

Northeast SARE 2027 Farmer Grant Scoring Rubric

1 - 3	4 - 5	6 - 7	8 - 9	10	Weight
Comprehensive Review Reviewers should consider the FULL proposal when scoring the following three questions.					15% of total score
LEGISLATION Does this project contribute to SARE's legislated purpose? These include: - maintain and enhance the quality and productivity of the soil; - conserve soil, water, energy, natural resources, and fish and wildlife habitat; - maintain and enhance the quality of surface, and ground water; - protect the health and safety of persons involved in the food and farm system; - promote the well being of animals; - increase employment opportunities in agriculture.					5%
Does not meaningfully address any SARE legislative priority.	References one or more priority but lacks detail on benefits.	Addresses one or more priority with examples of anticipated benefits.	Demonstrates clear benefits with measurable outcomes relevant to one or more priority.	Demonstrates strong benefits with ambitious, achievable, and measurable outcomes relevant to one or more priority.	
INNOVATION Is this project innovative by addressing new practices, improving existing practices, or introducing existing practices to a new farmer audience?					5%
The approach is not meaningfully different from standard practice.	Some innovative element is present but minimal or poorly explained.	The project has innovative elements that are identified and explained.	The innovative elements are strong and clearly explained.	The project is highly innovative, well-explained and proposes meaningful improvements.	
IMPACT Will the project have substantive impact on farmer's ability to steward resources to ensure sustainability, resilience, economic viability, and a high quality of life in the Northeast?					5%
No credible pathway to farmer benefit. The research, if successful, would not clearly benefit farmers, is too narrowly scoped to have regional relevance, or addresses topics disconnected from Northeast agricultural needs.	Some farmer benefit is possible but the pathway from research to improved farmer outcomes is vague. Impact would be limited in scope, audience, or duration. The scale of investment is not matched by the expected scale of benefit.	Somewhat impactful - Impact is plausible, proportional to the project's scope, and aligned with the SARE outcome statement.	The project will have lasting impact that addresses present needs.	The project is highly and demonstrably impactful with a lasting impact that addresses present needs and anticipates future ones.	
Section Criteria These criteria apply to specific sections of the proposal. Reviewers should focus on the information in that section to score, but should also consider information found elsewhere in the proposal as relevant.					85% of total score
Context - Includes Introduction, Previous Work, and Citation List.					20%
*The story of the project is poorly explained. The issue being addressed or how the project will address it is unclear. *The issue being addressed does not relate to the Project leader's farm AND/OR other farms in the region. *Weak or no evidence is presented that other farms are interested in the issue. *The proposal shows weak or no familiarity with other efforts to address this issue, and/or it does not build on previous work (their own work or the work of other farmers / researchers).	*The story of the project is somewhat explained. The issue being addressed or how the project will address it may be lacking. *It is unclear how the issue being addressed relates to the Project leader's farm AND/OR other farms in the region. *There is limited evidence that other farms are interested in the issue. *The proposal shows limited familiarity with other efforts to address this issue, and/or it is unclear how it builds on previous work (their own work or the work of other farmers / researchers).	*The story of the project is explained, including the issue being addressed and how the project will address it. *The issue is moderately important to the Project leader's farm AND other farms in the region. *There is evidence that other farms are interested in the issue. *The proposal shows familiarity with other efforts to address this issue and builds on previous work (their own work or the work of other farmers / researchers).	*The story of the project is clearly explained, including the issue being addressed and how the project will address it. *The issue is important to the Project leader's farm AND other farms in the region. *There is strong evidence that other farms are interested in the issue. *The proposal shows strong familiarity with other efforts to address this issue and substantially builds on previous work (their own work or the work of other farmers / researchers).	*The story of the project is compelling, including the issue being addressed and how the project will address it. *The issue is critically important to the Project leader's farm AND other farms in the region. *There is overwhelming evidence that other farms are interested in the issue. *The proposal shows mastery of other efforts to address this issue and exceeds previous work (their own work or the work of other farmers / researchers).	
Project Team - Includes Project Leader, Technical Advisor, and Letter of Commitment from Technical Advisor. Collaborators and Letters of Commitment from Collaborators are optional.					15%
*The project leader does not have the experience, skills, and commitment necessary for the project. *Resource needs for the project are not addressed, or it seems that required resources are missing. *The technical advisor has limited or absent experience, skills, and/or commitment to the project. *The letter of commitment from the technical advisor does not demonstrate commitment, experience, or skills. *Either the project needs additional collaborators who are not included, or the collaborators presented lack necessary experience, skills, or commitment.	*The project leader has some of the experience, skills, and commitment necessary for the project. *Some resource needs for the project are addressed, but it is not clear if all needs will be met. *The technical advisor has unclear experience, skills, and/or commitment to the project. *The letter of commitment from the technical advisor lacks depth or does not address key areas. *The project team would be improved with additional collaborators who are not included, or the collaborators presented have unclear experience, skills, or commitment.	*The project leader has adequate experience, skills, and commitment to the project. *Most resource needs for the project are addressed. *The technical advisor has adequate experience, skills, and commitment to the project. *An adequate letter of commitment is included from the technical advisor. *Either the project does not need additional collaborators, or the collaborators presented are adequate.	*The project leader has strong experience, skills, and commitment to the project. *The resource needs for the project are addressed. *The technical advisor has strong experience, skills, and commitment to the project. *A strong letter of commitment is included from the technical advisor. *Either the project does not need additional collaborators, or the collaborators presented have strong experience, skills, and commitment.	*The project leader has exceptional experience, skills, and commitment to the project. *The resource needs for the project are clearly addressed. *The technical advisor has exceptional experience, skills, and commitment to the project. *An exceptional letter of commitment is included from the technical advisor. *Either the project does not need additional collaborators, or the collaborators presented have exceptional experience, skills, and commitment.	

