

Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education

**2021 On-Farm Research Grant Call for Proposals**

Amount Funded: $20,000 for a two-year project

Proposal submission deadline: Dec. 4, 2020 at 12 p.m. EST

Online submission link: <https://projects.sare.org/proposals/create/#/form/691686>

Read more about the requirements of [On-Farm Research Grants](https://www.southernsare.org/Grants/Apply-for-a-Grant/On-Farm-Research-Grants) before applying. Questions should be directed to the grant manager, Candace Pollock-Moore at [cpollock@uga.edu](mailto:cpollock@uga.edu) or call 770-412-4786.

**On-Farm Research Grant Schedule**

**September 2020: Calls for Proposals Released**

**December 4, 2020: Proposals Due**

**February 2021: Selected Proposals Funded and Announced**

**Introduction**

Southern SARE recognizes the value and importance of on-farm research in developing solutions to agricultural production problems. On-Farm Research Grants provide opportunities for ag professionals working directly with farmers and ranchers to conduct on-farm research projects in sustainable agriculture. On-Farm Research Grants emphasize relationship building between the researcher and the farmer and help support farmers in their efforts to conduct new and innovative sustainable agriculture production and marketing practices.

**Who Can Apply**

**Farmers and ranchers are not eligible to apply for On-Farm Research Grants.** The grants are open to ag professionals who regularly work with farmers and ranchers on farm production and marketing problems. These can include: Cooperative Extension agents, university specialists, governmental organizations such as NRCS, and non-governmental organizations.

On-Farm Research Grants must be developed, coordinated and led by ag professionals who regularly work with farmers and ranchers and who will conduct the on-farm research with at least one farmer or rancher cooperator.

Applicants must complete a proposal describing their project and explaining how it will help farmers or ranchers understand and adopt sustainable agriculture practices.

Southern SARE accepts proposals from applicants in the Southern region: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

**What is Sustainable Agriculture?**

Proposed projects must focus on [Southern SARE’s program objectives](https://southern.sare.org/about/) in developing sustainable agriculture systems or moving existing farming systems toward sustainability, as [defined by the Congress](https://nifa.usda.gov/program/sustainable-agriculture-program) in the 1990 Farm Bill. Under that law, “the term sustainable agriculture means an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will, over the long term:

* Satisfy human food and fiber needs;
* Enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends;
* Make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls;
* Sustain the economic viability of farm operations; and
* Enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.”

Applicants should submit proposed projects in one of the following focus areas:

1. **Beneficial Insect Habitat**: Developing cover crops or other plant mixes and locations to provide habitat (refuges) that keep populations of native beneficial insects living on the farm ready to attack crop pests as they occur.
2. **Alternative Crops/Animals**: Developing alternative crops, animals or products that help a producer’s operation become more economically sustainable. These projects must be at least as environmentally sustainable as the existing crops, animals or products they supplement or replace.
3. **Organic Agriculture**: Projects that address the production, distribution, marketing and consumption of organic farm products. This includes farmers adding value to organic products. Research into farming systems and practices that make use of on-farm biological cycles for soil, plant and pest management are accepted.
4. **Sustainable Marketing Projects**: Developing markets for existing or alternative crops, animals or products.
5. **Sustainable Grazing Systems**: Use of native grass species and/or plant or animal management systems to make grazing systems more sustainable.
6. **Soil Organic Matter Building/Protection/Management**: Projects that increase the sustainability of farming systems by developing soil organic matter and soil biota.
7. **Increasing Sustainability of Existing Farming Practices**: Any practice or system that increases the sustainability of an existing farming practice. The results should be able to be used by other farmers.
8. **Appropriate Technology**: Projects that develop a device or piece of machinery that promotes sustainable agriculture and can’t be purchased off the shelf. The device or machinery must have application for farmers/ranchers, be able to be built by them and enable them to operate more sustainably.
9. **Agroforestry**: Projects that demonstrate and quantify the feasibility of establishing agroforestry in the region.

