What is SARE?

Since 1988, the Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) program has been the go-to USDA grants and outreach program for farmers, ranchers, researchers and educators who want to develop innovations that improve farm profitability, protect water and land, and revitalize communities. To date, SARE has awarded over $404 million to more than 8,776 initiatives.

SARE is grassroots with far-reaching impact

Four regional councils of expert practitioners set priorities and make grants in every state and island protectorate.

SARE communicates results

SARE shares project results by requiring grantees to conduct outreach and grower engagement; and by maintaining an online library of practical publications, grantee-produced information products and other educational materials.

SARE: Advancing the Frontier of Sustainable Agriculture in...

U.S. Virgin Islands

Project Highlight: Cover Crops Can Thrive in the Tropics

When you live on an island perpetually faced with high import costs and limited resources, producing food in sustainable systems that rely little on off-farm inputs is more a necessity than a choice. But even then, sustainable production for growers in the U.S. Virgin Islands comes with its own challenges, as the tropical climate fuels an endless onslaught of weeds, pests, diseases and low soil fertility.

"Anything we can do to help our farmers sustainably manage these burdens and become more successful is important to us," said Stuart Weiss, an agroecologist with University of Virgin Islands Extension. This need has prompted Weiss to explore the use of cover crops as a means to tackle issues with soil fertility and pests. Using two SARE grants, he has led efforts to find cover crops, many of them legumes, that could thrive in tropical conditions and bring the most benefit to farmers, and to identify effective ways to manage them in no-till systems.

The researchers demonstrated the value of cover crops enough that 18 small-scale farms began using them during the course of the projects. Sunn hemp showed the most promise. Requiring no external inputs to grow, it provided excellent weed suppression and contributed more to soil fertility than other cover crop species.

For more information on these projects, see sare.org/projects, and search for project numbers OS11-062 and LS12-252.

SARE in U.S. Virgin Islands

southern.sare.org/state-profiles/u-s-virgin-islands/

$1,498,430 in total funding

25 grant projects

(since 1988)

For a complete list of grant projects state by state, go to www.sare.org/state-summaries
SARE in U.S. Virgin Islands

Grants awarded
2019–2024

Total awards: **8 grants**
- 3 Farmer/Rancher
- 1 Professional Development Program
- 2 On Farm Research/Partnership
- 2 Education Only

Total funding: **$278,077**
- $41,019 Farmer/Rancher
- $87,833 Professional Development Program
- $49,226 On Farm Research/Partnership
- $99,999 Education Only

Find a complete list of projects on page 3.

Farmer and rancher impacts
2019–2024

SARE grantees have reported the following impacts from their projects:

- **173 farmers participated in a SARE-funded project**
- **35 farmers reported a change in knowledge, awareness, skills or attitude**
- **19 farmers changed a practice**

Learn about local impacts at:
southern.sare.org/sare-in-your-state/u-s-virgin-islands/

Contact Your SARE State Coordinator

SARE sustainable ag coordinators run state-level educational programs for Extension and other ag professionals, and many help grant applicants and recipients with planning and outreach. Visit southern.sare.org/state-profiles/u-s-virgin-islands/ to learn more.

- **Vanessa Forbes**
  University of the Virgin Islands
  (340) 692-4054
  vforbes@live.uvi.edu

- **Louis Petersen**
  University of the Virgin Islands
  (340) 693-1083
  lpeters@uvi.edu

For detailed information on SARE projects, go to www.SARE.org

SARE is funded by the USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

This report includes summaries of competitive grant programs only. Some competitive grant programs that are no longer offered may be included or excluded from the totals in this report depending on the grant program and SARE region.
U.S. Virgin Islands has been awarded $1,195,457 grants to support 15 projects, including but not limited to, 5 research and/or education projects, 1 professional development project and 3 producer-led projects. U.S. Virgin Islands has also received additional SARE support through multi-state projects.

