

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 \$3.8 million to more than 66 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...

Michigan

Project Highlight: *Innovating No-Till Planting for Small Farms*

A group of Michigan farmers, led by Phillip Swartz of BeyondSustainable.Farm and Chanterelle and Sureau Vogtmann of Silverbeet Farm, has been working to develop an affordable no-till planting system for small farms. With support from a \$17,965 NCR-SARE Farmer Rancher grant, they have been designing a system compatible with the BCS two-wheeled tractor to help small-scale vegetable growers adopt sustainable practices without needing expensive, large-scale equipment.

While large farms benefit from advanced machinery and smaller garden plots rely on hand tools, small farms often face challenges due to limited equipment. Their solution aims to make no-till planting more accessible and efficient for small growers, particularly for crops like tomatoes and winter squash. The team's project focused on creating a roller-crimper and no-till planting system for small farms that integrates cover cropping.

Field trials showed that tomatoes yielded better with conventional tillage but benefited from the no-till system's ability to reduce disease pressure. Winter squash thrived with the no-till system, thanks to effective weed suppression and improved fruit quality. Soil health also improved, with organic matter increasing from 2.3% to 3.2%. The team plans to share their findings through how-to guides and fabrication plans, making their no-till system a practical option for small-scale vegetable growers.

"We believe that if a roller crimper and no-till planting system for the BCS two-wheeled tractor were readily available to small-scale vegetable growers, they would utilize those tools and there would be an increase in adoption of cover cropping and no-till practices on vegetable farms," said Swartz.

For more information on this project, see sare.org/projects, and search for project number **FNC23-1397**.

SARE in Michigan

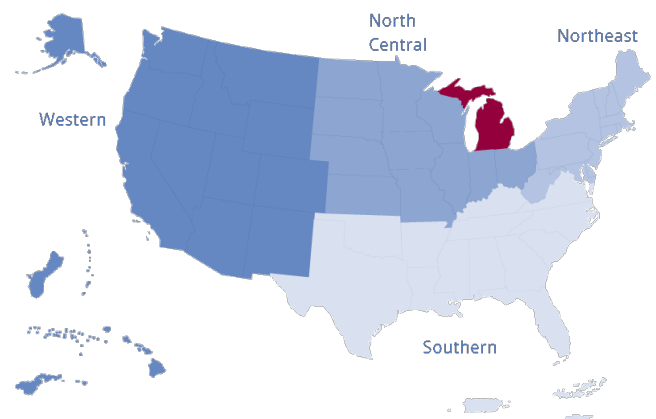
northcentral.sare.org/state-profiles/michigan/

\$3,816,902
in total funding

66 grant projects

(since 1988 [1])

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

Grants awarded

Total awards: **66 grants**

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

Total funding: **\$3,816,902**

- \$289,376 Farmer/Rancher
- \$1,949,998 Research and Education
- \$568,479 Professional Development Program
- \$331,079 On Farm Research/Partnership
- \$200,962 Graduate Student
- \$419,940 PDP State Program [2]
- \$57,068 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 Michigan awards, visit:
projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/

Farmer and rancher impacts

SARE grantees have reported the following impacts from their projects:

11,162 farmers participated in a SARE-funded project

181 farmers changed a practice



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

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/michigan/ to learn more.

Emily Proctor
(231) 439-8927
proctor8@msu.edu

Sarah Zeiler
Michigan State University
(517) 439-9301
froncz3@msu.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).