

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 \$16.0 million to more than 417 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...

Wisconsin

Project Highlight: *Organic Control of Canada Thistle in Mulched Orchards*

Organic apple growers Chris and Juli McGuire were concerned about the proliferation of Canada thistle in their Lafayette County, Wisconsin apple orchard. The McGuires raise two acres of apples together with other fruits and market them through a community-supported agriculture (CSA) program and local grocery stores. Like most apple growers today, they raise dwarf apple trees because the compact dwarf trees are easy to work with, and they bear fruit quickly, providing a rapid return on investment.

After years of struggling with Canada thistle and watching it spread through their orchard, the McGuires received an NCR-SARE Farmer Rancher grant to trial organic methods for controlling the troublesome weed. Over two growing seasons, they reduced Canada Thistle populations from over 1,300 shoots to zero in experimental plots within their orchard. They found that hoeing and string trimming were more efficient than hand-pulling or spraying an organic herbicide.

“The key,” said Chris McGuire, “is to kill the thistle shoots every three weeks repeatedly. They grow back, and then you kill them again three weeks later. We found that any method of killing the shoots is effective – cutting, pulling, or spraying with an organic herbicide. In the past, we would chop out thistle patches every 5-8 weeks, and that’s not often enough. The short, three-week interval exhausts the plants and depletes their strength, gradually killing them. By the end of a single growing season, only a few straggler plants remained in our plots, and by the end of the second year, we eradicated them.”

For more information on this project, see sare.org/projects, and search for project number **FNC19-1181**.

SARE in Wisconsin

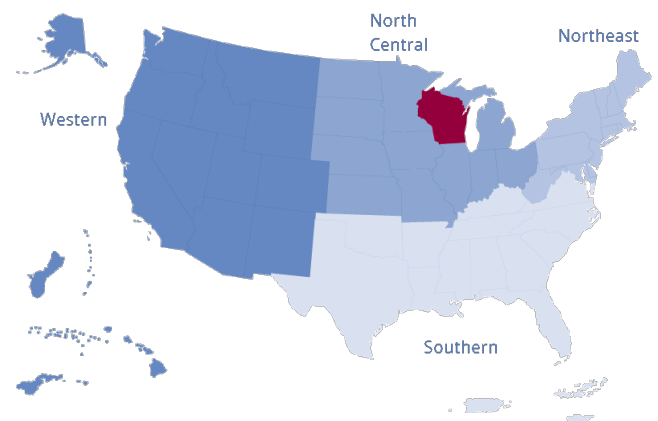
northcentral.sare.org/state-profiles/wisconsin/

\$16,034,738
in total funding

417 grant projects

(since 1988 [1])

For a complete list of grant projects state by state, 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 Wisconsin, 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 this state visit projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/.

Grants awarded

Total awards: **109 grants**

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

Total funding: **\$5,482,638**

- \$677,986 Farmer/Rancher
- \$2,279,439 Research and Education
- \$880,062 Professional Development Program
- \$981,071 On Farm Research/Partnership
- \$224,627 Graduate Student
- \$29,453 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 awards by state, visit: projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/

Farmer and rancher impacts

SARE grantees have reported the following impacts from their projects:

20,764 farmers participated in a SARE-funded project

4,579 farmers reported a change in knowledge, awareness, skills or attitude

912 farmers changed a practice



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

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/wisconsin/ to learn more.

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