Plan of Work- Includes Project Objectives, Project Activities and Timeline. Supporting Materials are optional.					25%
*The objectives are unclear and/or do not connect to the proposal context. *The timeline is absent or does not provide enough information to understand the plan of work. *Key activities are absent or lack sufficient detail. Research and education activities demonstrate little consideration of best practices. There is not be a clear link between project activities and project objectives. *Challenges and risks not meaningfully considered. *If supporting materials are included, they do not contribute to the project plan.	*The objectives are stated but they lack clarity and/or have minimal connection to the proposal context. *The timeline is absent or does not address most of the following: what, when, where, and who. *Key activities are described but lack detail. Research and education activities may not follow all best practices. There may not be a clear link between project activities and project objectives. *Challenges and risks are either absent or lack a clear plan to address them. *If supporting materials are included, they marginally contribute to the project plan.	*The objectives are stated and relate to the proposal context. *A timeline is included that answers most of the following: what, when, where, and who. *Key activities are described in sufficient detail. Research and education activities follow reasonable best practices for reliable results. The key activities relate to the project objectives. *Challenges and risks are mentioned, with an adequate plan to address them. *If supporting materials are included, they contribute to the project plan.	*The objectives are clearly stated and strongly relate to the proposal context. *A timeline is included that clearly answers the following questions: what, when, where, and who. *Key activities are described in detail. Research and education activities show strong understanding of best practices for reliable results. The key activities are likely to achieve the project objectives. *Challenges and risks are discussed. There is a meaningful plan to address them. *If supporting materials are included, they meaningfully contribute to the project plan.	*The objectives are exceptionally clear. Meeting the project objectives would significantly address the issue explored in the proposal context. *A thorough timeline is included that explains in detail the what, when, where, and who of the project activities. *Key activities are exceptionally well considered. Research and education activities show exemplary implementation of best practices. The key activities are well designed to achieve the project objectives. *The plan to address challenges and risks is exceptional and well incorporated throughout the project activities. *If supporting materials are included, they provide exceptional depth and clarity to the project plan.	
Outreach & Impact- Includes Outreach and Impact.					15%
*The outreach plan lacks important details about the target audience of farmers, methods for sharing information, and/or the content to be shared. *The outreach plan is underdeveloped, limited in scope, and/or irrelevant to the target audience. *The expected impacts of the project are not connected to Northeast SARE's outcome statement. Dissemination of results will not impact farmers.	*The outreach plan identifies most of the following: target audience of farmers, methods for sharing information, and the content to be shared. *The outreach plan may lack some evidence of planning, be limited in scope, or have marginal significance to the target audience. *The expected impacts of the project are marginally connected to Northeast SARE's outcome statement. Dissemination of results will have minimal impact.	*The outreach plan identifies an audience of farmers, methods for sharing information, and the content to be shared. *The outreach plan is adequately planned and appropriate for the target audience and scope of project work. *The expected impacts of the project are connected to Northeast SARE's outcome statement. Dissemination of results will benefit farmers.	*The outreach plan clearly identifies a relevant audience of farmers, effective methods for sharing information, and meaningful content to be shared. *The outreach plan is well developed and shows consideration for the target audience and scope of project work. *The expected impacts of the project are well connected to Northeast SARE's outcome statement. Dissemination of results will benefit farmers and increase knowledge and skills.	*The outreach plan is responsive to the strengths and needs of the audience of farmers, employs effective and relevant methods for sharing information, and the content to be shared is likely to meaningfully benefit the audience of farmers. *The outreach plan shows evidence of thorough planning and shows meaningful consideration for the target audience and scope of project work. Risks and challenges may be considered and addressed. *The expected impacts of the project are exemplary of Northeast SARE's outcome statement. Dissemination of results has potential to positively change behaviors.	
Budget - Includes Budget Justification and Narrative Spreadsheet, Total Direct Costs, Indirect Costs, and Total SARE Request. Other Funding Sources are optional.					10%
*Budget is incomplete or includes unreasonable costs. *There may be math errors or typos that make it impossible to understand the budget.	*Costs are not well explained (in terms of project relevance or dollar amount) *The overall request may be either too large or too small for the scope of work. *Other funding sources may seem to be necessary but are not described. *There may be math errors or typos that make it challenging to understand the budget.	*Costs are adequately explained (in terms of project relevance and dollar amount). *The overall request is reasonable for the scope of work. *Either no additional funds are needed to conduct the project, or there is adequate explanation of additional funds. *There may be math errors or typos that lead to minor inconsistencies in understanding the budget.	*Costs are detailed and well reasoned (in terms of project relevance and dollar amount). *The overall request is reasonable for the scope of work. *Either no additional funds are needed to conduct the project, or there is strong explanation of additional funds. *There may be minor math errors or typos, but these do not impact overall ability to understand the budget	*Costs are exceptionally clear, transparent, and well reasoned (in terms of project relevance and dollar amount). *The overall request is reasonable for the scope of work. *Either no additional funds are needed to conduct the project, or there is strong explanation of additional funds. *The budget lacks errors.	