2017 Farmer Grant

Application Instructions

Grants to explore new ideas in agriculture

To submit, go to http://www.ciids.org/nesare/fg

The online submission system will open by October 15, 2016

Deadline is November 29, 2016 11:59 PM EST

Staff will be available to answer questions until 5 p.m. on the due date

Northeast SARE
655 Spear Street
University of Vermont
Burlington, VT 05405-0107

Agriculture in the Northeast will be diversified and profitable, providing healthful products to its customers. It will be conducted by farmers who manage resources wisely, who are satisfied with their lifestyles, and have a positive influence on their communities and the environment.

—Northeast SARE outcome statement

Note to applicants

Electronic copies of these application instructions can be downloaded from the Northeast SARE website at www.nesare.org/Grants/Get-a-Grant/Farmer-Grant. You will also find other useful documents there, such as "What is a Farm?" and the budget justification template.

For an introduction to Farmer Grants, you are welcome to watch a narrated PowerPoint presentation at www.nesare.org/Dig-Deeper/Grant-Workshop-PowerPoints-and-Webinars/Farmer-Grant-narrated-PowerPoint

Proposals must be submitted at www.ciids.org/nesare/fg

We strongly recommend that you write and edit your responses using a word processing program, and then copy and paste the final text into the online submission template. There are strict word limits for each section, and you will not be able to submit if any portion of the proposal exceeds them.

Questions?

Call 802/656-0471 or send e-mail to nesare@uvm.edu

Northeast SARE programs are offered to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status.

OVERVIEW

The goal of the Farmer Grant program is to help farmers explore new sustainable production and marketing practices, often through an experiment, trial, or on-farm demonstration. SARE defines practices as being sustainable when they are profitable, environmentally sound, and beneficial to the wider farm community.

The funding is competitive and only projects that promise the greatest benefit to farms and farmers will be awarded a grant. Successful proposals define a problem or opportunity and offer solutions or test new ideas. These ideas may come to you as you go about the daily work of managing your farm business, and should reflect the concerns and the barriers to sustainability specific to crops or products in your area.

There are no set restrictions on content—you can experiment with a new crop or production method, develop a machine or tool that does something new, try out a pest control or grazing technique, explore adding value, test a new way of marketing directly to the public, improve the skills of immigrant workers and those who manage them, or address issues related to farm labor and apprentices. These are just examples—the scope of the program is broad.

Go to www.nesare.org/Grants/Sample-Grants/Farmer-Grants to read short descriptions of previous Farmer Grant awards.

WHO CAN APPLY

You must be a farm business owner or manager in the Northeast SARE region. The region is made up of Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C. You must run a commercial operation with an established annual farm income of at least $1,000 from the harvest and sale of crop, nursery, livestock, greenhouse, or aquaculture products that you sell on a regular basis. You need not be farming full time, but the grants are not intended for gardeners or hobby farmers. If you aren't sure you qualify, read our document on What is a farm, found in the right sidebar at www.nesare.org/Grants/Get-a-Grant/Farmer-Grant or call the Northeast SARE office at 802/656-0471.

Managers on farms affiliated with an institution or a nonprofit organization are eligible to apply, but only if the primary activity of the farm is to produce and sell agricultural products under the kinds of economic constraints that affect commercial farmers. Farms where the primary mission is education or research are not eligible. Farms affiliated with institutions or organizations should apply using the name that appears on their 501(c) (3).

Applicants who are farm managers rather than the farm owner/operator need to complete an application signoff sheet, available on request from nesare@uvm.edu. This applies to farm managers at a privately owned farm or at an institution/organization. The signoff sheet must be uploaded with the application to verify the farm's owner or institutional grants approval and support for the project.

Farmer Grants are reserved for farmers. Agricultural service providers—consultants, extension staff, or other support personnel—who want to conduct research with farmers as collaborators should apply for a Partnership Grant. In the same vein, organizations that work with farmers to improve the economic or social position of agriculture should also access SARE funds through a Partnership Grant. Go to the Northeast SARE website for more about eligibility and application criteria.

PLANNING YOUR APPLICATION

Only one proposal is allowed per farm per year. If you have several different ideas, you will need to choose which one you want to submit.

