



Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education *in FY 2017 Appropriations*

Driving innovation and research for farmers and ag entrepreneurs

Increased investment in agricultural research is vital to continued productivity and innovation in American agriculture. The **Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)** program is the only USDA competitive grants research program with a clear and consistent focus on sustainability and farmer-driven research. Research underpins every aspect of successful and viable farming, whether it's a fifth generation commodity producer looking to add cover crops and diversify their crop rotation, or a beginning farmer interested in tapping into the huge unmet demand for grassfed beef.

For over 25 years, SARE has been at the forefront of innovations in research and extension activities for profitable and environmentally sound farming systems.

We urge Congress to meet the President's request to fund SARE at \$30 million in FY 2017, which would bring funding to half of the authorized level after 27 years of successful research innovations.

This increase would allow SARE to enhance support for beginning farmers adopting sustainable agriculture practices while keeping SARE on the cutting edge of the cover crop and soil health revolution.

Why It Matters

- Despite SARE's popularity and demonstrated administrative efficiency, after 27 years of proven on-the-ground results, it is still not yet funded at even half of its authorized amount. As a result, USDA can fund only six percent of eligible research and education pre-proposals.
- In order to meet future productivity challenges, farmers need cutting-edge research that is easily accessible and relevant to their farming systems, and takes advantage of farmer innovation.
- Farmers and ranchers help steer SARE's research priorities, ensuring that the program is constantly responding to the research challenges that farmers and ranchers face. SARE's regional delivery structure ensures that local needs are met and all regions of the country benefit equally, and that SARE research results are easily disseminated to farmers and adopted in their fields at a much faster pace than traditional agricultural research.
- Investing in agricultural research is a win-win for taxpayers -- for every \$1 invested in publicly funded agricultural research, \$20 in economic activity is generated.
- The National Academy of Sciences states that we need to aggressively fund and pursue integrated research and extension on farming systems that evaluate the interactions among productivity, environmental, economic, and social factors – exactly what SARE does, but lacks the funds to fully achieve.



110 Maryland Ave NE, Suite 209
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 547-5754
<http://sustainableagriculture.net>

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