In 2010, Idaho’s farmers, researchers and educators launched a collaborative effort to achieve the goal of having 20 percent of the state’s food produced locally by 2020. At the same time, a survey of local food vendors revealed that the single largest roadblock to making this goal a reality is Idaho’s short growing season.

This prompted the University of Idaho’s Stephen Love to organize a team of horticulture specialists to expand farmers’ use of high tunnels in the state. Funded by a SARE grant, the team collaborated with three experienced high tunnel growers in different parts of the state to evaluate high tunnel designs and the profitability of growing various crops in them.

The experience at the three farms gave the team important information to share with growers around the state. On one farm, eggplants grown inside the tunnels were superior economically to ones grown outside, but for cucumbers the results were mixed. On another farm, there was a clear advantage to growing tomatoes, garlic and peppers in high tunnels. The third farm showed that medicinal crops otherwise unsuited to Idaho’s climate can be grown in high tunnels. It also evaluated structures specially designed by engineering students to withstand harsh winter conditions.

For more information on this project, see www.sare.org/projects, and search for project number OW13-043.
SARE Grants in Idaho

SARE has awarded a total of 65 grants in Idaho since 1988.

- 31 Farmer/Rancher Grants
- 22 Research & Education Grants
- 8 Professional Development Grants
- 4 On-Farm Research 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.

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