Size and duration of grants. Grants are capped at $15,000 and there is no matching funds requirement. The overall project cost may be higher, but the SARE portion of the budget—the one covered by this application—must be $15,000 or less. Most projects last one year, but multiyear projects are accepted.

Time needed to submit. Successful grantees report that it generally takes 20 to perhaps 40 hours to develop a proposal. SARE grants are competitive—in 2016, the program awarded $323,951 to 26 farmers from a field of 54 applicants; awards ranged from $4,730 to $15,000.

Technical advisor. All projects must have a technical advisor such as a county extension agent, NRCS staff, a university research or extension specialist, a private crop consultant, a veterinarian, or other technical expert. You will need to get a letter of support from your technical advisor that describes his or her involvement and confirms the level of commitment—you will upload this letter with your online application. Although the technical advisor is required, you, the farmer, should be the one actively in charge of the project. If you find that you prefer your technical advisor be in charge, encourage the advisor to apply for a Partnership Grant with you as a cooperating farmer.

Before writing anything, it's important to talk your project through with your technical advisor. The role of this advisor is to provide support where needed to the farmer applicant. The technical advisor can review the proposal to give feedback, help with the design of the study, provide technical information on the topic, help troubleshoot any problems that arise during the project, or help promote the results of the completed study.

Background reading. You should also find out what others have done recently in your topic area and show in the proposal that you have done this homework. Search the SARE projects database, visit websites and online resources like the National Agricultural Library and their Alternative Farming Systems Information Center, Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas, or the Organic Farming Research Foundation. Make sure you include the results of your background research in your response to application question 3, What efforts have been made by others to solve the problem?.

Collaboration. Some projects include collaborators. Collaborators are typically other farmers, consultants, specialists, suppliers, and others who have something specific they can bring to the project. Collaborators can help with replication, marketing, data collection, or other project activities. Including collaborators makes sense when there is a natural fit between your collaborators and your project design.

Outreach. Your project must offer an outreach component, and often the technical advisor is helpful in completing this requirement. Common outreach mechanisms are field days, demonstrations, fact sheets, handouts, or other materials made available to other farmers through a producer network. You can also plan to present your project at a meeting, develop a flyer, or seek media coverage for your project. Your outreach should target people who will benefit from knowing the results of your project, and should cover as wide a geographic area as possible.

WHAT SARE FUNDS CAN BE USED FOR

- to pay you for your time and the time your employees work directly on the project
- to buy materials specific to the project
- to pay for project-related services like soil testing and consulting
- to support project-related travel
- to pay for postage, printing costs, and other outreach expenses related to the project
- to compensate technical advisors, collaborators, and other participants
- to rent or share the cost of equipment needed specifically for the project
- to help cover overhead, or indirect costs, at the rate of 10 percent of direct costs

THINGS SARE DOES NOT FUND

Expenses to start or expand your farm operation. SARE funds cannot be used to buy land, tractors, livestock, or machinery, or to make long-term improvements like additions, barns, high tunnels, or greenhouses. In the same vein, funds cannot be used to start or expand a farm, establish a herd, orchard, or vineyard, or to fund any comparable major farm fixture**.**

Normal operating expenses. Do not ask for specific overhead costs in the form of utility bills, general maintenance, general supplies, or any other expenses that would be there in the absence of the project. Cell phone expenses are also excluded, even if you use your cell phone in the course of the project.

Funds used to develop an exclusive or proprietary process, procedure, or technique. One of the goals of the SARE program is getting useful information into the hands of farmers. Information gathered in the course of a SARE grant becomes public information, and will be available on line as interim and final reports.

Applications from past grant recipients who are behind in their reporting. If you have a grant project that has ended or is near completion, finish it up and file your final report; if your project is still in progress, make sure we have a recent annual report.

Expenses outside the grant period. Expenses incurred before the award notification date or after the end date on the grant contract.

More than one project per farm per year. No more than one application per farm per year will be considered.

HOW GRANT FUNDS ARE PAID

Grants are paid on a reimbursement basis. You need to have the financial capacity to pay project costs and be reimbursed one to two months later. Also note that SARE will hold 20 percent of the total award until all outreach has been done and you have submitted a satisfactory final report.

