

## 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 \$10.8 million to more than 268 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: *Prairie Strips as a Farmland Conservation Practice*

For almost 20 years, farmers and researchers in Iowa have experimented with prairie strip plantings to help reduce surface runoff from agricultural fields. Prairie strips use strategically placed native prairie plantings in crop fields to retain soil and prevent runoff. **STRIPS**, which stands for "Science-based Trials of Rowcrops Integrated with Prairie Strips," is a group of scientists researching the benefits of integrating prairie into crop production systems.

They started this work back in 2003, and in 2007, Seth Watkins near Clarinda, Iowa, was the first farmer to work with the STRIPS project. In 2009, the STRIPS project applied for a SARE grant to expand their research. With the grant, they investigated and demonstrated the effects of incorporating perennial vegetation in the form of restored native prairie into row-crop agriculture at 12 watersheds at the Neal Smith Wildlife Refuge near Prairie City, Iowa.

Dozens of Iowa farmers adopted STRIPS in the time following the findings from the Neal Smith Wildlife Refuge. Today, prairie strips are part of the continuous Conservation Reserve Program under CP43. More than 14,000 acres of prairie strips have been planted in more than 14 states.

Dan Stoffel worked with the Sand County Foundation on a 2016 SARE project to extend and adapt the experience of the Iowa State University prairie strips project into Wisconsin. Stoffel grows soybeans, alfalfa, and oats on 800 acres of rolling terrain that has been in his family since the late 1870s. On Stoffel's farm, two fields, in particular, had some problematic water flow areas.

"Initially, I wanted just to get a sense of how they look and work," said Stoffel in a 2018 interview. "Two years into this, I've found their root structures and plant residue makes a big difference. They hold their own against the water."

For more information on these projects, see [sare.org/projects](http://sare.org/projects), and search for project numbers [LNC09-314](#), [LNC16-378](#), and [GNC18-257](#).

## SARE in Iowa

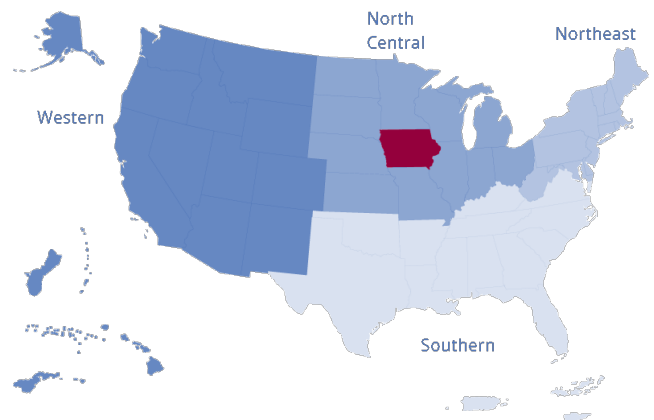
[northcentral.sare.org/state-profiles/iowa/](http://northcentral.sare.org/state-profiles/iowa/)

**\$10,767,342**  
**in total funding**

**268 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, 2020-2025

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: **51 grants**

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

Total funding: **\$2,470,489**

- \$201,063 Farmer/Rancher
- \$682,654 Research and Education
- \$209,794 Professional Development Program
- \$856,638 On Farm Research/Partnership
- \$88,340 Graduate Student
- \$22,000 Youth Educator
- \$410,000 PDP State Program [2]

[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:

**12,321** farmers participated in a SARE-funded project

**1,540** farmers reported a change in knowledge, awareness, skills or attitude

**560** 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.

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