**Preparing Your Proposal**

Refer to the following template when preparing your proposal. The information provided here is required for submitting your proposal online. When you are ready to submit your proposal, apply in the [SARE Grant Management System](https://projects.sare.org/proposals/create/#/form/691686). **Be sure to submit your proposal prior to the application deadline. Once the Dec. 4, 2020 deadline passes, the online systems will close and late proposals will not be accepted.**

**A. Basic Information**

**Project Title**

The title of the proposed project.

**Principal Investigator (PI) or Project Coordinator**

List the principal investigator or project coordinator, the lead institution/organization, full address, telephone, e-mail, and fax. Include the role of the principal investigator or project coordinator in the project.

**Institutional Administrative Contact**

List the name of the administrative contact, including institution name, full address, telephone, e-mail and fax. The administrative contact is the person who handles grant contracts and as signature authority.

**Institutional Financial Contact**

List the name of the financial contact, including institution name, full address, telephone, e-mail and fax. The financial contact is the person who submits invoices and answers questions concerning invoicing and payments.

**Project Cooperators**

List at least one (1) farmer cooperator, and any other major cooperators, involved in the project. Include the role of each cooperator on the project. Do not list more than six cooperators. Maximum of 500 words.

**Type of Institution**

Indicate the type of the main institution applying for the grant. This can include 1862 land-grant university, 1890 land-grant university, other college/university, NGO, or government.

**Primary State**

Indicate the state where the research will be conducted.

**Proposed Start Date**

The project start date for the SSARE 2021 On-Farm Research Grant will be April 1, 2021. This date is firm. Enter 04/01/2021 in the online system.

**Proposed End Date**

Project duration is two (2) years. The ending date will be 03/31/2023.

**B. Proposal**

**Statement of Problem**

Provide a statement of the problem being addressed and how it is related to, or affects, the sustainability of agriculture. Begin the statement of the problem as: “The purpose of this project is to…” Limited to 500 words.

**Statement of Proposed Solution**

Provide a statement of the proposed solution to the problem. Limited to 500 words.

**Approaches and Methods**

Provide a brief description of the methods, demonstrating how your solution works in addressing the statement of the problem. What is the methodology? There must be a direct relationship between the approach and methods and the project relevance to sustainable agriculture. Limited to 1,000 words.

**Project Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture**

You must demonstrate how your project is relevant to sustainable agriculture. State how the project and the expected results contribute to agricultural sustainability. Don’t simply tell us that your project addresses an element of sustainable agriculture, tell us how your project will address it and make it more sustainable. Make sure that your work, even though it is making a part of a system more sustainable, does not make the whole system or another part of it, less sustainable. Does your project use genetically engineered varieties or organisms? If so, state how their use will contribute to your project and make agriculture more sustainable.

How will this project improve quality of life for producers, communities and consumers in the Southern region? See Southern SARE’s [working document](https://southern.sare.org/grants/apply-for-a-grant/research-education-grants/quality-of-life/) on what quality of life means for sustainable agriculture research grants.

Limited to 1,000 words.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

Will this project support underserved producers and/or increase equity in Southern agricultural systems? If yes, how? Limited to no more than 1,000 words.

Under USDA’s Section 2501 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 (FACT Act), also known as the 1990 Farm Bill, P.L. 101-624, a socially disadvantaged group is defined as: *A farmer or rancher who is a member of one or more of the following groups whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities,*7 U.S.C. § 2279(e). Groups include, but are not limited to:

* African Americans
* American Indians
* Alaskan Natives
* Asians
* Hispanics
* Pacific Islanders
* Refugees
* Immigrants

The 2014 Farm Bill expanded that definition to include military veterans.

**Timetable**

Provide a timetable of the work to be completed. Limited to 250 words.

**Literature Cited**

List cited literature that supports the justification of the research project being proposed. Limited to 500 words.

**C. Outreach Plan**

Southern SARE requires an outreach component to research grants to ensure that project results are shared with farmers and ranchers and have the widest possible benefits for the community in furthering sustainable agriculture across the Southern region.

Indicate your outreach or educational plan for your project. Outreach plans may include workshops, field days, on-farm demonstrations, farmer training, online training efforts, curriculum development, videos and webinars, educational publications, journal articles or presentations at meetings or conferences.

