Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education

2023 Producer Grant Call for Proposals

Amount Funded: Individual Farmers, $15,000; Farmer Groups, $20,000
For a two-year project
Proposal submission deadline: November 11, 2022 at 12 p.m. (NOON) EST
Online submission link:
https://projects.sare.org/proposals/create/#/form/903888

Read more about the requirements for Producer Grants before applying. Questions should be directed to the grant manager, Candace Pollock-Moore at cpollock@uga.edu or call 770-412-4786.

Producer Grant Schedule

September 2022: Calls for Proposals Released
November 11, 2022: Proposals Due
February 2023: Selected Proposals Funded and Announced

Introduction

Southern SARE recognizes the value and importance of on-farm, producer experiences in developing solutions to agricultural production problems. Producer Grants give farmers and ranchers the opportunity to conduct their own research projects to develop sustainable production and marketing practices.

The goal of the Producer Grant Program is simple: Allow farmers to test, on a small scale, an idea, practice or technology to a production or marketing problem (either as an individual or as a group), evaluate whether the results sustainably address the problem, and share how those efforts can benefit other farmers. Successful projects can then be applied by the farmer applicant or by others on a larger scale.

Producer Grants are research grants. Grant funds cannot be used to pay a farmer to farm, fund operating expenses, or conduct any other kind of farm business. Grant funds are paid by reimbursement of allowable project expenses.

Who Can Apply

Producer Grants are open to individual full-time or part-time farmers and ranchers or farmer organizations such as cooperatives.

Projects must be developed, coordinated and conducted by farmers and/or ranchers or a farmer organization. Farmers must have at least $1,000 in documented annual income from the operation. There is no restriction on farm size or the length of time an individual has been farming. SSARE also considers proposals from indigenous agriculturists who produce for community food systems. These enterprises may be eligible to apply where the production activity has an annual value of at least $1,000, but products are not sold due to cultural factors.

Farmer organizations must be comprised primarily of farmers/ranchers and must have majority farmer representation on their governing boards.

Applicants must complete a proposal describing their project and explaining how it will help other 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. University of Georgia employees are not eligible to apply for Southern SARE Producer Grants.

What is Sustainable Agriculture?

Proposed projects must focus on Southern SARE's program objectives in developing sustainable agriculture systems or moving existing farming systems toward sustainability, as defined by the Congress 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**: The use of trees in farm systems to promote sustainability, including water quality and quantity.

Preparing Your Proposal

Before beginning your proposal, SARE recommends that you review the following SARE technical bulletin, "How to Conduct Research on Your Farm or Ranch." The publication provides detailed instruction on how to conduct research at the farm level, providing the basics of experimental design, on-farm analysis, data collection and evaluation of results. Developing strong scientific research in your approaches and methods will help strengthen 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. **Be sure you submit your proposal prior to the deadline. Once the Nov. 11, 2022 application deadline passes, the online system will close and late proposals will not be accepted.**

A. Basic Information

Project Title

The title of the proposed project.

Farmer/Rancher or Farmer Organization Conducting the Project

Provide the name, full address, telephone, and email of the farmer/rancher or farmer organization conducting the project. Tell us more about your farm operation. Limited to 500 words.

Project Cooperators

List at least one (1) cooperator involved in the project. Cooperators can be other farmers, researchers, extension agents, governmental or non-governmental organizations, or others who are involved in the project planning, data collection and outreach of results. Include the role of each cooperator on the project. Do not list more than six cooperators. Limited to 500 words.

State

Indicate the state where the research will be conducted.

Proposed Start Date

The project start date for the SSARE 2023 Producer Grant will be April 1, 2023. This date is firm. Enter 04/01/2023 in the online system.

Proposed End Date

Project duration is two (2) years. The ending date will be 03/31/2025.

B. Proposal

Statement of the Problem

Provide a statement of the problem being addressed and how it is related to, or affects, the sustainability of agriculture. 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 on what quality of life means for sustainable agriculture research grants.

Begin the statement of the problem as: "The purpose of this project is to…" Limited to 1,000 words.

Statement of Proposed Solution

Provide a statement of the proposed solution to the problem. Limited to 1,000 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? What are you measuring? 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 1,000 words.

SSARE defines underserved communities as those populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civil life.

Timetable

Provide a timetable of the work to be completed. When will you do the parts of your project? Provide the steps you will take to complete your project. 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.

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, as well as the sample budget outline as a guideline.**

Do not breakout your budget by year.

Make sure your expenses are reasonable for the project you are proposing. For example, trials to test ideas and solutions for crop varieties, or evaluate soil health using cover crops **do not** require seeding 50 acres. Make sure that you value farmer labor (yours or hired) for what it is worth.

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.

- Your own labor for project activities above and beyond your normal farming duties.

- 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 investments or permanent farm improvements, including: purchasing equipment; purchasing permanent greenhouses, high tunnels or other buildings; purchasing permanent irrigation; building a pond; purchasing and installing water containment tanks; purchasing permanent fencing; planting an orchard; purchasing livestock or 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.

