

# **Northeast SARE**

## **Sustainable Community Grant Evaluation**

### **2009 Survey of Sustainable Community Grant Recipients and Project Participants**

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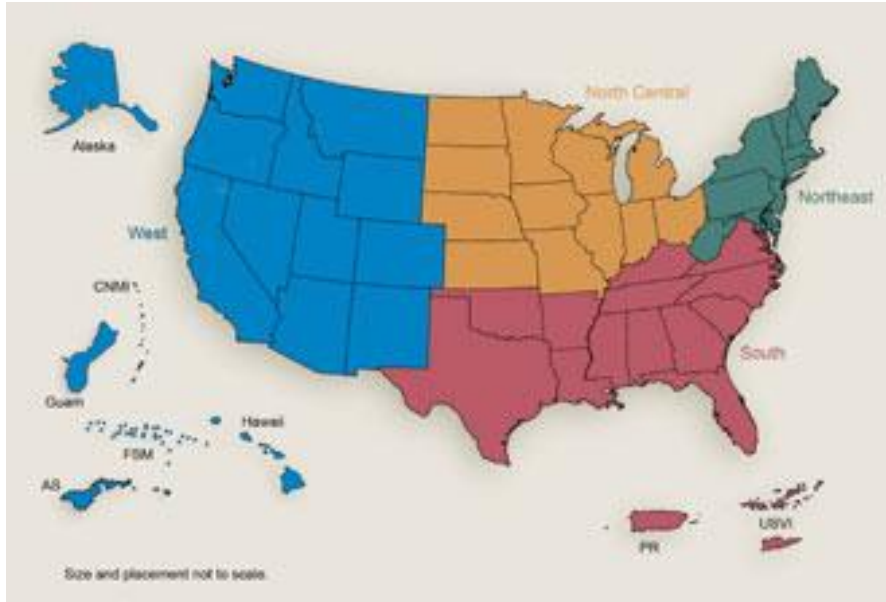
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## **Executive Summary**

Survey research was conducted to collect and analyze information regarding the effectiveness of the Northeast SARE Sustainable Community Grant program based on its first two year of funded projects. Grantees and cooperators for each project were invited to respond to a survey, project reports were studied, and additional information about projects and their impacts was sought on the Internet. The Northeast SARE Sustainable Community Grant program has made positive contributions to move regional agriculture toward the desired outcome. These grants have provided extensive social and economic benefits as well as some environmental benefits. Areas of particular strength include youth engagement in food and agriculture, connecting farmers with new, local institutional and direct markets, and helping farmers acquire the land and capital necessary for a viable farming business. Nearly all projects have continued in some way beyond their initial Northeast SARE funding and most have an active on-line presence. Project participants are positive about their involvement in the projects, the impacts of the projects and their involvement with Northeast SARE. Some of the projects have secured substantial additional funding to expand or carry on project activities. This funding program is supporting projects that have broadly engaged community members and brought together farmers with other community partners.

## **Introduction**

The Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program (Northeast SARE) is one of four regional competitive grants programs funded by the United States Department of Agriculture since 1988. It is designed to influence America's farmers and ranchers to adopt more sustainable farming systems. The Northeast region, shaded in green in Figure 1, serves Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C. The SARE mission is to advance agriculture that is profitable, good for the environment, and has a positive effect on the community. The primary tool for achieving the mission is a competitive grants effort.



In the Northeast region, Sustainable Community Grants address economic and social issues in the farm community and support appropriate growth, improved farm profits, a better quality of life, a cleaner environment, or improved farm stewardship. The Northeast SARE website explains that "Sustainable Community Grants make a direct connection between community revitalization and farming. Projects must address specific key issues such as farm finance, marketing, land use, water use, enterprise development, value-added product development, or other delineated topic areas. To apply, you must be affiliated with Cooperative Extension, NRCS, a municipality, a state department of agriculture, a college or university, a community organization, or other institutional entity."

The Sustainable Community grant program was first funded in 2006, with each grant capped at \$10,000. The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development collaborated with Northeast SARE to support the program, providing \$25,000 each year. Since 2006, award criteria have been refined, with an increasing emphasis on specific aspects of community and economic development. All projects are expected to break new ground and offer fresh approaches to enhancing sustainable commercial agriculture and community development.

