It is a maxim universally agreed upon in agriculture, that nothing must be done too late; and again, that everything must be done at its proper season; while there is a third precept which reminds us that opportunities lost can never be regained.

Pliny the Elder, Natural History

Field Notes, the quarterly newsletter of the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, has been absent for two years. It has not been lack of news that halted publication production, but the lack of a publication producer -- the NCR-SARE communications director position was empty from March until September, 2003. The position filled (by Jennifer Robison, a nationally published writer with a strong family farm background), Field Notes is going back into the field -- late, but not too late.

Ordinarily, Field Notes highlights a specific aspect or form of agriculture. Past issues have covered sustainable agroforestry, marketing, watering systems, and swine production, among many others. This method is deliberate. It allows us to cover sustainable agriculture projects in great depth, and lets us show you the scope of complex farming techniques. More important, single-topic reporting is a good way to introduce you to the people putting sustainable practices to work. It's a method we're committed to, but one we're not using this issue. After such a long absence, we feel it is the proper season to do something we’ve never done before -- report every single grant we’ve awarded in a single year.

The North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program is committed to helping producers, students, scientists, and educators lead American agriculture into an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable future. So as you review the lists, consider the people behind the data. Each of them devoted long hours, hard work, and real passion to their projects. Each of them knew that their experience might be of more benefit to others than themselves. Each one of them took the opportunity to take a chance -- one that might have been lost, never to be regained.

### People and Projects: NCR-SARE’s Grants in 2003

#### Iowa

- **Project Coordinator:** James Blankman  
  **Project Category:** Animal Production  
  **Project Title:** Using Flathead Catfish to Renovate Ponds Overrun with Bullheads, Improving Water Quality Within and Exiting the Ponds

- **Project Coordinator:** Michael Nash  
  **Project Category:** Economics/Marketing  
  **Project Title:** Local Foods Buying Club

- **Project Coordinator:** Tom Wahl  
  **Project Category:** Crop Production  
  **Project Title:** Value Added Processing for Small Sized Chestnuts

- **Project Coordinators:** Jeff and Jill Burkhart  
  **Project Category:** Economics/Marketing  
  **Project Title:** Picket Fence Creamery . . . to Sustain a Family Farm and Preserve a Way of Life

- **Project Coordinator:** Eric Jellum  
  **Project Category:** Natural Resources  
  **Project Title:** Deep Placement of Compost

- **Project Coordinators:** Maury and Mary Wills  
  **Project Category:** Crop Production  
  **Project Title:** Evaluating Alternative Pest Management Strategies for Organic Apple Production
**Illinois**
Project Coordinator: Jon Klingenberg  
Project Category: Crop Production  
Project Title: Okra Test Trial of 16 Varieties in an Organic Farming Operation

Project Coordinator: Irene Seals  
Project Category: Animal Production  
Project Title: Raising Tilapia Fish in Tanks Along with Plants and Vegetables in Beds

**Indiana**  
Project Coordinator: Jim Tarnowski  
Project Category: Natural Resources  
Project Title: Investigating the Use of Compost Tea for Rapid Restoration of Soil Ecology on Four Indiana Farms

**Kansas**  
Project Coordinator: Glenn Brands  
Project Category: Crop Production  
Project Title: The Use of Cover Crops in Western Kansas Rotation in Lieu of Summer Fallowing, and the Economic Return of Both

Project Coordinator: Karen Rains  
Project Category: Crop Production  
Project Title: Moveable High Tunnel

Project Coordinator: Kevin Morrill  
Project Category: Crop Production  
Project Title: Clover 101: Can Clover Help Eastern Kansas?

