearby areas,” Darby says.

Many of those questions have been raised by the region’s emerging community of biodiesel producers, who are pioneering the use of oilseed crops like sunflower and canola in New England. Darby has worked on two SARE grants to learn more about oilseeds—particularly pest and weed management—and to share their knowledge with others.

With another SARE grant, she is working with oilseed producers and researchers to “close the loop” by producing food-quality oil that can be sold to restaurants and then later returned to farmers for biodiesel production. This two-stage life can increase the oil’s value by up to 50 percent.

Darby is also helping Vermont’s wheat growers produce grain suitable for local bakers, who have been hesitant to source flour locally because of inconsistent quality.

For more information on this research, see www.sare.org/projects, and do a coordinator search for “Darby.”
SARE has awarded a total of 257 grants in Vermont 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.nesare.org/vermont](http://www.nesare.org/vermont) to learn more.

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**For detailed information on SARE projects, go to**

[www.SARE.org](http://www.SARE.org)