Please indicate how you will conduct your outreach plan if you anticipate COVID-19 restrictions will prevent travel related to your outreach plan or prevent any in-person events, such as trainings, workshops, conferences, or field days.

Limited to 1,000 words.

**D. Budget and Budget Narrative**

Fill in a budget and provide a justification in the budget narrative for each allowable item listed on the budget. **Refer to the budget checklist attached to this Call for Proposal.** SARE allows indirect costs. SARE does not require matching funds/cost-shares.

**Allowable Expenses**

* + Costs of sampling and sample analysis. This can include in-field data collection or lab data analysis.
  + Renting equipment needed for the project. The rental must not extend beyond the project’s timetable.
  + Materials and supplies needed for the project. The materials and supplies must remain within the scope of the project and be a reasonable request relative to the research being conducted. An example would be the amount of seed needed relative to the size of the research plots.
  + Travel needed for the project, which can include lodging, mileage and meals. The travel must relate to the project’s goals/activities.
  + Hiring labor needed to effectively conduct and complete the project within the proposed timetable. This can include hiring farmer/rancher labor beyond normal farming duties. Hired labor must remain within the scope of the project and be a reasonable salary request.
  + Expenses related to the project’s outreach plan. This can include holding a field day, workshop, farm tour or demonstration program; the printing of educational materials, such as fact sheets, manuals or curriculum; or the development of other resources such as apps, webinars or videos. The educational materials developed for the outreach plan must remain within the scope of the work and be a reasonable request. An example would be the amount requested for the printing of educational materials relative to the size of the audience the resource is intended to reach during the life of the project.
  + Refreshments at educational events, such as workshops or field days.

**Non-allowable Expenses**

* + Starting a farm, NGO, business or other community organization, or expanding an existing farm, NGO, business or other community organization. Providing any kind of financial support relative to the operation of the farm, NGO, business of community organization.
  + Providing support of any kind for capital expenses or permanent farm improvements, including purchasing equipment; purchasing permanent greenhouses, high tunnels or other buildings; purchasing permanent irrigation; purchasing permanent fencing; planting an orchard; purchasing bee hives; or purchasing crops or crop seed for use beyond the research plots and timetable of the project. Generally, any item that has permanent use beyond the life of the grant project is not allowed.
  + Breakfasts, lunches or other full meals for the project’s outreach plan, or educational/resource event or program.
  + Testing of commercial products.
  + Tuition

**Indirect Costs**

USDA-NIFA will allow recovery of indirect costs.  If your institution has a federally negotiated indirect rate agreement (NICRA), you may include indirect costs as a line item in your budget at the USDA-NIFA capped rate of 10% total federal funds.  This is equitable to 11.11% total direct costs.  This is only allowable if your institution’s negotiated rate is higher than the USDA-NIFA capped rate.

If your institution has a federally negotiated indirect rate agreement (NICRA), and your negotiated rate is less than the USDA-NIFA capped rate of 10% total federal funds (11.11% total direct costs), you may only include indirect costs in your budget calculated using your lower negotiated indirect rate.  A rate higher than your negotiated rate will not be approved as an allowable cost.

If your institution has never had a federally negotiated indirect rate agreement (NICRA), you may include indirect costs as a line item in your budget at a maximum rate of 10% modified total direct costs.  This is the de minimus rate approved under Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200.414).  The calculation of the modified total direct cost base must adhere to the definition of modified total direct costs in 2 CFR 200.68.

**Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)**

MTDC means 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). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of $25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

The maximum amount allowed for funding an On-Farm Research Grant, even if indirect costs are entered, is still $20,000.

**E. Signature Sheet**

Before you submit your proposal as final, print a copy of the proposal signature sheet from the online system. It should be signed by both the Principal Investigator and the Organizational Administrative Representative (a representative at your institution who has authority to sign contracts). After scanning your signed signature sheet, the system will allow you to upload it and submit it along with your proposal up to the proposal deadline. Signature sheets can be signed electronically. You may also send in your signature sheet after the proposal deadline. After the proposal deadline, please send the signed signature sheet as an e-mail attachment to Sandra Blackwell at [youngjs@uga.edu](mailto:youngjs@uga.edu). Call 770-229-3212 with any questions regarding your signature sheet.

