Southern Region
Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SSARE) Program

ON-FARM RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM
2017 Call for Proposals

Proposal submission deadline, Friday 5:00 PM, Eastern Time, November 18, 2016

The Southern Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (**SARE**) Program recognizes the value and importance of On-Farm Research in developing solutions to agricultural production problems. In recognition of this, the Southern Region SARE Program is requesting grant proposals from **EXTENSION, NRCS, UNIVERSITY PERSONNEL, GOVERNMENTAL AND/OR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION (NGO) PERSONNEL WHO <u>REGULARLY</u> WORK WITH FARMERS/RANCHERS** and are interested in conducting on-farm research projects related to sustainable agriculture.

An applicant may only submit ONE proposal to the SSARE On-Farm Research Grant Program in one grant cycle.

On-Farm Research Grant Projects must be developed, coordinated and led by Extension, NRCS, governmental or non-governmental organization (NGO) or University personnel who <u>regularly</u> <u>work</u> with farmers/ranchers AND who will conduct the on-farm research <u>with at least one</u> <u>farmer/rancher cooperator.</u> Applicants must complete a proposal describing their project and explaining how it will help producers understand and adopt **sustainable agriculture** practices.

<u>**Important:**</u> **If you are a farmer/rancher or an organization of farmers/ranchers, you are not eligible to apply for an On-Farm Research Grant. You should apply under the SSARE Producer Grant Program. For information on Producer Grants and all other SSARE grants, please see the SSARE web site at <u>http://www.southernsare.org</u>**

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Sustainable agriculture is an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will, over the long-term:

- Enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends;

- Make the most efficient use of nonrenewable 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/ranchers and society as a whole.

The Southern Region includes: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

IMPORTANT!

THE INSTRUCTIONS YOU NEED TO SUBMIT AN ON-FARM RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSAL CAN BE FOUND IN THE FOLLOWING CALL FOR PROPOSALS.

Proposals must now be submitted only on the **SSARE On-Farm Research Grant On-Line Proposal Submission Web Site**. The Web Site address for On-Line Proposal Submissions of On-Farm Research grant proposals is **http://www.ciids.org/sare/ofrg/** The web address can also be found throughout this call for proposals.

Use the on-line proposal system to develop and submit your proposal. Do all of your editing and modifying before you finalize your proposal. **Once your proposal is finalized, it cannot be modified. Also, once the November 18, 2016 deadline passes, the on-line system will close and no more proposals—even those in progress that haven't been finalized—can be submitted.**

Please print your proposal and signature page and have your proposal reviewed by your institution or organization and obtain the appropriate signatures on the signature page. **Then mail or fax--the signature page only—as soon after you obtain the appropriate signatures as possible. Although you may mail or fax the signature page after the proposal deadline, we must have your signature page on file in order for your proposal to be funded**.

Southern SARE Program
Room 203, Stuckey Bldg.
1109 Experiment St.
Griffin, GA 30223-1797
FAX: (770) 412-4789

Modify your proposal, if needed, and then perform the on-line submission prior to the deadline. All of the guidelines, program goals and review criteria for submitting an On-Farm Research Grant proposal can be found in this call for proposals.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

1. **Projects must include at least one farmer/rancher project cooperator.**

2. Projects may be funded up to TWO years for a **project maximum** of $15,000.

USE OF FUNDS

On-Farm Research Grant funds <u>may</u> be used for the following purposes:

1. Costs of sampling and sample analysis,
2. Materials and supplies needed for the project
3. Outreach expenses such as holding a field day,
4. Travel needed for the project,
5. Hired labor, including farmer/rancher labor beyond their normal farming duties,
6. Refreshments at field days.

On-Farm Research Grant funds may <u>NOT</u> be used for the following purposes:

1. Starting or expanding a farm, farming operation, business or NGO,
2. Equipment.
3. Permanent improvements to a farm or ranch, e.g. planting an orchard, buying a herd, permanent fencing, permanent irrigation, permanent greenhouses or buildings,
4. Lunches or other full meals at field days or large gatherings,
5. Testing of commercial products,

ON-FARM RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSAL FOCUS AREAS

The focus areas have been chosen by the On-farm Research Grant Committee as areas needing investigation. These focus areas elaborate topics for applicants who are in need of information on research areas of interest to the SARE On-Farm Research Grant program.

1) **BENEFICAL INSECT HABITAT –** Developing cover crops or other plant mixes and locations that 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 and 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.

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/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–** Studies are needed that demonstrate and quantify the feasibility of establishing agroforestry in the region. Information on the performance of various forage combinations under shaded conditions is needed.

The Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC) at the National Agricultural Library (partially funded by SARE) specializes in locating, collecting, and providing information about sustainable agriculture. You may contact them by phone at: (301) 504-6559 or view documents on their website at: https://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/applying-sare-grant

Organic Agriculture. If you are submitting a proposal on organic agriculture, consider consulting the National Organic Standards Board research priorities.

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR PROPOSAL

On the following 2 pages you can see all the questions you will be asked on the on-line submission web site at http://www.ciids.org/sare/ofrg/ Once you have read through this call for proposals, click on that site, follow the directions and begin your proposal.

Title Page:

Project Title

Project Coordinator
Information requested consists of project coordinator name (list only one person), lead institution/organization name, full address, telephone, email, fax and the Project Coordinator's role in the project.

