

# Farmer Rancher Grants Available with SARE

Tue, Nov 29, 2022 5:14PM 14:02

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

grant, farmers, farmer rancher, project, iowa, sustainable agriculture, website, ranchers, farm, linda, information, opportunities, program, christa, invasive species, pumpkin, books, funded, north central, research


## SPEAKERS

Christa Hartsook, Linda Naeve

---

- C** 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 four, where I interview Linda Naeve, the Iowa SARE coordinator, and talk about the SARE program and some opportunities that are available through ser. I'm Christa Hartsook, small farms program coordinator, and we hope you enjoy the show. Linda, what is SARE?
- L** Linda Naeve 00:24  
Well, SARE is an acronym for the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program. And it's actually a nationwide grants and education program to advance sustainable innovation to American agriculture. This program is divided into four regions, and Iowa is one of the 12 states in the North Central center region. The four regional center websites are hubs for excellent resources for farming and ranching operations of any size. They really provide a vast amount of information on various aspects of sustainable agriculture from production, agriculture, livestock grazing to marketing, locally grown produce and protein products, so so it's something for everyone.
- C** Christa Hartsook 01:04  
That's great. Sustainable Agriculture, you know, is a term that we hear a lot lately. How does SARE describe sustainable agriculture? What does that mean to them?
- L** Linda Naeve 01:06  
Well, sustainable agriculture is a farming and ranching that is ecologically sound profitable, and socially responsible. Although it's interpreted in many ways that SARE, or sustainable ag research and education program has three broad goals, or what they call the three pillars of


sustainability. That is profitability over the long term, stewardship of our nation's land, air and water, and last of all quality of life for farmers and ranchers and their communities. So it's these three pillars of sustainability that really describe what sustainable agriculture is all about.

 Christa Hartsook 01:50

You mentioned the website, Linda as kind of the hub for the SARE program. Can you share some of the information that's on the North Central Region?

 01:59

Well, the website which is really easy to remember [www dot North Central SARE sare.org](http://www.northcentralcenter.org), [north central center.org](http://northcentralcenter.org). It has educational resources online, where there are complete books that you can download and read, or hard copies of these books can be ordered online through our SARE store. Two of the most popular books in recent years, are managing cover crops profitably and building a sustainable business. And like most SARE publications, these were developed as a result of various research projects and are revised as more information becomes available through projects and grant opportunities. The building a sustainable business book is a guide to developing a business plan for firms and real businesses. And it's in a Workbook format with handouts and worksheets that you can complete as you move through. By the time you're through with that book, you've pretty much got a good business plan developed for your farm business. The website also has a number of bulletins and fact sheets on research projects, newsletters and information on current projects that are going on. And what I really enjoy are the topic rooms. These topic rooms include a number of resources and information on specific areas such as cover crops, farm to table, local and regional food systems, high tunnels, and a lot more. And so you can go into those topic rooms and learn on specific topics that you are interested in. And all of the resources on the SARE website are linked to those topic rooms. So it's a real good source of information.


 Christa Hartsook 03:33

A great resource for producers. You mentioned that Iowa was one of 12 states in that North Central SARE region. Is there a link on that website for specific Iowa information or localized events?


 03:46

Yes, there is Christa and on our Iowa website, we have a calendar of upcoming workshops, conferences and other events to learn more about sustainable agriculture and these may be sponsored programs through SARE or they may be individual conferences that include a lot of sustainable agriculture information within them. Local information also such as fact sheets and videos of our Iowa SARE projects and activities that are going on in the state. We also have information on grants and projects that have been funded in Iowa. If you're interested in knowing what things have been going on, you can go there and find a quick link to that. And our Iowa website is just through the north central website, you click on our state, and you can


find our information. Since part of my SARE duties include professional development. The Iowa SARE program does offer educators agricultural educators travel scholarships and mini grant opportunities with an online application process.

 Christa Hartsook 04:44

That's an amazing amount of information. What are some of your other responsibilities as the state sector coordinator?

 Linda Naeve 04:53

Well, as I mentioned, part of my responsibility is to provide professional development training opportunities for agricultural professionals in sustainable agriculture practices, and then share our project results with them. In addition to that, I also promote SARE resources and grant opportunities at various conferences and meetings with various groups and audiences. So if you go to some of the specific conferences in Iowa, you may see me there with my SARE booth showing all kinds of resources such as the books and the flyers and the bulletins that we have available.


 Christa Hartsook 05:24

Linda, you mentioned grant opportunities that were available through there and I think our listeners would be very interested in learning more about those can you describe some of them?

 05:33

Well, there are a wide variety of projects and program topics that are supported by SARE grants such as soil erosion control, soil quality improvement, water quality, wetlands, crop and landscape diversity, agriforestry value added and direct marketing, just a vast number of projects related to sustainable agriculture. That's just a few. Some of the examples of the grants that we have available are the research and education grant, Partnership Grants, youth educator grant, professional development grant, graduate student grant, Farmer rancher grant. So in our nurses in our North Central region, we have the six grant programs. But when it comes to filtering them down as to what is available to farmers and ranchers, I recommend the farmer rancher grant and the partnership grants, these two grants will offer farmers an opportunity to do on Farm Research, some on their own, and some with professional ag specialists, such as university specialists, or non government organizations such as Practical Farmers of Iowa, they can team up so these two grants are probably the most effective for farmers to get their ideas out there to try something that maybe they don't have funding for on their own. And they have a great idea they'd like to share with other farmers. So these two grants are excellent ones. And really, there's a lot of opportunities out there since there was established in 1988. It has funded over 160 grant projects in Iowa totaling over \$5.3 million in grant support. And the farmer rancher grant, again, is unique because it's for farmers and ranchers who really want to carry out Sustainable Agriculture Research, Demonstration, and education projects on the farms or ranches. The main focus on many of the grants for SARE is


on outreach, how can you share the information that you have found and learned from your project with other ranchers or farmers. And then another unique thing about the farmer rancher grant, it's actually written and implemented by the farmers and ranchers themselves without outside support. So the funding goes directly through them to them, and they're responsible for the, their reports.

