



Northeast SARE's Definition of a Farm

Farms and farmers are at the center of Northeast SARE's competitive grants and education efforts. The purpose of this document is to clarify our definition of "farm" to:

- 1) help potential applicants of our Farmer Grants program to determine if they are eligible to apply,
- 2) determine eligibility of farmer partners in our Partnership Grant and other programs, and
- 3) support grant reviewers in their evaluation of proposals where the beneficiaries are farmers.

We encourage potential applicants to reach out to [Northeast SARE staff](#) with any questions.

Farm Definition

We use the [U.S. Census of Agriculture](#) definition of a Farm: *"Any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year."*

The [USDA Economic Research Service](#) recognizes that some farms *"experience low sales in a particular year due to bad weather, disease, changes in marketing strategies, or other factors."*

Northeast SARE's definition of farm includes those operations taking place in rural and urban settings, on land and in aquatic places, and at any scale (large or small) that meets the definition.

Northeast SARE funds proposals that address a wide variety of agricultural practices and social issues affecting farms, farm families and farm workers. Topics are eligible for Northeast SARE funding only if the proposal describes a clear and strong connection to working farms and if there is a potential benefit to the region's agriculture.

Farms affiliated with an institution or an organization may qualify as a farm if they meet the definition above.

Eligible Enterprises

While not an exhaustive list, the following is a list of farming enterprises that are eligible as farms for Northeast SARE grant programs; applicants not included in this list may still be eligible so long as they qualify with the Farm definition provided above.

- Agroforestry
- Aquaculture
- Bees
- Cattle (including beef and milk cows)
- Christmas trees
- Equine
- Fiber crops (hemp, kenaf, etc.)
- Flavoring and beverage plants (hops, mint, etc.)
- Forage crops
- Fruit (including berries, grapes and tree fruit)
- Grain crops (including corn, rice, wheat)
- Herbs (culinary and medicinal)
- Hogs
- Oilseed crops (including canola, flax, sunflower)
- Ornamentals and turf production
- Other livestock (including alpacas, llamas, rabbits, etc.)
- Maple or other tree syrups
- Mushrooms
- Nuts
- Poultry (including chickens, turkey, ducks and geese)
- Small ruminants (including goats, sheep, etc.)
- Vegetables

Examples of Enterprises Considered Eligible Farms

The list below provides examples of situations that have been previously presented to Northeast SARE reviewers and deemed eligible for funding. While this is not an exhaustive list, it is provided to demonstrate how our definition of a farm has been applied.

Types of Enterprises considered Farms include:

- Aquaculture—Cultivated (not wild-caught) fish, shellfish and algae (seaweed) located in tanks, fresh and seawater environments.
- Equine operations that raise horses (may include breeding) for their sale, land-based with on-site pasture/hay.
- Indigenous agriculture that produces products for community food systems.*
- Ornamental nurseries, greenhouses and turf farms that produce landscape plants and flowers.
- Urban enterprises that produce products for community food systems.*

*These enterprises may be eligible to apply where the production activity has an annual value of >\$1,000 but products are not sold due to cultural factors. Reviewers evaluate the extent to which proposed projects contribute to [Northeast SARE's Outcome Statement](#).

Enterprises Not Considered Eligible Farms

Businesses that only supply agricultural products or services are not considered farms. Wild-caught and wild-crafted enterprises are not considered farms under our definition. Below are examples of enterprises that are not considered farms under our definition.

Types of Enterprises Not Considered Farms:

- Animal slaughter service that is not part of a farming operation.
- Compost manufacturer that is not part of a farming operation.
- Fertilizer production company.
- Home, community and school gardens where the focus is on educational activities.
- Horse stable for recreation (training, boarding, lessons).
- Landscaping company (installation or maintenance of plants).
- Suppliers of animals (like ornamental fish, sea animals, coral, etc) to pet stores or pet owners.
- Wild fisheries that are not considered part of aquaculture.
- Woodlot that is not part of a farming operation.

Comparison of Eligible versus Not Eligible Activities under Northeast SARE's Farm Definition

Sometimes, a project will involve enterprises or activities that may or may not be considered farming, depending on the specific nature of the proposed work. In such cases it is up to the applicant to make clear to reviewers that the project is agricultural in nature and that it offers significant potential benefit to farmers and the region's agriculture.

The comparison table below provides some examples of topics that have been presented to Northeast SARE reviewers for consideration about whether or not they were determined to be eligible for funding. This is not an exhaustive list; questions about eligibility should be directed to the appropriate grant coordinator.

Eligible Activities	versus	Not Eligible Activities	
A project aimed at farms growing turfgrass to be sold to golf courses or landscapers.			A project aimed at golf course managers or landscapers.
A study of composting effects on soil fertility.			A study of a composting business that is not tightly linked to farming operations.
Research into on-farm production of rabbits for a niche meat market.			Research into the use of rabbits for therapy in hospitals.
Training for farms engaged in agritourism to improve their financial plans.			A project to establish recreational trails that simply cross over farmland.
An effort to improve breeding stock for aquaculture operations.			An effort to improve harvest or marketing methods for non-cultivated, wild-caught fish.
A project to strengthen woodlot management owned by farmers.			A woodlot project directed at all types of rural landowners, not focused on farmers.
A pasture management project on an equine operation aimed at improving land stewardship and reducing costs.			A proposal to support riding lessons and/or boarding of horses.
An institutional marketing effort that offers farmers better access to public school markets.			A project to develop classroom education materials on farming activities.
An urban farm cooperative marketing plan.			Establishment of gardens in urban parks.
Education to enhance tribal food sovereignty by providing culturally appropriate information for food producers feeding themselves and their neighbors.		Education for master gardeners who produce food as a hobby and donate surplus products to food banks.	

For More Information

For more information about Northeast SARE, please visit our website or contact us.

Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE)

University of Vermont | 140 Kennedy Drive, Suite 202 | South Burlington, VT 05403

www.northeastsare.org | 802.651.8335

 **USDA** National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Northeast SARE, one of four regional SARE programs, is hosted by the University of Vermont and is funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Northeast SARE programs are offered to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status.

Revised August 17, 2021