**Minnesota**  
Project Coordinator: Winona LaDuke  
Project Category: Crop Production  
Project Title: Restoration of Traditional Anishinaabeg Agricultural Practices, Utilizing the Three Sisters Gardening Method

Project Coordinator: Tim Gieske  
Project Category: Crop Production  
Project Title: Designing My Path into Sustainable Organic Farming

**Missouri**  
Project Coordinator: Ben Hunter  
Project Category: Animal Production  
Project Title: Crawfish Production in Reestablished Wetlands

**Michigan**  
Project Coordinator: Mike Iho  
Project Category: Animal Production  
Project Title: Pasture Improvement Trial: Enhancing Results by Analyzing Samples and Observing Cattle Grazing Preferences

Project Coordinator: James Crosby  
Project Category: Agroforestry  
Project Title: The Value of Mint: Preserving Historical Mint Fields with Windbreaks

Project Coordinator: Roy Monzo

Project Coordinator: Louis Reuschel  
Project Category: Education  
Project Title: Student Producers for the Future

Project Coordinator: Brenda Lyons  
Project Category: Animal Production  
Project Title: Reinventing the Family Farm

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Project Coordinator: David Sjostrom  
Project Category: Animal Production  
Project Title: Yield and Feeding Value of Annual Crops Planted for Emergency Forage in Minnesota

Project Coordinator: Patricia Altrichter  
Project Category: Agroforestry  
Project Title: Developing a Saskatoon Berry Market in the Upper Midwest

Project Coordinator: Sally Auger  
Project Category: Crop Production  
Project Title: Dream of Wild Health, a Project of Peta Wakan Tipi

Project Coordinator: Brian Fredericksen  
Project Category: Animal Production  
Project Title: Adding Value to Honey Products through the Use of Melissopalynology

Project Coordinator: Rick Hopkins  
Project Category: Economics/Marketing  
Project Title: Diversity Increases Profits for Small Livestock Producers

Project Coordinator: Daniel West  
Project Category: Energy  
Project Title: Ethanol from Waste Fruit
The threatened Western Prairie Fringed Orchid. This one was found on land belonging to Larry Woodbury of McLeod, North Dakota. Woodbury received a Producer Program grant in 1996 for "Incorporating Holistic Resource Management."

Part of Dan Laursen's 1997 project, "Kentucky Bluegrass Management and Variety Evaluation for Sustainable Seed Production in Western Nebraska," was a field day, featuring this sign. Laursen's land is near Alliance, Nebraska.
### Professional Development Grant Program

**Illinois**  
Project Coordinator: Stewart Jacobson  
Project Title: Professional Development Program in Apiculture and Pollination

**Kansas**  
Project Coordinator: Jerry Jost  
Project Title: Grow Your Farmer's Market

**Minnesota**  
Project Coordinator: Caroline Van Schaik  
Project Title: Smarter Farmers, Smarter Lenders: Educating Toward a Sustainable Community

**South Dakota**  
Project Coordinator: H. Trey Patterson  
Project Title: Training in Sustainable Production Systems in the Northern Great Plains

**Wisconsin**  
Project Coordinator: Will Allen  
Project Title: Building with Community: Professional Development Training in Sustainable Food Systems

### Research and Education Grant Program

**Iowa**  
Project Coordinator: Derrick Exner  
Project Category: Animal Production  
Project Title: Research Alliance for Farrowing, the Weak Link in Alternative Swine Systems

**Illinois**  
Project Coordinator: M Babadoost  
Project Category: Disease/Pest Management  
Project Title: New Strategies for Management of Vegetable Diseases in Organic and Traditional Farms

**Indiana**  
Project Coordinator: Steven Hallet  
Project Category: Weed Management  
Project Title: Microbial Processes Underlying the Natural Weed Suppressiveness of Soils

**Kansas**  
Project Coordinator: Ted Carey  
Project Category: Economics/Marketing  
Project Title: Growing Growers for Greater Kansas City: Improving Skills for Sustainable Local Food Production and Marketing

**Michigan**  
Project Coordinator: Bernard Knezek  
Project Category: Natural Resources  
Project Title: Calcium Inputs for Soil Quality Improvement

**Minnesota**  
Project Coordinator: Paul Peterson  
Project Category: Animal Production  
Project Title: Enhancing Pasture Productivity by Improving Winter Survival of Perennial Ryegrass

**Nebraska**  
Project Coordinator: David Baltensperger  
Project Category: Education  

**Ohio**  
Project Coordinator: David Barker  
Project Category: Animal Production  
Project Title: Financial Implications of Non-Toxic Endophyte-Infected Fescue Pasture: Establishment Costs and Livestock Returns

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Bluebirds provide natural, pesticide-free -- and cheap -- insect control, which is why Myron Herek of Stevens Point, Wisconsin, installs bluebird houses, like this one, on his property. Herek was a 1993 Producer Program grant recipient for his project, “Evaluating Various Forage Combinations in a Rotational Grazing System.”