IF YOUR PROJECT IS FUNDED

Northeast SARE requires annual progress reports and a comprehensive final report that are published on line for wide access. Annual reports are due by December 31 each year and final reports are due within 30 days of the end date of the project. To understand the types of information you will be asked to report on, please look at

the performance indicators provided (Appendix B). You will not be required to report on all indicators, just the ones that apply to your project.

REVIEW CRITERIA

1. A direct link to agricultural sustainability and identified need and interest. Sustainability is defined as farming practices that are profitable, good for the environment, and beneficial to farm communities. All projects must have a direct link to at least one of the key themes listed below, and two or more is better.

- the reduction of environmental and health risks in agriculture
- the prevention of agricultural pollution
- improved productivity, the reduction of costs, and the increase of net farm income
- the conservation of soil, the improvement of water quality, and the protection of natural resources
- the enhancement of employment in agriculture
- the improvement of quality of life for farmers, their employees, and the farm community

Reviewers also want to see whether farmers, farm groups, or experts in the field have expressed interest or need for this type of inquiry.

2. Clarity. Proposals should explain the project goal succinctly, show what question or questions your proposed study will answer, and list the objectives that will lead to useful information.

3. Builds new information based on an understanding of related work. Proposals should build on work done by others and avoid merely verifying that an established sustainable practice really works. Proposals should also explain how other farmers will benefit from the results.

4. Sound methods and measurable results. Your methods should align with the project concept and there should be evidence of thoughtful planning and consultation with advisors and collaborators. Data should be gathered and assessed consistently and logically, with controls or other methods that assure that results will be trustworthy. The capstone will be how you will analyze and interpret the information you gathered. A study need not be subject to statistical analysis, but it should be unbiased and last long enough to be meaningful and provide results that are more than merely anecdotal.

5. Clear and workable timetable. The timetable should be realistic and should include descriptions of who will do what and how long each step should take.

6. Outreach. Proposals must include a plan to share the project findings with other farmers and service providers so they can continue the inquiry and perhaps adopt or replicate the project's findings. There should be a thoughtful plan for sharing project results over as wide a geographic area as possible.

7. Suitability of the farm to the proposal and capacity for success. Experience is a key element in any project, as is access to the basic tools that will make it work. Proposals should describe the farm's commercial activity in detail and describe key people in terms of the skill, time, and commitment they will bring to the project and their capacity to see the work through to conclusion. This includes the technical advisor's role and his or her anticipated contribution.

8. Sensible budget. The proposal budget should be clear, internally consistent, and should justify how the money will be spent. Budget items should be allowable and reasonable, and the overall budget request should be appropriate to the scale, scope, and expected results of the project.

HOW TO APPLY

Submitting your application. All applications are submitted on line at http://www.ciids.org/nesare/fg. This online application template has strict word limits, which is why we strongly suggest you prepare your proposal using a word-processing program, edit each response to comply with the word limits, and then copy and paste your proposal section by section into the online template, saving as you go. If you run into problems with submitting, first ask your technical advisor for support. If a problem persists, e-mail Carol Delaney at carol.delaney@uvm.edu or call 802/656-0697.

Register. This online application template requires registration. It uses your e-mail address as a user name and you will create a password—use the "create account" button to create an identity in the system. This only takes a minute and you will be able to log in right away, but note that this registration is specific to this grant application—the submission interface won't recognize usernames and passwords from the SARE reporting system or other grant applications.

Identify the project. Once you are registered and have logged in, the application template will ask for the **project title** to begin a new proposal. Limit the title to 125 characters, including spaces. The template will than ask for the name of the **project leader—**this should be you, the applicant—and some baseline **contact information** for you and your technical advisor**.** Once this is saved, you may exit and return and add to the proposal and preview.

As you copy and paste each section from your word processing file, remember to save each section before moving on. You will be able to log in and out of the online application template to revise your proposal, provided you do not press submit. Before submission, you may view your proposal as a draft .pdf document.

Remember to upload a signed letter from your technical advisor that describes his or her involvement in the project and willingness to participate. If this letter is not already in an electronic format (.pdf, or .doc) you will need to scan or otherwise convert the letter so it can be uploaded as an attachment. A full list of required documents is given in the checklist on page 10.