 Christa Hartsook 07:49

That's great. I read recently that the call for proposals for the farmer rancher grants just recently came out for next years funding. So obviously, now is the time for producers to really start that application process. How does that process work? Or can you give us some details on that?

 08:05

Well, the process is not difficult, and it's all done online. So reading the call for proposals is the first step in the process. And that can be found at the North Central SARE website, right on the front page, [www.northcentral.sare.org](http://www.northcentral.sare.org), you'll find the link to the farmer rancher call for proposals. That paper also includes a link to the actual submission page is basically a step by step process in which you can go through to learn how to dot your i's and cross your t's and how to write a good grant. And this really helps you through that. And as you go through the process, you'll notice that the farmer rancher grant project can be up to 24 months to complete. And there are three types of competitive farmer rancher grants. One is individual farmer grant which one farmer you the farmer does the project writes the grant and does the report and you are the specialist so to speak, in that that grant, and the amount that you can request is up to \$7,500. Now if you team up with another farmer, so there are two of you on the grant. And but there have to be separate from another yet can't be from the same farm. If you work together, you it can be up to \$15,000. And then there's a group of grants where three or more farmers or ranchers from separate or distinct operations work together. So three farmers and you receive 22,000 up to \$22,500 for that project, and again, it can go over 24 months. So the grant process is fairly unique in the sense that it's simplified. It's easy to write the report is easy to write, and you do have assistance in writing through your state SARE coordinator such as me, or you can contact the person in charge that John Benjamin directly and ask her questions.


 Christa Hartsook 09:53

This program is not intended to fund any and every, you know, dream to farm, What types of projects are funded through the farmer rancher grants? What what do I need to look at to be to fit into this program?

 10:08

Well, it's not going to fund things that will help you buy your equipment or put up a building or things like that. What it is it's innovative ideas that would help other farmers and ranchers on these various topics that we talked about earlier. I'm just going to give you a couple examples,


Christa, what has been funded in Iowa, I found one of the most unique ones recently is a forestry project in which two farmers and a consultant teamed up on a project that's titled invasive species control through combine methods of browsing and prescribed burn. The project incorporates the USDA approved methods of goat browsing and prescribed burns to maximize the control of invasive species and invigorate the native Savanna growth and multi use timber stand. So this is a case where a farmer had a 40 to 50 acres of timber and it was overgrown with invasive species such as multi Flora rose, and he was looking at alternatives to herbicide control and other methods to control those invasive species so that they can get in and harvest the timber and manage the timber appropriately. It this project is in the works now is a 24 month project. And it's going along very successfully. The farmer who is conducting the research is now writing his first annual report on that to see the progress of his project. Another project is being conducted by a commercial farmer of no till pumpkins, where he is using a roller crimper on rye and oat cover crops between his pumpkin rows. In this project he's attempting to use these cover crop residue mats to suppress weeds in an organic pumpkin operation. His goal is to reduce field passes and number of cultivation, he's going to need to manage his weeds, as well as reduce the weed pressure by the matting and the shading resulting in the mat. And then the final outcome would be to have cleaner pumpkins at harvest time. And so with these three goals in mind, he's doing an excellent job of showing other farmers the success that he's having, and the challenge that's that this kind of a system poses.

 Christa Hartsook 12:14

So Linda based on these two examples, it really sounds more like you need to kind of have a research component to what it is you are proposing in this grant application.

 12:23

Yes, a research component and or a demonstration. So if you have been doing something that really works well for you, that isn't mainstream with the other farmers or ranchers in your community, that would be a good opportunity to write a SARE grant to be able to spread the word to maybe expand that project or that effort was on your farm. And the deadline for the application is actually coming up. It's Thursday, December 3rd, 4pm. Again, to get that online registration turned in. So you don't need to stick it in the mail or anything like that. You just go in and click on to the website and start completing it. Many farmers find and even researchers with the online process, they do it in a Word document and then they just cut and paste and move their text over. And it's very simple process. The call for proposals that I mentioned earlier spells out exactly what they need to apply and how to do it. So again, it's a basic step by step instructions. And the website is [www.northcentralsare.org](http://www.northcentralsare.org) And if they would like more information or have questions, they can contact me at [lnaev@iastate.edu](mailto:lnaev@iastate.edu) I'd be glad to help them if they have any questions regarding the application process.

 Christa Hartsook 13:41

Linda, thank you so much. We hope our listeners enjoyed this program. We'll have some links to that North Central SARE website up along with this podcast at our website which is [www dot extension dot iastate.edu/smallfarms](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/smallfarms). Thank you for listening