### **Evaluation Purpose**

On November 20, 2008, Northeast SARE issued a Call for Proposals for Survey and Evaluation of its Sustainable Community Grant program. A copy of the call may be found in Appendix A. The call specified both "quantitative analysis and qualitative synthesis about grant program effectiveness." It described the overall purpose of the evaluation as responding to the question of "how and whether this grant program contributes to and is consistent with the Northeast SARE outcome statement, . . ."Agriculture in the Northeast will be diversified and profitable,

providing healthful products to its customers; it will be conducted by farmers who manage resources wisely, who are satisfied with their lifestyles, and have a positive influence on their communities and the environment.”

The questions to be addressed within the overall purpose were specified as:

- Whether Sustainable Community Grant projects had a positive influence on the economic position of commercial farmers;
- Whether Sustainable Community Grant projects had a positive influence on the economic position of the community;
- Whether Sustainable Community Grant projects had a positive influence on quality of life, a cleaner environment, or improved farm stewardship;
- Whether grantees and project cooperators agree about the value of project results;
- Whether the constituencies being surveyed are satisfied with SARE staff, program policies, and program delivery from initial proposal to final reporting, and whether SARE grantees have any specific recommendations for improved SARE program management;
- Whether the SARE grants had any surprising or unintended results, either good or bad, that affected the sustainability of farms and farming in the Northeast;
- Whether and how many projects resulted in ongoing activity or impacts after the grant period ended, including the leveraging of other funds to continue the project; and
- Whether this grant program has been effective in addressing Northeast SARE’s outcome statement, based on the cumulative impact of these individual projects.

## **Methodology**

The Center for Evaluative Studies in Michigan State University’s Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies (MSU CARRS) responded to the November 2008 Targeted Call for Proposals for Survey and Evaluation – Sustainable Community Grants from Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education.

## **Survey Description**

The call stipulated that evaluators revise the previously-developed Western SARE survey materials to focus the inquiry specifically on goals of the Sustainable Community Grant program. The Western SARE survey materials were revised based on information in the Call for Proposals and posted on the Northeast SARE web site. A draft survey was provided to the Northeast SARE Coordinator for his review and to share with interested Administrative Council members. Several additional modifications were made.

Once the questionnaire was finalized, it was programmed into a web survey format using Vovici EFM Continuum survey package. Each respondent was assigned a unique identification/access code for the survey to assist in tracking returns and to follow up with non-responders. Copies of the email invitation and the survey are provided in Appendices B and C.

### **Identification of Survey Participants**

Northeast SARE provided researchers with copies of the initial proposal and final report for each of 31 Sustainable Community grants which were committed from 2006 to 2008 and were completed by May 2009 to be included in the evaluation pool. In addition, they provided researchers with names and contact information for Project Directors and (with most projects) for two additional project participants. Email addresses were missing for 30 of the 88 people on the list, so researchers tried to contact these people by telephone (where numbers were included) and to locate them on line. Researchers secured 19 additional email addresses in these ways, enabling email contact with 77 of the 88 potential respondents. Telephone contact was attempted one or more times with over 40 of those on the list.

Many of the potential respondents had changed jobs and/or left the area. Researchers tried to secure new contact information and followed up where possible.

Table 1 shows the state and year representation among the grants that were surveyed.

**Table 1: Sustainable Community Grants Surveyed by State and Year**

State	2006		2007		2008		Totals	
	N	\$	N	\$	N	\$	N	\$
Connecticut	1	\$9,953	3	\$25,583	0		4	\$35,536
Delaware	0		0		0		0	
Maine	3	\$28,846	1	\$10,000	0		4	\$38,846
Maryland	0		0		0		0	
Massachusetts	1	\$8,902	3	\$39,661	0		4	\$48,563
New Hampshire	2	\$19,931	1	\$3,288	0		2	\$23,219
New Jersey	1	\$10,000	0		0		1	\$10,000
New York	6	\$58,153	3	\$25,859	0		9	\$84,012
Pennsylvania	0		1	\$9,212	0		1	\$9,212
Rhode Island	0		0		0		0	
Vermont	2	\$16,587	1	\$9,994	1	\$10,000	4	\$36,851
West Virginia	1	\$9,582	0		0		1	\$9,582
Washington, D.C	0		0		0		0	
Totals	17	\$161,954	13	\$123,597	1	\$10,000	31	\$295,551

### Survey Procedure

Project directors and participants were contacted through a series of electronic mailings. The message included the name and project number for the project in which Northeast SARE records indicated that they had participated. In each mailing the survey webpage link was provided, allowing respondents to link directly to the survey from within the emailed message. Follow-up reminders were used to increase overall response rate. The sequence of electronic mailings was initiated on October 6, 2009 and continued through January 27, 2010.

Initial telephone contacts to correct or verify email addresses were made by researchers through the same time period. The researcher provided a basic explanation of the project and requested assistance from the potential recipient. With limited web-based responses, researchers attempted to reach potential respondents by telephone to conduct the survey in that manner.