The application template will close at **11:59 PM EST on November 29, 2016**. Waiting until the last minute risks not being able to submit because of power failures, websites going down, browser incompatibilities, bad weather, or other unexpected calamities. Submitting early also allows for resubmitting if a mistake is encountered. If this happens, let SARE staff know which proposal is the correct version that should be reviewed. Staff will be available until 5 p.m. on the due date to help with questions and technical issues.

Once you have submitted, you will be able to print out the entire application as a .pdf file. It is a good idea to download and print a copy of the proposal and its attachments for yourself and your advisor.

PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION

Summarize the proposal. Here, you have 250 words to offer a brief outline of the project content. This summary is the first thing reviewers see, so take some time to make it compelling and base it on what you wrote

in your proposal. Include the basic elements from the application questions below, including outreach, so that the reviewer can grasp quickly what the project is about the essential points and elements in it.

Keeping in mind the corresponding review criteria, answer these questions:

What is the problem and why is it important? Briefly state the problem, issue, or opportunity and explain why it matters (e.g., have other farmers, farmer associations, or experts in the field confirmed that this is an issue or an obstacle?). Reviewers are interested in the project's potential contribution to sustainability as related to the themes listed on page 6, the significance of the issue. *500 words*.

What is your proposed solution? Present the overarching goal of your project followed by your idea or the main question you seek to study and resolve, and then briefly state your project's objectives. These objectives will relate directly to the methods and budget that follow. *200 words.*

What efforts have been made by others to solve the problem? Tell us how your project builds on what is currently known and how it is different. Reviewers look for evidence that you are familiar with past work or research and that what you are doing will provide new information and that will help other farmers. Minimally, search the SARE report database to see what has been done by others – though it is expected that you not limit yourself to just SARE projects; strong proposals make use of all current knowledge to prevent replicating previous work. Again, this may be an area your technical advisor can be helpful. *750 words*

What will your methods and measurements be? Describe what you will do and how. For example, if you are trying out a pest control technique, describe the quantities used, the application dates or stage of growth, and how you will set up a control plot versus a treatment plot. Or, to use a different example, if your project will explore whether a new procedure will decrease mastitis in goats, you will need to describe how you will set up control and treatment groups—you would need to identify the tests that verify whether the goats have mastitis or not and explain how this data will be summarized. If there are enough sample numbers, perhaps a statistical analysis of that information can be done to verify results. If you don't have the skill needed to do this kind of analysis, recruit a technical advisor or researcher who does. Give a clear, detailed description of how and when data will be collected. Reviewers will be looking for a plan of work that makes sense, addresses the problem or question, and leads to measureable results. *1000 words.*

What is the timetable of your project? In chronological order, outline the steps listed in the methods and measurement and outreach sections, say how long each step will take, and who will do them. Use months and years to be clear when events happen. Be sure to include outreach and allow enough time and funding to complete this step. If you are not sure of the name of a person doing a task, indicate the role, like "farm manager," instead. *500 words.*

What is the outreach plan? Describe how other farmers and agricultural service providers will learn about your results. Reviewers look for a plan that will deliver information widely, letting other farmers know what worked and what didn't. Writing an article for publication, doing a presentation at a farm trade show, or speaking at a producer meeting can reach many farmers; well-advertised and well-attended on-farm workshops or field days can also be effective. It is better to have a short and specific outreach plan than a longer list of general ideas without a specific proposal. *250 words*.

What is your farm business and how will your project fit in with your farm operation? Describe your farming experience and your farm business. Reviewers will want to know how many years you have been in the

business, what you produce, acres, head of livestock, markets, whether you farm full- or part-time, gross sales, and other key information related to describing your farm.

Reviewers will also want to know how the project will affect the sustainability of your farm operation. If your project calls for special expertise that you don't have, say who on your project team will fill that role. This is the appropriate place to include mention of your technical advisor.

If there are to be partner farms in this project, mention them and make sure they provide you with a letter of commitment to upload.