### RESEARCH AND EDUCATION GRANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project #</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>SARE Support</th>
<th>Project Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LS12-252</td>
<td>Developing Sustainable Tropical Leguminous Cover Crop and Green Manure Mulch Systems for Low-External-Input crop Production in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Florida</td>
<td>$223,000</td>
<td>Dr. Stuart Weiss \nTarleton State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS04-163</td>
<td>Trade, tenure and tourism in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico: Understanding the Policy Frameworks that will increase success for an Organics Agriculture</td>
<td>$280,000</td>
<td>Janie Hipp \nCSREES, USDA \nEric Wailes \nUniversity of Arkansas \nLouis Petersen, Jr. \nUniversity of the Virgin Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS00-112</td>
<td>Greenwater Tank Culture of Tilapia with the Effluent Used as a Source of Water and Nutrients for Terrestrial Crops</td>
<td>$135,484</td>
<td>Donald Bailey \nUniv of the Virgin Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS99-107</td>
<td>Ecological, Sustainable and Economic Impact of Legume-based Pasture Systems for Limited-Resource Small Ruminant Farmers in the Virgin Islands</td>
<td>$110,410</td>
<td>Elide Valencia \nUniversity of the Virgin Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS96-075</td>
<td>Developing Sustainable Crop Management Systems for Improving Production of Culinary Herbs in the Virgin Islands</td>
<td>$143,529</td>
<td>Manuel C. Palada \nUniversity of the Virgin Islands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM GRANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ES20-157</td>
<td>Advancing Professional Development in the U.S. Virgin Islands About the Cooperative Business Model: A Training and Mentorship Program</td>
<td>$87,833</td>
<td>Louis Petersen, Jr. \nUniversity of the Virgin Islands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FARMER/RANCHER GRANTS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project #</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| FS23-354   | Impact of Landscape Fabric on Selected Cultivars Suitability to a Subtropical Climate for the USVI Farm to School Program | $19,930      | Dr. Nate Olive  
Virgin Islands Farmer Alliance                                                |
| FS20-327   | Testing Vegetable Varieties in Tropical Conditions on St. Croix, USVI for Farm to School Crop Production | $12,480      | Dr. Nate Olive  
Virgin Islands Farmer Alliance                                                |
| FS19-316   | Lemon Grass (Cymbopogon citratus) of the Two Main Strands East Indian Lemon Grass (Cymbopogon flexuosus) or West Indian Lemon Grass (Cymbopogon citratus): Which one yields the greatest amount of essential oil | $8,609       | Benita Martin  
Meder Mogzit family farm and educational center                                |

**ON FARM RESEARCH/PARTNERSHIP GRANTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project #</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| OS24-175   | Assessing arsenic and soil salinization risk of Sargassum used in crop growth, agricultural compost, and upland waste piles in the US Virgin Islands | $29,990      | David Hensley  
University of the Virgin Islands                                               |
| OS22-151   | Potential Grasses as Alternative Forage Crops for the Virgin Islands          | $19,236      | Dr. Worku Burayu  
University of the Virgin Islands                                               |
| OS11-062   | Promoting Tropical Cover Crop Mulch Systems for Minimum-Till Crop Production in the U.S. Virgin Islands | $14,957      | Dr. Stuart Weiss  
Tarleton State University                                                       |

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY INNOVATION GRANTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project #</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| CS07-053   | Youth and Agriculture: a Bridge to the Future (YABF) for From Tree to Table (FTT) | $10,000      | Latoya Mitchell  
Virgin Islands Farmers Cooperative, Inc.  
Yvette Brown  
Virgin Islands Farmers' Cooperative, Inc. |

**EDUCATION ONLY GRANTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Project Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| EDS24-069  | The use of Vetiver Grass to improve sustainable agriculture in the Virgin Islands | $49,999      | Dr. Laura Martin  
Paradise Farm  
Monica Prosper  
Prosper Foundation |
Launching Virtual and Live Youth Sustainable Educational Agriculture Program

Sandra Cannon
The Center for Educational Growth
Sansara Cannon
The Center for Educational Growth
Shanika DeWindt
CaneCuttaz, Inc.
Vanessa Forbes
University of the Virgin Islands
Lisa Petersen
CFEG and UVI

Total funding from the USDA SARE program to U.S. Virgin Islands
$1,195,457

For further information on projects, contact 770-412-4787 or ssare@uga.edu.
Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) is funded by USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).