0014 Resources Available Through the SARE Book Library

SUMMARY KEYWORDS
books, farm, ser, farmers, small farms, information, linda, acres, resources, talks, print, research, managing, read, pasture, wind farms, projects, operation, organic, program

SPEAKERS
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Christa Hartsook 00:00
Welcome to the small farms podcast, a production of the small farms program at Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. This is Episode 14, where I interview Linda Naeve, Iowa SARE coordinator and Program Specialist with Iowa State University Extension and outreach. And we're talking today about resources for small farmers. I'm Christa Hartsook, small farms program coordinator, and we hope you enjoy the show. Linda, you can really find information online on just about anything. I know that that's the easy part. The difficult part is finding information that is accurate and very research based. Linda, can you tell me a little bit about some of the resources that are available from SARE. And particularly I know they have an extensive book library. But first of all, we should probably explain what SARE is.

Linda Naeve 00:49
Okay. SARE is an acronym. Of course, it's S A R E, and it stands for Sustainable Agriculture, Research and Education. It's a USDA funded program, but it's run through our regions. And we are in the North Central Region, one of four regions. And the North Central Region ser has a lot of resources available. And it's primarily available online. A little bit about the SARE program, in general, it's a grass roots program. What I mean by that is if you're looking for some research on a particular topic, let's say grazing on pastures, and you go online, and you can't quite figure out what's right, what's wrong, what kind of pasture mix you're going to be using. SARE has that kind of information. And it's written up not in a research based format, you know, as you would get the charts and the tables, which nothing wrong with that, but it's not really user friendly. SARE's articles, information are very user friendly. It's something a farmer, or user would get good information from. If you're a reporter, you can get great information from their newsletters, from their featured articles, or from the field newsletters. And you can also find it with different other resources available.

Christa Hartsook 01:59
Christa Hartsook 02:39
That's great information. So obviously, you know, we need to be able to access this information, where can you find these resources? Are they all online?

Linda Naeve 02:07
They're all online. And it's a very user friendly website, it's our North Central Regional Center website is www.northcentralsare, all one word SARE North Central sare.org. I'll say that, again, www.NorthCentralsare.org. And it's all there, very easy to find.

Christa Hartsook 02:29
Perfect. So we know there's a lot of free resources on this website if we go looking on there. But let's really talk specifically about the different books that are available. And I know there are a wide variety.

Linda Naeve 02:40
There are a wide variety of books, there are about 20 excellent books in their library. And the really neat thing is you can obtain those books either if you're a Kindle reader, you can obtain them, download them online and read them right off your computer or your tablet. Or you can order the print copy. Or you can actually just print the free downloadable PDF file, but you could print it but some of the pages is 250 pages long, so maybe you don't want to do that. But on some of the books, some of the books are very good reading. Some are actually used as textbooks. For example, we have the business planning book it's called 'Building a Sustainable Business, a Guide to Developing a Business Plan for Farms and Rural Businesses'. It's available print and online. If you print it, it's several pages long. But what you can do is go in there and look at the book, print the chapters that you like. And since it is a workbook, there are templates for business planning guides, for budgets, and things like that, that you can just print off those templates. Another similar one is if you're interested in transitioning to organic, there's another business planner for farmers, ranchers, and food entrepreneurs for organic transition. A lot of the content is similar to the previous book I mentioned, but it's more what kind of efforts and what kind of paperwork do you need to go through to transition to organic. So those are just two of the books that are available. Some of the others I'm just going to give you a little overview of some are actually used as textbooks in classes. One of them is called 'Managing Alternative Pollinators', which is a great handbook for beekeepers, growers, and conservationists. Another one is 'Managing Cover Crops', which is a big topic now for soil management. Managing cover crops profitably. It explores how and why cover crops work and provides really all kinds of information on how to build soil health. Another one is 'Managing Insects on Your Farm: a Guide to Ecological Strategies'. Here's an excellent one, it's very specific, but it's how you work with other farmers a multi farm CSA handbook. So if you want to do a CSA, but you don't want to, it's all your farm, you can work together with others. And then there are books that are more storytelling. And these are the kinds of books that I really like that SARE has. They're written by specialists, all of the talks are, and so they're very accurate, but some of them are called Youth renewing the countryside. We have a youth grant program within SARE and some of these projects are written up based on their youth, youth educator grant programs, or the youth grant program. So it's excellent. It's not just from our region, but it's from all over the United States. So you get to read case studies and information on what
other people are doing. So many times, if you get a bright idea, maybe somebody has already thought of that and refined it. And so in these cases, these books are excellent for that. They're very well written, and they're updated regularly. There's one called 'Steel in the Field: a Farmers Guide to Weed Management Tools'. So it's good for both large and small scale producers, large farms and small farms. So SARE just isn't for organic producers. It isn't just for traditional agriculture, it's for all sizes and ranges of agriculture, which makes it very perfect for small farms.