If other farm resources are going to be dedicated to this project, describe them here. For example, you may already own an essential piece of specialized equipment or may have received other funding to cover related expenses not funded by SARE. *300 words.*

Budget justification and narrative

The budget justification, once complete, will be uploaded as an attachment in Excel format. Use the Excel worksheet found in the "For applicants" box on the Northeast SARE website. Expand row heights or column widths as needed to accommodate your narrative and justification. For all items, give a brief, clear description of the purpose. *No word limit.*

Use only the categories in the template (personnel, materials and supplies, travel, printing/publications, other direct costs, and indirect costs), and justify each expense with narrative and by showing how it was arrived at by giving a unit cost times some quantity.

For example, if under "materials" you are proposing to buy cover crop seed, your budget line should specify how much and cost per unit ("Cover crop seed for 10 acres, 12 lbs. per acre = 120 lbs. @ $4 per pound = $480."), and a brief description of how it will be used. For "travel," include who, where, and the purpose and distance of each trip ("Mary Sanchez, project leader, car travel to experiment station for insect identification training, one 62-mile round trip @ 0.54/mile = $33.48"). Under "personnel," show the cost of your time or the time of employees dedicated to the project as an hourly rate times the anticipated time needed to complete the project. Consultant time—these are payments to people who are not your employees—should be put under "other direct costs."

Budget summary

In the online submission system, present the budget subtotal for each of the categories of personnel, materials and supplies, travel, printing and publications, and other direct costs, and indirect costs (if applicable) making sure that your dollar amounts exactly match those in your budget justification. Only submit one total expense in each category. *No word limit.*

Example budget.

A budget lacking sufficient detail can decrease the chances a project will get funded. Before you prepare your own budget justification and narrative spreadsheet and fill out the on line budget summary you may want to look at a sample to see how these two items fit together. A sample budget spreadsheet and summary with more detailed instructions about indirect costs and equipment are found in Appendix A.

ATTACHMENT CHECKLIST

Make sure you upload the required attachments. Supported formats are .pdf, .doc, .docx, .xls, and .xlsx.

- ☐ Letter of commitment from your technical advisor (.doc, .docx, or .pdf)
- ☐ Budget justification spreadsheet (.xls, xlsx)

Required in specific situations:

- ☐ If there are other farmers participating, a letter of commitment from each
- ☐ If the proposal is for an invention or prototype, include diagrams, sketches, or explanatory images
- ☐ If the project is a feasibility study or economic viability study, include a proof of concept or pro-forma budget
- ☐ If your project measures changes in human learning or behavior, include sample surveys
- ☐ If a hired farm manager is the applicant, either at a privately owned farm or at an institution, include the sign-off sheet verifying approval of the farm owner or institution/organization—contact nesare@uvm.edu to get this form
- ☐ Plot plans or diagrams for experimental design (hand-drawn is acceptable)

.

Limit attachments to required items (budget, commitment letter), and documents or images that explain core project content. Do not upload general letters of support, brochures, newsletters, resumes, or other general items unrelated to the project, since they will not be reviewed.

EVALUATION TIME LINE

Online submission deadline ..... November 29, 2016

Applicants receive email confirming receipt with link to satisfaction survey ..... upon submission

Proposal review ..... Dec 2016 - Feb 2017

Final selection and notification of applicants not accepted ..... mid-February 2017

