



# Conducting Online Outreach for Northeast SARE Farmer Grants

## Why Online Outreach

Northeast SARE requires that, as a Farmer Grant recipient, you conduct outreach to share what is learned during your project. Outreach can be conducted in many ways: at events on the farm, through presentations at conferences, via printed publications, and/or on-line. It is important that other farmers can learn from the results of your work. While in-person events can provide hands-on learning and foster two-way sharing of knowledge, conducting online outreach also has valuable benefits. You may, for example, be interested in spreading the word about your project results to a wider group of farmers beyond state lines and/or your immediate agricultural community. You may want the information to be more “evergreen” and available to farmers into the future beyond a one-time field day. Or you may be an introvert and the thought of a crowd of people on your farm doesn’t sound like fun.

No matter why you are choosing online outreach -- out of necessity or by preference -- there are essentially two steps to consider: 1) what are you going to develop (what is your “product” or “deliverable”) and 2) how are you going to share it with other farmers (delivery method). This fact sheet provides some ideas about both steps, recognizing that there are many ways (beyond the ones listed here) to spread the word about the results of your project to other farmers. The ways you choose to offer your project’s outreach depends on you, your individual preferences and what works best for your project.

## Step I. Developing Your Outreach Products

First, determine what “product” or “deliverable” you are going to develop. There are a range of options to consider; a few are listed below but there are numerous outreach products that may work for your project. The key is to present the information in a way that other farmers may easily learn about your project and its results.

### Article

A written article is certainly not a new idea but is a common and straightforward way to share research results. A good rule of thumb to develop an article is using the 5Ws: **Who** (you are and a brief description of your farming operation); **Why** (why did you conduct the project; why was it important to your farm and the greater farming community); **Where** (where was the research was conducted); **When** (when was the project conducted); and, more importantly, **What** (what did you do and what were the results of your project). Some farmers choose to write short, succinct articles for placement into newsletters while others choose to write in-depth research reports that detail the project.

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Northeast SARE offers competitive grants and sustainable agriculture education in Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts,

Article examples:

- [Written for newsletter](#)
- [Formatted as a brochure](#)
- [Written as a bulleted list](#)
- [Research report](#)

## Longer Publication

Some projects lend themselves to a longer written publication like a bulletin or fact sheet, guide, booklet or manual. Some Farmer Grant projects specifically identify one of these publication types as the outcome of their projects. Since longer writing projects entail dedicated time--and some projects work with editors, illustrators and graphic designers on their publications--these products should be carefully considered to ensure you have the time and resources to put into their development.

Examples:

- [Fact sheet](#)
- [Guide](#)
- [Booklet](#)
- [Manual](#)
- [Research report](#)

## Plans and Schematics

If your project involves creating a structure, building and testing a piece of equipment or machinery, or otherwise testing a prototype, consider ways to share the process through blueprints or schematics, detailed plans, step-by-step instructions, or mechanical drawings.

Examples:

- [Plans/Schematics](#)
- [Architectural Drawings](#)
- [Step-by-Step Instructions](#)

## Photo Gallery

Depending on the project, a photo gallery with explanatory text can be a powerful way to share research results. A slide presentation using PowerPoint or Google slides; a photo album in Google Photos or Flickr; and other image collage platforms can help organize your photos and tell the story of your project and its results. Keys to good photo displays are, of course, clear and high quality photos as well as the text explaining the photos and connecting them back with your research project.

Examples:

- [Powerpoint/slide presentation](#)
- [Photo documentation](#) that accompanied [plans](#)
- [Photo gallery made into video](#)
- [Research report with photos](#)

## Video

Many farmers develop videos as ways to show the project's research and results. Camera equipment is now easily accessible -- you can find it in your back pocket! Cell phones, especially newer versions, produce excellent quality video clips and there are several free or low-cost video editing apps and software on the market. In addition to cell phones, camcorders and drones are coming down in price; if this technology sounds fun, they can be worth the investment (note, however, that these pieces of equipment would be considered as general use and therefore would not be eligible as SARE expenses). The keys to good video production are: a) good audio and b) a checklist or script of what you want to cover. Additional strategies to making videos are included in [SARE's Farmer Field Day Toolkit](#).

Examples:

- [Video of research results](#)
- [Video step-by-step how-to](#)
- [Instructional video](#)
- [Webinar recording](#)

## Step 2. Spreading the Word: Delivery Methods

Once you have developed your outreach product, the next step is determining how and where you are going to share the information with other farmers. Again, there are numerous options available; a few ideas are listed below.

### Published in print or online newsletter

Most organizations that host farming conferences or events also likely publish print and/or online newsletters. They may welcome your contribution of an article, a blurb about a publication you developed, or the link to a video that they can publish in their newsletter. Your technical advisor may also publish a newsletter or have ideas of colleagues that would be interested in spreading the word, so check with them too.

### Online events

Several organizations offer online conferences, virtual field days, and webinars. If you have developed a photo gallery or video, these can form the basis of a presentation you could give online through one of these online events. Many of these online offerings are recorded so farmers can benefit from watching them either live or in the future.

### Websites

You can post any of your outreach products on your farm website; some farmers have constructed special pages on their websites just for their Farmer Grant project. Again, your technical advisor or farming organizations with which you are involved might be willing to post your outreach products on their websites. Some websites are specifically designed for sharing farmer information. For example, [FarmHack](#) is an open-source, web-based community of farmers that build and modify tools and equipment. Several Farmer Grant projects have posted their plans and schematics for prototypes and equipment builds there.

## Online Networks

A quick and effective way to spread the word about your project results include posts to social media channels like Facebook and Instagram or through local or farmer-to-farmer email listservs. If you are not subscribed to social media or listservs, your technical advisor might be willing to share the information through these online networks.

## Working with the Media

Media outlets like television, radio and newspapers are other ways to share information about your project. Some tips for working with the media are included in [SARE's Farmer Fieldday Toolkit](#). The toolkit also has information on [creating a press release](#). If you need assistance constructing or editing a press release, please contact Northeast SARE communications specialist [Deb Heleba](#).

## Additional Tips and Guidance

As you plan for your project's outreach, keep these additional considerations in mind.

### Acknowledge SARE

In all outreach products and other materials you develop, please make sure you acknowledge SARE as the funding source of your project. Preferred acknowledgement wording and the Northeast SARE logo are available at: [www.northeastsare.org/logo](http://www.northeastsare.org/logo).

### Include your outreach activities in your SARE report

Don't forget to upload the outreach products you create to your SARE report at: [projects.sare.org](http://projects.sare.org).

### Where to Get Help

In addition to your technical advisor, Northeast SARE personnel are here to help. Each land grant university has a state SARE coordinator that may be able to provide ideas or assistance; find the coordinator in your state at: [northeastsare.org/sare-in-your-state](http://northeastsare.org/sare-in-your-state). And, of course, Northeast SARE's Farmer Grant coordinator [Candice Huber](#) and communications specialist [Deb Heleba](#) are happy to work with you.