



[www.sare.org](http://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 \$3.1 million to more than 49 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...

## Iowa

### Project Highlight: *Iowa Farmer Promotes Cover Crops Adoption*

Bob Recker, of Cedar Valley Innovation LLC in Iowa, received a \$28,870 SARE Farmer Rancher grant in 2022 to encourage local farmers to use cover crops and improve soil health. Building on his past work with wide-row corn and cover crops, Recker's project focused on real-world, on-farm trials on grower-owned plots. By comparing traditional farming practices with new techniques, he has been demonstrating how these practices can improve water runoff, soil health, and crop yields.

Recker partnered with local farmers Michael Cook, Graham Thompson, and Loran Steinlage to implement wide-row corn plots with aggressive multi-species cover crops. His previous research had already shown a significant reduction in water runoff—by 56%—with cleaner runoff water when using 90-inch twin-row corn with cover crops. This new project expanded on those findings, testing various cover crop treatments in real-world grower fields. With the use of small equipment for quick and efficient seeding, Recker's research demonstrated that cover crops not only reduced soil erosion but also enhanced nutrient retention and increased soil organic matter, resulting in healthier, more productive soil.

Beyond just research, Recker engaged the farming community through extensive outreach, including consultations, on-farm demonstrations, tours, webinars, and field day workshops. His efforts directly led to 10 farmers adopting new, more sustainable practices and four new collaborations between growers. Farmers who participated in the project noticed tangible benefits, such as improved soil structure that made fields easier to work with in future seasons. One grower who began using cover crops for the first time even reported improved crop yields, especially during drought conditions, showing how these practices can help farmers thrive in challenging environments.

For more information on this project, see [sare.org/projects](http://sare.org/projects), and search for project number **FNC22-1348**.

## SARE in Iowa

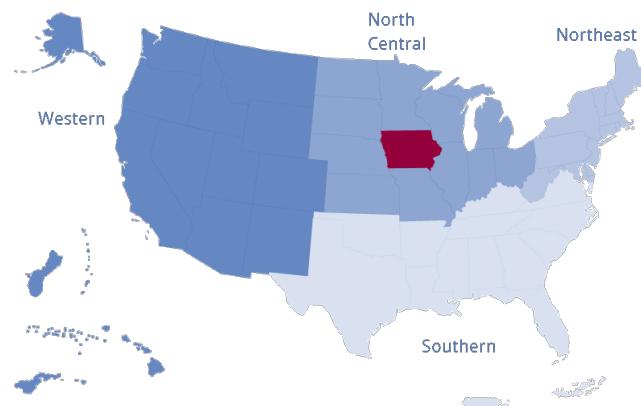
[northcentral.sare.org/state-profiles/iowa/](http://northcentral.sare.org/state-profiles/iowa/)

**\$3,127,790  
in total funding**

**49 grant projects**

(since 1988 [1])

For a complete list of Iowa grant projects, go to [projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/](http://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 Iowa, 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](https://projects.sare.org). For a list of all projects in Iowa visit [projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/](https://projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/).

## Grants awarded

### Total awards: **49 grants**

- 10 Farmer/Rancher
- 6 Research and Education
- 2 Professional Development Program
- 18 On Farm Research/Partnership
- 7 Graduate Student
- 3 PDP State Program [2]
- 3 Youth Educator

### Total funding: **\$3,127,790**

- \$167,565 Farmer/Rancher
- \$1,427,385 Research and Education
- \$209,794 Professional Development Program
- \$776,708 On Farm Research/Partnership
- \$108,338 Graduate Student
- \$420,000 PDP State Program [2]
- \$18,000 Youth Educator

[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.

For a complete list of Iowa awards, visit:  
[projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/](https://projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/)

## Farmer and rancher impacts

SARE grantees have reported the following impacts from their projects:

**13,027 farmers participated in a SARE-funded project**

**594 farmers changed a practice**



Learn about local impacts at:  
[northcentral.sare.org/state-programs/iowa/](https://northcentral.sare.org/state-programs/iowa/)

## 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/iowa/](https://northcentral.sare.org/state-profiles/iowa/) to learn more.

Ashley Dean  
Iowa State University  
(515) 447-3766  
[adean@iastate.edu](mailto:adean@iastate.edu)

Christa Hartsook  
Iowa State University  
(515) 294-4430  
[hartc@iastate.edu](mailto:hartc@iastate.edu)



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).