Awards announced to accepted applicants and start date ..... February 20, 2017

Grant contract issued ..... April 2017

Reviewer comments e-mailed to unfunded applicants and advisor ..... April 2017

Appendix A
Sample budget justification & budget summary

Funding Categories / Item Name	*Narrative justification of expense*	Unit	Quantity	$ per unit	Quantity x $ =
Personnel:					
Salaries and wages. *Show FTE and salary for each year or hourly wage times number of hours = [total $].*					
Project Leader / Major Participants		Unit	Quantity	$ per unit	Quantity x $ =
Maria Sanchez	manage grant, data collection and analysis, do outreach and reporting	hours	120	$ 28.50	$ 3,420.00
Support Staff					
Bashir Ibrahim , employee	plant and manage experiment within crops, set up trial plot	hours	120	$ 12.00	$ 1,440.00
Other hired labor					
				Subtotal: Salaries and wages (rounded to the nearest dollar)	**$ 4,860**
Fringe Benefits:					
SS, Medicare, FUTA - employer portion		percent	1440	$ 0.08	$ 118.80
				Subtotal: Fringe Benefits (rounded to the nearest dollar)	**$ 119**
				Personnel total (Salaries, hourly labor, and fringe benefits)	**$4,979**
Non-Personnel:		Unit	Quantity	$ per unit	Quantity x $ =
Materials and Supplies:					
Clover/grass seed for study	12# per acre for 10 acres	pounds	120	$ 4.00	$ 480.00
Insect traps	10 per acre for 10 acres plus 10 spare replacements for damaged traps	each	110	$ 4.45	$ 489.50
					-
				Subtotal: Materials and Supplies (rounded to the nearest dollar)	**$ 970**
Travel:					
Maria Sanchez	5 round trips to cooperating farms @ 100 miles	miles	500	$ 0.540	$ 270.00
Maria Sanchez	1 round trip to Exp. Station @ 62 miles	miles	62	$ 0.540	$ 33.48
Maria Sanchez	travel to regional crop meeting to present results	miles	334	$ 0.540	$ 180.36
Maria Sanchez	2 nights lodging at conference	night	2	$ 120.000	$ 240.00
				Subtotal: Travel (rounded to the nearest dollar)	**$ 724**
Publications/Printing:					
300 flyers for announcing workshop	Sent to print shop	each	300	$ 0.25	$ 75.00
				Subtotal: Publications (rounded to the nearest dollar)	**$ 75**
		Unit	Quantity	$ per unit	Quantity x $ =
Communications - mailings, postage, conference calls. Cell phone charges are unallowable.					
Postage for field day outreach	300 flyers sent in mail @ $0.44 each	each	300	0.44	$ 132.00
					$ -
Photocopying - In-house photocopying.					
Photocopying of handout for field day	Six page handout with experiment description and results, copies for 25 people	page	150	0.05	$ 7.50
Consultants:					
Insect Specialist/Consultant	identification of pests-2.5 hrs/month for 4 months @ $35/hr	hours	10	35	$ 350.00
Mira Gaba-Dodge, collaborator	analyzing data; evaluating results; assist in report preparation - 20 hrs	hours	20	30	$ 600.00
Service or maintenance contracts: Costs should be in direct correlation to the use of the equipment for the project.					
LabTech, LLC.	Lab Tissue Analysis, sampled twice per summer over 2 years	samples	4	125	$ 500.00
Jerry Gray, subcontractor, Wonder-Spray	fee for custom treatments: $280	treatments	5	280	$ 1,400.00

Sample budget justification & budget summary, continued

Equipment and land use charges or rental.					
Extra land rental for experimental plots	land	acre	10	100	$ 1,000.00
Microscope for insect identification; from www.microscopes.com, model GW168, The Microscope Store.	Purchase needed for project at $1565 plus $35 shipping, to be used for two years on SARE project. $1600/10 year life = $160. For 2 year project, $320 would be the SARE share of purchase price.	microscope with farm paying $1480	1	320	$ 320.00
Other / Miscellaneous: These costs must always be identified in order to be allowed.					
Signage for field day	One road sign from print shop to direct attendees to the farm	each	1	50	$ 50.00
				Subtotal: Other Direct Costs (rounded to the nearest dollar)	**$ 4,360**
				Non-Personnel total	**$ 6,129**
				TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	**$11,108**
				Indirect Costs, if applicable *	**$1,110**
				TOTAL SARE Request	**$ 12,218**
Indirect costs (round down if needed to not exceed limit, and complete check-off	*To cover overhead, using de minumus rate of 10% of direct costs. $11,108 x 0.10 = $1,134*				$ 1,134
				TOTAL SARE REQUEST	**$ 11,341**

Applicants are informed that they may be eligible to claim indirect cost recovery as follows:

An organization having a current federally negotiated rate for indirect costs may request either the negotiated rate or up to 10% of the total SARE request, whichever is less.*

An organization or private business not having a federally negotiated rate for indirect costs, and never having had one previously, may claim up to 10% as de minimus to cover overhead.**

Applicants are required to check off one (and provide rate if requesting indirect):	**√**			
No indirect is requested				
Indirect is requested	**√**	**at rate of (as % of direct costs):**	**10.00%**	

***Current negotiated rate.** The USDA/NIFA limit on SARE grants for organizations having a current federally negotiated indirect cost rate is 10% of the total SARE grant request. An organization having a negotiated rate that is lower than 10% of total SARE funds requested must use the lower rate. (It is helpful to use 11.11% of direct costs to get a close approximation of what the 10% of federal funds limit would be.)