SAMPLE BUDGET OUTLINE

BUDGET CATEGORY	FUNDS REQUESTED
PERSONNEL (LABOR)	
Lynn Sandefer (farmer) plant trials and sample collection, 50 hrs @ $20 hr	$1,000.00
Kim Sandefer (farmer) sample collection and record keeping, 40hrs@$20 hr	$ 800.00
Terry Smith (insect scout, 120 hrs. @ $7.00/hr)	$ 840.00
Chris Peterson (insect specialist-identify and catalogue 25 hrs@ $50.00/hr)	$1,250.00
Personnel (labor): SUB-TOTAL	$3,890.00
OPERATING AND SUPPLIES	
hay mulch (100 bales@45lbs/bale@$2.00/bale)	$ 200.00
chemical fertilizer (6 gal.@$50/gal)	$ 300.00
organic fertilizer (7gal.$@75/gal)	$ 525.00
clover seed (20 lbs.@$5/lb.)	$ 100.00
peanuts (1 acre)	$ 120.00
cotton (1 acre)	$ 50.00
insect traps (100 traps@$3.50/trap)	$ 350.00
Operating and Supplies: SUB-TOTAL	$1,645.00
TRAVEL	
5 trips to farms of cooperating farmers for planting meetings (1000 miles	
@ 200 miles/trip @ $0.56/mile)	$ 560.00
Travel: SUB-TOTAL	$ 560.00

OUTREACH	
photocopy fliers (1000 fliers@ $0.10/copy)	$ 100.00
portolet for field day (1 day@$150/day)	$ 150.00
Signs (10 signs@$15/sign)	$ 150.00
Outreach: SUB-TOTAL	$ 400.00
MISCELLANEOUS	
lab tissue sample analysis (70 samples@ $10.00/sample)	$ 700.00
Miscellaneous: SUB-TOTAL	$ 700.00
PROJECT TOTAL	$7,195.00

E. 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 Producer 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.

Upon closure of the grant deadline, proposals receive a technical review by the Producer Grant Committee of Southern SARE's Administrative Council, the program's governing body.

The Producer Grant Committee determines the fundability of the proposal based on the following questions:

1. Is the proposal submitted from a farmer/rancher or farmer/rancher group?

2. Is the project relevant to sustainable agriculture? Does the proposed project promote the understanding and adoption of sustainable agriculture practices to the farming community?
3. Are the funds requested in the proposal allowable items?

If any of these questions is NO, then the proposal cannot be funded.

The Producer Grant Committee also evaluates the proposal using 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 to determine if the goal of the project is clear, well designed and thought out so that useful and applicable results can be obtained.
3. Reviewing the timetable to determine if the project can be effectively completed in the time provided based on the goals 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.

Once the Producer Grant Committee completes its technical review, it meets by conference call to discuss fundable proposals, and then again at the February Administrative Council (AC) meeting to select fundable projects. Those are then presented to the full Administrative Council for funding.

By March you will be contacted regarding the status of your proposal, and a summary of the review comments for your proposal will be provided to you. If awarded a Producer Grant, you will be asked to sign a contract prior to receiving any funds. If you sign the contract, you agree to conduct the activities outlined in your proposal. Any changes in budget or activities must receive prior Southern SARE approval. Grant funds are paid by reimbursement of allowable project expenses. Awardees must keep receipts of their expenditures for three years after project completion.

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, fax: 301-504-6927, e-mail: afsic@nal.usda.gov, web: http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/.

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Required Budget Narrative Checklist for 2023 Producer Grant Proposals

(form updated 06/2022)

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

PERSONNEL (LABOR): People working directly for you

- ☐ Position or Name
- ☐ Salary & basis for this salary (i.e. Hourly rate; etc.)
- ☐ Length of time expected to work
- ☐ What will they be doing?

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 $0.625/mi.
- ☐ Lodging - # of nights, # of people, Lodging cost
- ☐ Daily Per Diem-Rate for Meals; for current rate see: www.gsa.gov/perdiem
- ☐ ***International Travel is NOT ALLOWED***

MATERIALS & SUPPLIES

- ☐ State how each Material/Supply relates to the project.
- ☐ List Items and Cost
  Non-project research items, such as office supplies, must be justified as being required by the scope of the work and can be easily identified to your specific project.

OUTREACH

- ☐ Field Days, Workshops, Educational Brochures, Fact Sheets and other outreach activities.
  ***** Producer Grants cannot have lunches or other full meals at field days or large gatherings. *****
  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. Lunches or other full meals are not allowed**.

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 (must be 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.

Fee for Services -- A fee for services is the cost of professional services by nonemployees of the lead institution/organization required for a project that is beyond the scope of the work the grant recipient can perform or provide. Fee for services covers work that is needed for the project, but the professional performing the work or skill is not actually working on the project.

Examples of fee for services include: lab/data analysis, survey development, graphic design, videography/photography, transcription.

When listing fee for services in the budget narrative:

- Determine the cost of the service (per hour, flat rate, etc.);
- Provide the nature and scope of the service in relation to the project;
- Provide the qualifications of the individual/group rendering the service;
- Provide the fees charged by the individual/group for the service to be performed.

A fee for service is not the same as a consultation.

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.

***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**