**F. Applicant Demographic Data**

SSARE has a continuing commitment to monitor the operation of its review and award processes to identify and address any inequities based on gender or race.  To gather information needed for this important task, applicants are asked to voluntarily submit the requested information with the proposal. This information will not be part of the review process, will be confidential and will not appear on any copy of the submitted proposal including the applicant's copy.

Gender:  Male, Female

Race: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White/Caucasian, Other

Are you of Hispanic/Latino background?  Yes, No

**How Your Proposal Will Be Reviewed**

All funding of On-Farm Research Grants is awarded competitively and more proposals may be submitted than receive funding. Your proposal will be less competitive, or may not be funded at all, if it doesn’t conform to the requirements in the Call for Proposal.

Proposals are first reviewed by a Technical Review Committee made up of Cooperative Extension agents and specialists, researchers, farmers and other ag professionals.

The Technical Review Committee evaluates proposals based on the following questions:

1. Is the project relevant to sustainable agriculture? Does the proposed project promote the understanding and adoption of sustainable agriculture practices to the farming community?
2. Is it clear in the proposal that the applicant regularly works directly with farmers or ranchers?
3. Is at least one farmer or rancher cooperator identified in the proposed project?
4. Are the funds requested in the proposal allowable items?
5. Is an outreach component outlined in the proposal?

Once these questions have been answered, the Technical Review Committee continues to evaluate the proposal focusing on the following criteria:

1. Determining whether the proposed project focuses on one or more of the proposed focus areas in addressing a problem or issue for agriculture in the South.
2. Reviewing the approaches and methods for a direct relationship between the methodology and the project relevance to sustainable agriculture.
3. Reviewing the timetable to determine if the project can be effectively completed in the time provided based on the goals and objectives proposed.
4. Reviewing the outreach plan to determine whether it benefits its intended audience and is the most effective way of reaching farmers and ranchers.
5. Evaluating the project’s budget to determine if the requested amount is reasonable and realistic, and is clear on what the funds will be spent on.

The evaluations of the Technical Review Committee are given to the Producer Grant/On-Farm Research Grant Committee of the Southern SARE Administrative Council for funding recommendations. The Producer Grant/On-Farm Research Grant Committee reviews proposals that scored high for fundability by the Technical Review Committee, and makes final project selections. The selected projects for funding are presented to and voted on by the full Administrative Council during the Winter Administrative Council meeting.

By late February or early March, you will be contacted by e-mail regarding the status of your proposal, and review comments on your proposal will be made available to you. If awarded an On-Farm Research Grant, your institution/organization will be asked to sign a contract prior to receiving any funds. Once the contract is signed, you agree to conduct the activities outlined in your proposal. Any changes in budget or activities mustreceive prior approval from Southern SARE. The award funding will be paid through reimbursement of allowable project expenses.

**Other Information**

The Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC) at the National Agricultural Library specializes in locating, collecting, and providing information about sustainable agriculture. Information specialists can answer questions, highlight resources, and share search techniques for literature reviews, background research, and identifying experts in the field and pertinent USDA researchers and projects. AFSIC has a number of resources on its website that may be relevant to your proposal. Contact: AFSIC, National Agriculture Library, USDA, 10301 Baltimore Ave., Beltsville MD 20705-2351, phone: [301-504-6559](tel:%28301%29%20504-6559), fax: [301-504-6927](tel:%28301%29%20504-6927), e-mail: [afsic@nal.usda.gov](mailto:afsic@nal.usda.gov), web: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/>.

If you are submitting a proposal on organic agriculture, you may want to consult the National Organic Standards Board [research priorities](https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/MSResearchPrioritiesDDApril2020.pdf).

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**Required Budget Narrative Checklist for On-Farm Research Grant Proposals**

**(form updated 07/2020)**

**\*\*In the Budget Narrative, you must explain why each cost in the budget is needed to complete your Project. \*\***

**PERSONNEL (LABOR): Your Institution Personnel**

**(non-employee payments are other direct costs)**

Position or Name

Salary & basis for this salary (i.e. FTE; Hourly rate; etc.)

