

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 \$11.6 million to more than 342 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 <a href="mailto:sare.org/projects">sare.org/projects</a>, and search for project number FNC23-1397.

#### **SARE** in Michigan

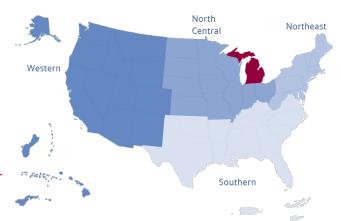
northcentral.sare.org/state-profiles/michigan/

# \$11,647,389 in total funding

#### 342 grant projects

(since 1988 [1])

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



### SARE in Michigan, 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. For a list of all projects in Michigan visit projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/.

#### Grants awarded

## Total awards: 74 grants

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

# Total funding: \$4,425,972

\$305,980 Farmer/Rancher

\$2,359,379 Research and Education

\$744,870 Professional Development Program

\$331,079 On Farm Research/Partnership

\$213,672 Graduate Student

\$61,049 Youth Educator

\$409,943 PDP State Program [2]

[2] The Professional Development Program (PDP) State Program is a noncompetitive 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:

12,370 farmers participated in a SAREfunded project

547 farmers reported a change in knowlege, awareness, skills or attitude

#### 176 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.

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