Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education

www.sare.org

What is SARE?

Since 1988, the Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) program has been the go-to USDA grants and outreach program for farmers, ranchers, researchers and educators who want to develop innovations that improve farm profitability, protect water and land, and revitalize communities. To date, SARE has awarded over $7.3 million to more than 209 initiatives [1].

SARE is grassroots with far-reaching impact

Four regional councils of expert practitioners set priorities and make grants in every state and island protectorate.

SARE communicates results

SARE shares project results by requiring grantees to conduct outreach and grower engagement; and by maintaining an online library of practical publications, grantee-produced information products and other educational materials.

SARE: Advancing the Frontier of Sustainable Agriculture in...

Illinois

Project Highlight: *Heirloom Corn Varieties for Spirit Production*

Farmers are increasingly seeking innovative ways to diversify their crops and tap into new markets, and a recent project led by farmer Will Glazik and the IDEA Farm Network in Illinois is demonstrating how heirloom corn could unlock exciting opportunities. Glazik's $17,530 NCR-SARE Farmer Rancher project explored the potential of growing heirloom corn varieties, such as Bloody Butcher, Wapsie Valley, and Hopi Blue, specifically for craft spirits production.

Using chemical analyses and blind taste testing, Glazik's project identified the distinct characteristics that each heirloom corn variety imparted to the spirits. The results showed that certain heirloom varieties had the potential to create unique flavor profiles that could differentiate small-batch distillers from mass-produced spirits. For farmers, this means new avenues for selling their crops to local distilleries seeking to create one-of-a-kind products.

The project's impact extends beyond just growing and distilling. By engaging local farmers and distillers through networks like the Artisan Grain Collaborative and ReGenerate Illinois, the project shared valuable insights and encouraged the adoption of heirloom corn in spirit production. Presentations at Midwest grain conferences and distillers' guilds helped farmers see the potential to diversify their crops and tap into a growing market for locally sourced craft spirits.

"While talking to distilleries, there is a lot of interest in the outcomes of this project," said Glazik. "Many distillers are interested in making the best whiskey possible and want to purchase local grains directly from farmers."

For more information on this project, see sare.org/projects and search for project number FNC20-1219.

SARE in Illinois

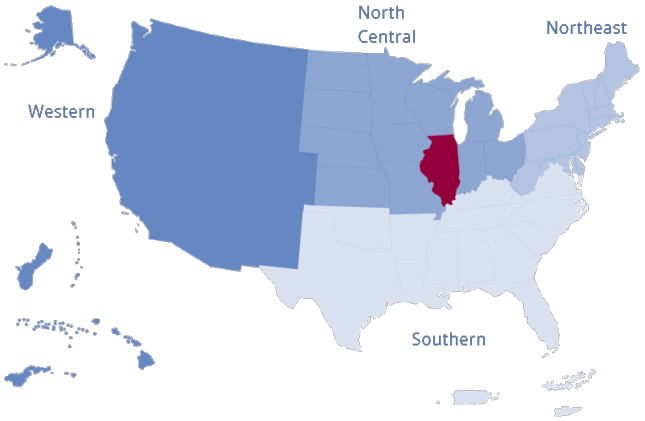
northcentral.sare.org/state-profiles/illinois/

$7,334,391
in total funding

209 grant projects

(since 1988 [1])

For a complete list of Illinois grant projects, go to projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/



[1] These totals reflect available data; complete information may not be available for all grant programs prior to 2016.

SARE in Illinois, 2021–2026

This is a summary of recent SARE-funded activities and impacts in the state. To search all SARE projects visit projects.sare.org. For a list of all projects in Illinois visit projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/.

Grants awarded

Total awards: **59 grants**

18	Farmer/Rancher
6	Research and Education
4	Professional Development Program
6	On Farm Research/Partnership
10	Graduate Student
12	Youth Educator
2	PDP State Program [2]
1	Community Foods Project

Total funding: **$3,181,441**

$268,581	Farmer/Rancher
$1,386,250	Research and Education
$316,858	Professional Development Program
$281,082	On Farm Research/Partnership
$159,020	Graduate Student
$64,458	Youth Educator
$290,000	PDP State Program [2]
$415,192	Community Foods Project

[2] The Professional Development Program (PDP) State Program is a non-competitive award that funds the activities of the state coordinator(s). See more below.

Farmer and rancher impacts

SARE grantees have reported the following impacts from their projects:

7,704 farmers participated in a SARE-funded project

959 farmers changed a practice



For a complete list of Illinois awards, visit:
projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/

Learn about local impacts at:
northcentral.sare.org/state-programs/illinois/

Contact Your SARE State Coordinator

SARE sustainable ag coordinators run state-level educational programs for Extension and other ag professionals, and many help grant applicants and recipients with planning and outreach. Visit northcentral.sare.org/state-profiles/illinois/ to learn more.

Emily Heaton
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
(217) 649-2090
heaton6@illinois.edu

Cate Loomis
University of Illinois
(217) 300-7053
cloomis3@illinois.edu

SARE Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education
USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

SARE is funded by the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).