****De minimus.** USDA/NIFA allows organizations and private businesses that have never had a federally negotiated rate agreement to use a de minimus rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). MTDC includes all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first $25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award), but MTDC excludes trainee/participant support costs, long-term rentals, equipment purchases, and amounts above $25,000 on subawards to other organizations.

Organizations that have had a previously negotiated indirect cost rate may not use de minimus. (Note that if your organization's previously negotiated rate is no longer in effect, it is ineligible to receive indirect costs.)

Sample Budget summary

Personnel total	**4979**
Materials and supplies total	**970**
Travel total	**724**
Printing and publications total	**75**
Other direct costs	**4360**
Indirect costs	**1110**
Total grant funds requested (rounded to nearest dollar)	**$12,218**

Indirect costs. USDA/NIFA allows grant recipients to include indirect costs in their budget. This helps grantees recover costs for overhead that cannot be directly attributed to your grant project, to contribute toward routine expenses like utilities, general supplies, and other carrying costs that would be there whether this project happened or not.

Most Farmer Grant applicants will likely use what's known as the *de minimus* rate, which allows for indirect costs up to 10 percent of direct costs. In the example above, the requested direct costs total $11,108, so the *de minimus* rate of 10 percent would be $1,110, making the total request $12,218. The total request, including the indirect cost, cannot exceed $15,000.

Enter this on the "indirect cost" line of the budget spreadsheet and in the budget summary.

In rare cases, often involving non-governmental, academic, and service organizations, a slightly different rate will apply. If your organization has an established federal indirect rate, contact Northeast SARE for guidance on how to complete this budget line.

Equipment

Equipment refers to tangible, nonexpendable property having a useful life beyond the project period.

Farm applicants are expected to already have the equipment needed for normal farming operations such as tractors, tillage implements, and product handling equipment, and that is why a *de minimus* indirect is available to contribute to some of those overhead expenses of ownership. Applicants from institutions or organizations are also expected to already have essential equipment such as copiers, cameras, computers, video equipment, and other items that could have a wide range of uses beyond the boundaries of the project, so any requests for these items must be clearly justified and the equipment must be essential and directly related to the project activities.

Any requests for funds to rent or purchase equipment should describe why the equipment is not part of a farm's normal inventory and why it is essential to the project. When possible, equipment should be rented, but if the equipment is relatively inexpensive or not available for rent, an applicant can propose to buy the equipment and request that SARE share the cost based on the time it will actually be used for the project. The allowed expense would be calculated as the purchase price divided by expected useful life times the number of years used on the project. Choose a useful life that is appropriate for the equipment and how it will be used.

Equipment purchase costs are entered in the budget under "other direct costs," along with any delivery or shipping costs.

Examples of allowable equipment expense calculations

If a $6,000 scale (plus a shipping fee of $200) is needed to weigh cattle being raised under different feed regimens and one is not available for rent (www.cattlescales.com, Model AP600), and it will be used over two years in the project with a useful life of 10 years, the allowable SARE portion of the purchase price would be $6,200/10 years = $620 per year. $620 times two years = $1240. This is the allowable expense charged to SARE; the $4,960 balance would be paid by the farm.

A dewatering screw press is needed to remove moisture from the byproduct brewer's grains for a one-year feed study (http://www.vincentcorp.com, model Issue #215). The purchase price (including shipping) is $5,200 /10 year useful life = $520/yr. times one year of project use = $520; this last number is the allowed expense that could be charged to the grant.

A microscope is needed to identify insects for a two-year study. It has a useful life of 10 years (www.microscopes.com, model GW168, The Microscope Store.). If the purchase price (including shipping) is $1,600, $320 of the purchase may be charged to the grant ($1,600/10 yr. = $160/year times two years = $320).