Length of time expected to work

What will they be doing?

**Secretarial / clerical** must be exceptional in nature and justified as it relates to the project.

**FRINGE BENEFITS** (if applicable)

Provide Total allowable fringe benefits

Salary x % Rate = Benefits

**TRAVEL**

All travel expenses associated with this request must be shown in budget narrative.

How does this travel relate to your project goals/ activities (**required**)

Destination – if known

Mileage – Maximum rate is $0.575/mi.

Lodging - # of nights, # of people, Lodging cost

Daily Per Diem-Rate for Meals; for current rate see: [www.gsa.gov/perdiem](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem)

\***International Travel is** **NOT ALLOWED\***

**MATERIALS & SUPPLIES**

State how each Material/Supply relates to the project.

List Items and Cost

\* **Items normally covered under F&A**, such as office supplies, must be justified as being required by the scope of the work, can be easily identified to your specific project, and are above and beyond what would normally be covered under F&A.

**OUTREACH**

Field Days, Workshops, Educational Brochures, Fact Sheets and other outreach activities.

**\*\*Lunches or other full meals at field days or large gatherings are not allowed On-Farm Research Grants. No Breakfast is allowed on any Grant. \*\***

***Field Days & Workshops*** – includes costs of holding a field day or workshop. (e.g. Rental of facilities, cost of refreshments, equipment or supplies needed for the field day or workshop, and any other expenses associated with the preparation and execution of educational field days or workshops.) **Provide full details** in the budget narrative. Any purchases of refreshments must be itemized and justified in the budget, the cost must be reasonable, and the justification must explain the estimated cost per person and why these items are necessary for the project. **Also, must show expense is for the continuity of the meeting; that meeting will be held at a remote location; and includes non-UGA employee participants.**

**PRINTING OF BROCHURES**

List each Item and Cost

Includes costs associated with printing and distribution of educational fact sheets or brochures relating to the project and sustainable agriculture.

**MISCELLANEOUS ALL OTHER DIRECT COSTS**

Direct project charges not included in other categories. Description and cost must be included in budget narrative for each item.

Some examples of direct charges include:

***Communications*** – mailings, postage, faxes, telephone ***(These items are also considered direct costs and if placed in budget should be exceptional in nature and justified as it relates to the project).***

***Photocopying*** – in-house copying (not commercial printing) for materials associated to the program**.**

***Service Maintenance*** – Maintenance contracts in direct correlation to use of equipment for the project (e.g. 50% use of equipment for project, 50% of service contract applied to budget costs).

***Honorariums*** – Provide recipient information (if known) or number expected, reason for need, and fee associated with the honorarium.

***Consultants:*** Persons or Entities who provide advice for the project – Provide the name & organization of the consultant, a statement of work, funds being charged to the project. Also provide a copy of the resume or vita.

**INDIRECT COSTS**

Section 704 of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations ACT, 2012 (P.L. 112-55) limits indirect costs to 10 percent of total Federal funds provided. Therefore, when preparing budgets limit your requests for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of your institutions’ official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 10 percent of total Federal funds awarded. 11.111% of Total Direct Costs is the Equivalent of 10% of the Total Federal Funds Awarded.

If your institution has never had a federally negotiated indirect rate agreement (NICRA), you may include indirect costs as a line item in your budget at a maximum rate of 10% modified total direct costs. This is the de minimus rate approved under Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200.414). The calculation of the modified total direct cost base must adhere to the definition of modified total direct costs in 2 CFR 200.68.

**Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)**

MTDC means 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). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of $25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

**If your institution is waiving indirect costs, this must be noted in the budget narrative.**

**TUITION IS NOT ALLOWED**

**MATCHING FUNDS / COST SHARE**

Are not required by SARE

**\*Note: If there is something you wish to budget but have concerns regarding budget placement please contact Jami Sealey for assistance at 770-467-6083 or by email at** [**jsealey@uga.edu**](mailto:jsealey@uga.edu)