SARE
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 $12.0 million to more than 283 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*

Iowa farmer and consultant Bob Recker tests ideas that break the status quo. To maximize sunlight for cover crops, he has been widening corn rows well beyond the standard 30 inches. Most farmers assume wider rows just mean lower yields, so Recker set out to test the real-world impacts on profit and soil health.

With support from a series of NCR-SARE Farmer Rancher grants, Recker has teamed up with three farmers near Waterloo, Iowa. They have compared 60- and 90-inch corn rows against standard 30-inch rows. To keep overall plant populations equal across all plots, they planted more corn plants in each wider row.

Between the rows, the farmers tested single cover crops, diverse mixes, and even cash crops like vegetables. Each farm tailored a plot to its own goals, such as grazing livestock or transitioning to organic production. Throughout the season, the team tracked weed suppression, biomass, runoff, and yields.

The results were striking. While wide-row corn yields were slightly lower, the added benefits stood out:

Drought insurance: When drought wiped out one farmer's corn, he still turned a profit by selling turnips grown between the rows at a local farmers' market.

Less runoff: One 60-inch row plot cut water runoff by 56% during heavy rains.

Better soil: Soil organic matter jumped by 0.2% to 0.3% in a single season.

"There are a number of growers and landowners who have taken a great interest in my work," said Recker. "It is intriguing to them because it is so different from their traditional practices."

For more information on this project, see sare.org/projects and search for project number FNC22-1348.

SARE in Iowa

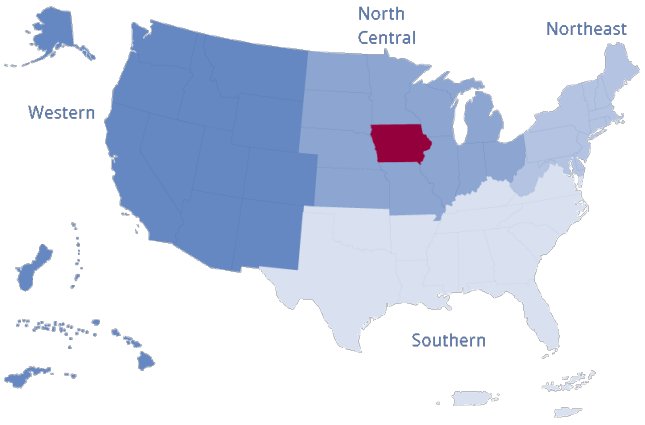
northcentral.sare.org/state-profiles/iowa/

$12,001,112 in total funding

283 grant projects

(since 1988 [1])

For a complete list of Iowa 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 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. For a list of all projects in Iowa visit projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/.

Grants awarded

Total awards: **60 grants**

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

Total funding: **$3,586,831**

$241,591	Farmer/Rancher
$1,677,385	Research and Education
$209,794	Professional Development Program
$876,555	On Farm Research/Partnership
$128,158	Graduate Student
$420,000	PDP State Program [2]
$33,348	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/

Farmer and rancher impacts

SARE grantees have reported the following impacts from their projects:

13,139 farmers participated in a SARE-funded project

645 farmers changed a practice



Learn about local impacts at:
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/ to learn more.

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SARE Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education

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