Survey responses were secured from 34 respondents – 26 via web and 8 via telephone. Four people responded to the initial invitation with an email message or telephone call declining to participate. Researchers verified through telephone contacts that at least 11 people had changed jobs, retired, and/or left the area with inadequate information to allow locating them. These contacts account for 49 of the 88 people on the original list. The 34 respondents represent 39% of the original



list or 47% of the 73 individuals left after removing those who declined or had left the area without contact information.

## **Review of Project Reports**

Northeast SARE provided researchers with copies of the final report for each project to be evaluated. Researchers carefully read each report as background and to provide context for the survey responses. Some of the project reports included additional materials that were developed by through the project. Where those materials were provided, researchers also reviewed them. The reports provided additional information to help answer the evaluation questions. In many cases, reading the project reports then triggered additional research on-line to follow project work. Researchers located and down-loaded the project-related materials found on-line. Any additional project materials beyond those provided in hard copy by Northeast SARE and/or located on-line were not collected or reviewed.

## **Data Collection**

Data from on-line surveys was electronically entered in the survey database established in Vovici. Data from telephone surveys was keyed into the survey database by the researchers. Data from project reports was collected through notes made by researchers while reading.

## **Data Management and Analysis**

Data were downloaded into SPSS from Vovici. Data were randomly checked for accuracy using frequency analysis. Data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the findings. Qualitative data were organized and analyzed by sorting and coding the reports.

## **Results**

**Project Roles.** Respondents were asked to indicate all the ways in which they were involved in the project. They were presented six types of possible project involvement – project manager; project planner and/or collaborator; participated in project research or demonstration; provided land, site, facilities, etc.; spoke on behalf of the project; wrote on behalf of the project; and other. Many respondents (59%) indicated multiple roles and nearly a third (32%) of respondents reported

that they had acted as project manager. The most frequent project roles were planner/collaborator (50%), then participant and speaking on behalf of the project, with 38% each. 24% of respondents reported that they had written on behalf of the project and 12% that they had provided resources. 24% of respondents reported other roles including school administrator, produce provider, panelist, facilitator, and sounding board. Table 2 presents data on ways in which respondents were involved.

**Table 2: Ways respondents were involved in project, n=34**

<b>Project Roles</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Project planner and/or collaborator	17	50%
Participated in project research and/or demonstration	13	38%
Spoke on behalf of project	13	38%
Project manager	11	32%
Wrote on behalf of project	8	24%
Provided land, site, facilities, etc.	4	12%
Other	8	24%

**Organizational Types.** Respondents were asked to indicate the types of organizations that they represented. Options included Cooperative Extension, community-based non-profit, local government, cooperative, planning board, educational institution, incorporated citizen group, and other. Other types of organizations mentioned (by 24% of respondents) were Town Agricultural Commission, hospital, Resource Conservation and Development, and unincorporated 15-year old coalition (farmers, citizens) supported by Extension. Four respondents reported multiple organizations. Community-based non-profits were the organization type most frequently reported at 42%, followed by Cooperative Extension at 21%, local government at 18% and educational at 15%. Table 3 presents data on the organizations represented by respondents.

**Table 3: Organizations represented by respondents, n=33**

<b>Organization type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Community-based non-profit	14	42%
Cooperative Extension	7	21%
Local government	6	18%
Educational	5	15%
Cooperative	0	0
Planning Board	0	0
Incorporated citizen group	0	0
Other	8	24%

**Main Activity Location.** Respondents were asked to indicate the main location of project activities. Options included on farms, at market place, in community gatherings, and other. Responses were fairly evenly divided among farms (25%), market places (29%), and community gatherings (29%). Locations mentioned as “other” or as more specific descriptions of one of the categories provided were: at work sites; right in the communities; on farms, farmers' markets, institutional kitchens, and gatherings of all stakeholders; in schools, helping school administrators, teachers, food staff and parents understand potential benefits; on farms and in institutional kitchens; at an outside stand in the center of the downtown redevelopment; at school and on the blueberry fields; K-12 Public Schools; local extension office; all of the above; this was primarily survey research. The most common location mentioned as “other” was at schools. Table 4 displays responses to this question.

