

5/20/2025

The Honorable John Hoeven  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Andy Harris  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop Jr.  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,  
FDA, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Hoeven, Chairman Harris, Ranking Member Shaheen, and Ranking Member Bishop

The undersigned food, farm, conservation, and rural organizations appreciate your commitment to continued investment in the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program. As you work to develop agriculture appropriations legislation for fiscal year (FY) 2026, we write to highlight the importance of continued investment in agriculture research and to urge your support for increasing SARE funding to \$60 million.

Administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), SARE has been a leader in addressing key sustainability challenges facing agriculture for over 35 years and remains USDA's only farmer-driven research program. It has helped create more innovative organic and conservation farm practices that are adopted by farmers on the ground than any other competitive agricultural research program.

All SARE projects address sustainability and focus on improving farmer profitability, stewardship, and quality of life. The program funds cooperative efforts to develop new marketing approaches for farmers, investigations into new approaches to processing and/or adding value to sustainably produced farm products, and improvements to local and regional food systems. SARE projects also include management practices that help sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increasing food sovereignty in Tribal communities, integrated livestock, agroforestry, perennial cropping systems, and renewable energy, to name a few.

The program's continued emphasis on practical, in-field research, on farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing, and on farmer-researcher collaboration ensures that its research priorities are constantly evolving and responding to the challenges that farmers and ranchers face every day. SARE also provides grants, training, and resources to agriculture professionals to build their knowledge and skills through its Professional Development Program. This includes professionals from the Cooperative Extension Service and USDA. For years, SARE has supported graduate students, helping establish the pipeline of future agricultural scientists who are needed to make the next breakthroughs in agriculture. In addition, SARE invests in historically underserved farmers and ranchers by providing sponsorship funds to support education and training activities and has devoted resources to 1994 and 1890 Land Grant Institutions.

Over its 37-year history, SARE has awarded over \$466 million across 9,726 initiatives focusing on farmer-led research and education in every state across the country. Yet, despite SARE's long-standing record of helping farmers and ranchers develop and adopt innovative practices and systems, the program has yet to reach its full authorization of \$60 million. We were encouraged to see steadily increasing funding toward SARE's fully authorized amount in FY2021, FY2022, and FY2023, but are concerned by the backward momentum of a 4% reduction from FY2023 levels in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-42) and the proposed 6.25% reduction in the FY25 appropriations bill. Without increased investments, farmers will not be able to meet future productivity challenges and remain competitive, and they will lack the easily accessible and regionally appropriate research that they need to develop sustainable food and farming systems.

In light of this, ***we support full funding for SARE at its authorized level of \$60 million for FY 2026.*** We believe this funding will boost research in soil health, expand investments in research to support farmers, and help rural communities thrive.

We thank you for your strong support of SARE and efforts to increase SARE funding in previous years, as well as your continued support for our nation's farmers.

Sincerely,

Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association

Alaska Food Policy Council

American Society of Agronomy

Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy

Appalachian Sustainable Development

Botanical Bites & Provisions, LLC

C.A.S.A. del Llano

California Certified Organic Farmers  
California Climate and Agriculture Network  
California FarmLink  
Carbon180  
Catholic Rural Life  
Center for Rural Affairs  
Certified Naturally Grown  
Chesapeake Bay Foundation  
Chicago Food Policy Action Council  
Clagett Farm/Chesapeake Bay Foundation  
Clean Wisconsin  
Climate Land Leaders  
Community Alliance with Family Farmers  
Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture  
Contemporary Farmer, Inc.  
Crop Science Society of America  
Crossroad Farm Organics  
Dakota Rural Action  
Earley Farm  
Ecological Farming Association  
Farm Aid  
Fleurdelis Farms  
Florida Organic Growers  
FoodCorps  
Fox Haven Farm & Learning Center  
Friends of the Mississippi River  
Garden Variety Harvests LLC  
GrassWorks  
Grayson LandCare  
Green Lands Blue Waters  
Hmong National Development, Inc.

Illinois Stewardship Alliance  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative  
Izaak Walton League of America  
Kansas Rural Center  
Kinfolk Gardens  
Cultivate KC  
Land Stewardship Project  
Louisiana Food Policy Council  
Maine Farmland Trust  
Mandaamin Institute, Inc.  
Marbleseed  
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute  
Michigan Food & Farming Systems (MIFFS)  
Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance  
Missouri Coalition for the Environment  
Montana Organic Association  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
National Organic Coalition  
National Wildlife Federation  
Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society  
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of CT (CT NOFA)  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)  
Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society  
Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides  
Nourish Colorado  
Ohio Ecological Food & Farm Association  
Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network  
Oregon Tilth  
Organic Farming Research Foundation

Organic Growers School  
Organic Seed Alliance  
Pasa Sustainable Agriculture  
Pesticide Action and Agroecology Network  
Pinnacle Prevention  
Pollinator Partnership  
Quapaw Canoe Company  
Regenerative Agriculture Coalition  
RI Food Policy Council  
Rodale Institute  
Rude Becky Farm  
Rural Advancement Foundation International – USA  
Savage Acres, LLC  
Savanna Institute  
Simple Hill Farm  
Simple Roots Farm  
Slow Food USA  
Soil and Water Conservation Society  
Soil Science Society of America  
Sprout  
The Inspired Garden  
The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture  
The National Center for Appropriate Technology  
The National Center for Frontier Communities  
The Wetlands Initiative  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Virginia Association for Biological Farming  
Wild Farm Alliance  
Women, Food, and Agriculture Network  
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation  
Yogaville Farm