Christa Hartsook 05:59
Absolutely. Linda, you made reference, you know, pretty early to resources and sources of information that are accurate and research based. How do SARE's books fit in with this, you know, category?

Linda Naeve 06:12
Well SARE materials are written from work that's supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, which is part of the US Department of Agriculture. And they channel those funds for research projects, through SARE. So the materials are written based on some of the SARE projects that are done. And it's very transparent, you can actually go in and see since 1988, all of the projects that have been completed, and archived reports from those projects. And they're, again, very easy to read. So, and one example is our farmer rancher grants, people will go in there just to see what other farmers, let's say, if they're looking at goat grazing to control a weed populations in their timber, they can go in there and find the materials on that. So that's just one example of that.

Christa Hartsook 06:58
Perfect, Linda, let's talk a little bit you know, about a specific book, for example, you know, I know you mentioned that you really liked the storytelling aspects of some of these books. And these research materials. Give me an example.

Linda Naeve 07:11
These books are.. they're paperback and so they're not extremely expensive. But they're fun books. This one that I really like is called 'The New American Farmer'. It's the second edition because I did mention that they're constantly being updated. And it's called 'Profiles of Agricultural Innovation', and what it is, so basically states case studies and reports on what farmers have done, and there you have find reports and case studies on farmers that are farming 1200 acres or more in North Dakota, but at the same time you find a farmer who's just starting from scratch with 10 acres, for example, this one is from Kenyan, Minnesota, Mary Door with Dancing Wind Farms. It talks about the summary of her operation, some of the problems that she addressed in her project, or in her background, and then what she plans to do in the future. So if you just give me a minute, I was read a little bit from a little excerpt from Mary..
That would be great!

"Mary Doors from Dancing Wind Farms, she has a 36 goat dairy herd with rotational grazing on eight acres. She does soft cheeses, the goat cheeses and low salt Fata. She has a pasture of mixed alfalfa hay on some of the 10 acres. And what she wants to do is a bed and breakfast for an educational farm retreat." So this might be something that might spark your interest as well. "The focal point of her operation is she wanted to scale back and add value to her farm because she wasn't going to expand. She had a barn fire that nearly wiped out her young operation. Her and her partner rebuilt replacing the old three storey 60 by 100 foot barn with a smaller barn more suitable for goats along with the cheese room. They had been advised they involve their dairy inspector in the design process." So she goes on and talks about is her future. And she says, "as she looks to the future Door continues to seek balance in her life, she'd like to concentrate on the bed and breakfast, and go on making the soft ripened cheese, but let go of some of the physical work required with the farming." And we can all relate to that "her operation will remain holistic with every piece important to the whole. For example, The Guest House wouldn't be nearly as successful. If the farm were not a genuine working dairy." So it talks about all of her accomplishments, and then it gives you the information how you can contact that individual. So it's not totally secret. In other words, they don't try to disguise who this person is. And you can actually contact them or maybe even visit her bed and breakfast. There you go. So that's an example of one of the books that they have. Again, lots of good stories in there. If you're interested in how you can develop your farm practice and farm business,

And we can all learn from others as we go through our small farm journeys. This is a great resource.

Isn't that the truth? Thank you Christa.

Thanks for being on today, Linda, why don't you get that website where we can find all of these books one more time?

Okay, it's www.northcentralsare.org
Perfect. Thank you. And as always, this podcast will be up on our website www.extension.state.edu/small Farms. Thanks for listening.