Graduate Student: Ebener Ballinger
University: University of Minnesota at St Paul
Project Title: Systems Evaluation of the Components of Reduced Input Dairy Farms

Graduate Student: Marjorie Ross
University: University of Minnesota at St Paul
Project Title: Comparing Vesicular-Arbuscular Mycorrhizal Colonization in Conventional vs. Organic Strawberry Production Systems

Graduate Student: Elaine Krumpelman
University: University of Missouri - Columbia
Project Title: Enhancing the Sustainability of Producer-Owned Organizations

Graduate Student: Mindi Schneider
University: University of Nebraska at Lincoln
Project Title: Land Ethics: Connecting Producers, Consumers, Land and Food

Graduate Student: Dario Stefanelli
University: Michigan State University at East Lansing
Project Title: Effect of Sustainable Ground Floor Management Systems on Root System Dynamics of Apple and their Contribution to Carbon Sequestration and Nutrient Cycling in the Soil

Graduate Student: Chandrappa Gangaiah
University: Kansas State University at Manhattan
Project Title: Laboratory, Field and Farm Based Assessment of Compost and Compost Teas for Vegetable Crop Health

Graduate Student: Matthew Stoltenberg
University: South Dakota State University at Brookings
Project Title: Effects of Prairie Dogs on Sustainability of Cattle Grazing in Mixed-Grass Prairie
RESEARCH AND EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM
$1,989,000* was awarded in 2003.
$21,000,000 has been awarded since the program began.

In 2003, NCR-SARE awarded 17 R&E projects, one each in Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, and South Dakota. NCR-SARE funded two projects each in Wisconsin and Ohio, three in Nebraska, and four in Minnesota. Most of the research was in the category Natural Resources, followed by Animal Production and Disease/Pest Management. Historically, this is slightly unusual. Over the past 11 years, the majority of funded R&E projects have been in Education, followed by Crop Production. Animal Production and Economics/Marketing have rounded out the top four slots.

PRODUCER GRANT PROGRAM
$403,000 was awarded in 2003.
$2,800,000 has been awarded since the program began.

Since the program began, NCR-SARE has awarded 485 Producer grants. This year, NCR-SARE awarded 57 projects. Missouri claimed the highest number of funded projects, eight, followed by Iowa with seven, Minnesota and Ohio with six each, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin with five each, Kansas received four grants, North Dakota, Nebraska, and South Dakota each received three, and Indiana got one. Over the years, the project subjects have been evenly split between Animal Production and Crop Production -- each comprise 25% of all projects -- followed closely by Economics/Marketing. This year's projects follow the historical trend, but not the percentages. Twenty projects focused on Crop Production, 15 were on Animal Production, and only nine concentrated on Economics/Marketing.

GRADUATE STUDENT GRANT PROGRAM
$129,000 was awarded in 2003.
$237,000 has been awarded since the program began.

Of the 13 grants awarded in 2003, the highest percentage of funding, almost $30,000, went to students in Iowa. Two projects, totaling $20,000 together, were funded in Minnesota and Ohio. Graduate student grants in Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, and South Dakota totaled $10,000 each. The Graduate Student Grant program has awarded 24 projects since its inception two years ago and doesn't recognize specific subject categories.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM
$379,000 was awarded in 2003.
$6,400,000 has been awarded since the program began.

In 2003, five grants were awarded, one each in Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The PDP program was instituted in 1994; 178 projects have been awarded since then. Prior to 2003, the PDP program had only one subject category, education.

*All dollar amounts have been rounded to the nearest whole number.