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, the applicant should 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

Institutional Administrative Contact
Name, institution name, full address, telephone, email and fax. (Person who handles contracts and has authority to sign—see page 6 under "Important" for explanation)

Cooperators
Please list the farmer cooperators, and any other major cooperators--and their roles in the project (no more than 500 words) -- who have agreed to participate in your project.   Do not list more than six cooperators.

Project Duration
Number of years of project duration. Two year maximum.

<u>**Body of Proposal**</u>

Statement of Problem
What is the problem and how does it relate to, or affect, the sustainability of agriculture in the South? No more than 500 words.

Statement of Proposed Solution
What is your answer to the problem? No more than 500 words.

Approach and Methods
How will you show or demonstrate that your answer or solution works? What is your methodology?
There must be a direct relationship between the approach and methods and the project relevance to sustainable agriculture described in the following question. No more than 1000 words.

Project Relevance 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. No more than 500 words. **This question is very important. If your proposal does not demonstrate to the On-Farm Research Grant committee of the SSARE Administrative Council that your proposal addresses an element of sustainable agriculture, it will not move forward in the review process and will not be funded.**

Timetable
When will you do the parts of your project? Give us a timetable and the steps you will take to complete your project. No more than 250 words.

Outreach Plan
Where and how will you tell others (producers, extension and/or researchers) about your results? What is your outreach plan? Outreach plans may include workshops, field days, fact sheets, journal articles, presentations at agriculture meetings and more. No more than 500 words.

Literature Cited
List cited literature limited to no more than 500 words.

Budget and Budget Narrative
Fill in a budget, with estimated labor/personnel, operating, supply, and equipment costs. See page 3 for a list of what can and cannot be funded. For budget narrative detail required please see: http://www.southernsare.org/Grants/Proposal-Budget-Checklist You must provide a budget justification for each item listed on your budget.

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.

The maximum amount allowed for funding an On-Farm Research Grant, even if indirect costs are entered, is still $15,000.

IMPORTANT

If you work for a Governmental Organization like--but not limited to--a University, even if you are not on the main campus, your institution has an office or department that handles grant contracts and financial reporting. This office contact information should be listed on the title page under *Institutional Administrative Contact* and it is likely that you will need to obtain their approval on your signature page. If you are unsure about this, please contact someone at your institution who has experience with grants.

HOW YOUR PROPOSAL WILL BE REVIEWED

All funding by the Southern SARE On-Farm Research Grant program is awarded competitively and more proposals may be submitted than receive funding. A subcommittee of the SSARE Administrative Council will first evaluate proposals to ensure that they meet the SSARE Program goals of sustainable agriculture. Those proposals that pass that stage (about 40) will be reviewed by a technical review committee made up of farmers, agriculture and natural resources extension personnel and agricultural researchers. Their evaluations are given to the Producer Grant/On-Farm Research Grant committee of the Southern Region Administrative Council, which makes the funding recommendations.

A copy of the evaluation criteria used to evaluate your proposal can be found at the end of this Call for Proposals.

Final project selections are made by the Southern SARE Administrative Council in mid February. By late February you will be contacted 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 must receive prior approval from the SSARE Assistant Director. The award funding will be paid through reimbursement of allowable project expenses.

Additional copies of this Call for Proposals may be obtained from the web at:

www.southernsare.org

For information please contact:

youngsj@uga.edu

Phone: (770) 229-3212

ON-FARM RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS!

Your proposal will be less competitive, or may not be able to be funded at all, if it doesn't conform to the requirements. Look at the evaluation worksheet at the end of this document; the reviewers will use the worksheet questions to review your proposal. Ask yourself how well your proposal fits those questions.

1) **If you have questions about your On-Farm Research Grant proposal, please don't hesitate to contact:**

John Mayne, Ph.D.
Assistant Director
Southern SARE Program
(828) 626-2680
jmayne@uga.edu

2) Don't ask for things that can't be funded by an On-Farm Research Grant. See page 3 for a list of non-allowed items.

3) If non-allowed items are requested in your proposal, your proposal can't be funded.

4) Don't request funding for equipment.

5) Don't wait until the last minute to prepare your proposal! Give yourself time to think about your proposal and print off a copy and get input from others before you submit your on-line proposal to SSARE.

The SSARE On-Farm Research Grant On-Line Proposal Submission
site is: http://www.ciids.org/sare/ofrg

2017 ON-FARM RESEARCH GRANTS SCHEDULE

September 2016   Call for Proposals Released
November 18, 2016   On-Farm Research Grant Proposals Due
Late February 2017   On-Farm Research Grants Announced

**2017 SOUTHERN REGION SARE
ON-FARM RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM**

Below are the questions reviewers will use to review your proposal. This is provided so you can see the criteria being used to review your proposal

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If one or more of questions 1-4 are answered NO by reviewers, the proposal will not be considered for funding.

1. **The proposal addresses a problem in a way that promotes sustainable agriculture.**   YES   NO

2. **The proposal is from an applicant who regularly works with farmers.**   YES   NO

3. **There is at least one farmer/rancher cooperator.**   YES   NO

4. **All funds requested are for allowable items.**   YES   NO

5. The project addresses an important problem or issue for agriculture in the South.

6. The project is well designed and thought out so that useful results can be obtained.

7. The project can be completed in the time allotted.

8. There is a clear outreach plan that will reach a large number of people who could benefit from the project.

9. It is clear what the funds requested will be spent on.

10. The budget is realistic for the project.