Ten electric netting rolls are needed to keep sheep in a hops yard. The netting has a useful life of three years. The equipment is Electro Net 35, 164 foot length each (www.premier1supplies.com). $112 times 10 rolls = $1120 plus $50 shipping/ three years = $390. Since this is a one-year study, $390 may be charged to the grant.

Insect screening is needed as a control method vs. spray for a two-year study. Assuming the screening has a five-year useful life, Insect Mesh .0394″ x .0335″, 13 feet X 328 feet (www.americannettings.com). $612 plus $28 shipping = $640/5 yr. = $128/year. For this two-year project, $256 may be charged to the grant.

Appendix B

SARE FARMER GRANT PROGRAM
Grantee reporting and post-project evaluation

Logic Model Category	Performance Indicators *(When you report you will receive prompts for these indicators.)*	Who Collects/When Reported	
		Grantee Collects/ Reports by End of Project	**SARE Collects/ Post Project** (from **F**armer and/or Technical **A**dvisor)
Participants	Number of farmers participating in research	✓	
	Number farmers reached through outreach	✓	
	Number of agricultural service providers reached through outreach	✓	
Outputs: – Activities – Information – Products	Research activities conducted	✓	
	Research results of the project	✓	
	Number and type of outreach activities conducted to share project results	✓	
	Number and types of outreach publications *(if produced)*	✓	✓F, A
Learning Outcomes	Number of farmers directly involved in project that report changes in KASA *(knowledge, attitudes, skills, awareness)*	✓	✓F, A
Action Outcomes	Number of farmers that made a change based on the results of the project *(including what is changed)*	✓	✓F, A
	New collaborations as a result of project *(by farmer and/or technical advisor, if occurred)*	✓	✓F, A
	SARE grant leveraged another grant *(by farmer and/or technical advisor, if occurred)*	✓	✓F, A
Condition Outcomes	Economic, environmental, social benefit(s) from farmers making change on farm		✓F, A

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: *How do I print out a hard copy of my application for my records?*

A: After you submit, you will be able to print out the entire proposal as a .pdf file.

Q: *Can I preview my application before I submit?*

A: Yes. In the last submission screen, you will see an option to preview a PDF version of your proposal. If you see something that doesn't look right there, you can go back to the relevant section and make edits before submitting.

Q: *Do I have to finish submitting my application in one online session?*

A: No—each section of the application can be saved as you go. You can leave your online session and return to finish up later.

Q: *Are the grants competitive?*

A: Yes. Last year we had 54 applications and funded 26.

Q: *If I am funded, what is reporting like?*

A: Our reporting requirements are straightforward. Be prepared to submit a project overview when the project begins, an annual progress report in December, and a final report when the project is over.

Q: *If I am funded, is there a lot of paperwork?*

A: Before we can send a contract for you to sign, you will need to fill out a W-9 tax form, a form specific to legal/audit compliance, and another form if you will be claiming *de minimus* indirect costs. We will send you a handbook that explains the project management and reimbursement process, but keep in mind that we cannot reimburse expenses prior to the approval of your award or after the contract ends.

Q: *I had a Farmer Grant in the past. Will this affect how my application is reviewed?*

A: No. Each application is judged on its merit.

Q: *What happens to the reports I send in and the information I uncover?*

A: Northeast SARE makes project results available on line and available to other growers, researchers, nonprofits, and the general public. Your reports will become part of a searchable SARE database and may be included in publications and informational campaigns.

Q: *Can you tell me more about the role of the technical advisor?*

A: These are people who bring technical support and offer access to resources; they are agricultural service providers who support things like outreach, project concept and design, and general consultation. To learn more, you can watch a short video, "Farmers and their technical advisors," on line in the Northeast SARE video vault.

Q: *What kind of support is available from Northeast SARE?*

A: There is a Farmer Grants coordinator (Carol.Delaney@uvm.edu or 802/656-0697), and each state has a SARE coordinator who can help (Go to the Northeast SARE website and select "state programs. Also, to help you in this process, you may read "How to Conduct Research on Your Farm or Ranch," available as a free download by searching this exact title from the SARE online learning center