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: *Building a DIY Portable Milking Parlor*

For small-scale dairy farmers on rented land, permanent milking parlors are often too expensive. They can cost tens of thousands of dollars and require specialized welding skills, making them a risky investment when you do not own the property.

Travis and Mariah Hurt of North Sky Farm in Harvard, Illinois, faced this challenge for years while leasing land in Virginia. After moving to Illinois in 2022, they used a $15,000 NCR-SARE Farmer Rancher grant to solve the problem. With help from advisors Steven Weaver and Roger Dahlberg, they designed a professional, portable, DIY milking parlor.

The Hurts tested high-strength "pipe and clamp" systems that assemble with basic hand tools, no welding required. They built several prototypes and watched how cows entered and exited to improve animal flow and reduce stress. They also tested different platform heights to protect the milker's back and create a safe barrier against kicks.

To help other farmers, the Hurts published a 72-page manual titled *Build It Yourself! Low Cost Milking Parlor Construction Guide*. The guide includes exact measurements, tool lists, and step-by-step plans for a sanitary, durable, 100% portable parlor. If a lease ends, the farmer can simply take the parlor apart and move it.

The full guide, budget tools, and a recorded webinar are available to the public through North Sky Farm. For more information on this project, see sare.org/projects and search for project number FNC23-1379.

SARE in Illinois

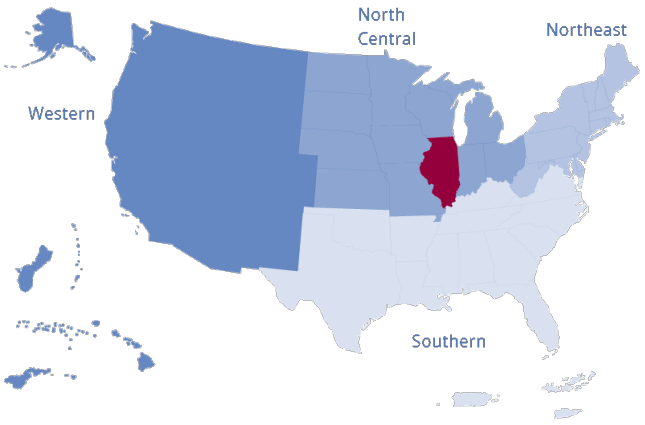
northcentral.sare.org/state-profiles/illinois/

$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.

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SARE Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education

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