**Table 4: Location of main project activities, n=24**

Location	Number	Percent
On farms	6	25%
At market places	7	29%
In community gatherings	7	29%
Other	4	17%

**Primary Focus.** Respondents were asked to indicate the project’s primary focus among eight options: finance, marketing, land use, water use, enterprise development, value-added activities, labor, and other. These categories are routinely used by Northeast SARE. Examples of each focus category were provided. Although respondents were asked to select only the one focus that best described their project, several respondents selected multiple foci. Percentages were calculated based on the number of respondents (34), not the total number of responses (42). Marketing was the most frequently reported focus at 41%. The second most frequently reported focus was finance (21%), then land use (18%), value-added (15%), and enterprise development. 24% reported that their project did not fit in the standard categories. They reported project categories of educational (2), sustaining productive land use, related to agriculture, food distribution, getting farms to the next generation, student involvement, linking low income consumers to farmers, youth education/empowerment, provide job and learning place for disabled persons. Several of the categories reported as “other” appear to fit in the categories provided, while several others appear not to fit.

Table 5 displays the primary foci of the projects evaluated.

**Table 5: Project primary focus, n=34**

<b>Focus</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Marketing	14	41%
Finance	7	21%
Land use	6	18%
Value-added	5	15%
Water use	0	0
Enterprise development	2	0
Labor	0	0
Other	8	24%

### **Project Benefits and Impacts**

Respondents were asked to indicate the types of benefits that resulted from the project. They were presented 12 types of benefits and asked to indicate any that applied. Respondents could also specify other types of project benefits. The types of benefits most often selected were more public support for agriculture (81%), greater farmer engagement in the community (72%), new market development (59%) and greater likelihood of farms remaining as farms (53%). Close behind were improved farm profits, Enhanced quality of life/satisfaction for farmers, and agricultural diversification, all at 49%. Establishment of new farms (25%), Improved environmental quality (13%) and improved stewardship of on-farm resources (7%) were benefits of fewer projects. No respondents indicated that improved farm labor relations were project benefits.

28% of respondents reported other benefits including improved Farmer, neighbor, community relations; students could see how blueberries help their community; student awareness; low income consumers have access to fresh, healthy, local produce; better understanding of smaller farm financing; greater collaboration between local farmers and school cafeterias; educated youth about agriculture; and introduced inner city residents -- especially elderly and lower income people -- to sustainably grown local food. One respondent reported that he/she saw no benefits.

All except one respondent reported multiple benefits from the project.

**Table 6: Project benefits, n=32**

<b>Project Benefits</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
More public support for agriculture	26	81%
Greater farmer engagement in the community	23	72%
New market development	19	59%
Greater likelihood of farms remaining as farms	17	53%
Improved farm profits	15	49%
Enhanced quality of life/satisfaction for farmers	15	49%
Agricultural diversification	15	49%
Establishment of new farms/farmers	8	25%
Improved environmental quality	4	13%
Improved stewardship of on-farm resources	2	7%
Improved farm labor relations	0	0
Other	9	28%

In a series of open-ended questions, respondents were asked to describe the economic, social and environmental benefits of their project. Respondents' responses are reported as they categorized them. In some cases, readers may not agree with the category chosen by the respondent and in some cases respondents indicated that it was difficult for them to determine in which category to place a particular benefit.

**Economic benefits.** Reports of economic benefits included both economic benefits for individual farm businesses and broader community economic benefits. Of the eleven responses to this question, five focused on benefits for individual farm businesses, three focused on economic benefits to the community and three indicated that they did not know. Two examples illustrate the types of economic benefits:

"Increased revenue for farmers connecting with previously untapped institutional cafeterias. Nine or more institutions accessing over a dozen farmers approximating \$20,000 to \$30,000 in purchases and climbing."

"I don't have specific economic impact data, however community awareness and interest has increased dramatically. Most meaningful economic benefits will likely take several years to realize, but this grant was critical to starting the process."

**Social Benefits.** A very broad range of social benefits was reported. Themes of the responses included institutional use of local food, youth engagement both in

and out of school, broad community awareness, and benefits to limited resource individuals and families. Some samples of the benefits mentioned are:

“The farmers market has become a center of social interaction every Sunday. The attendance has increased 40% over the last two years.”

“I don’t have specific data, but 3-4 community forums have been held and attendance at each was significant. Focused work groups have formed, in particular with a group working on enhancing distribution channels.”

“Schools began to engage students and parents in the school food system.”

“Farmers develop new relationships with schools, parents and children (their future).”

**Environmental Benefits.** The 12 responses stating environmental benefits generally fell into three themes – increases in awareness, maintaining viable farms, and specific farming practices. For example:

“Junior High students became aware of tribal involvement in local crops.”

“Protection and preservation of local farms.”

“The project taught and promoted organic agriculture and seed saving.”

A complete listing of these responses is provided in Appendix D: Economic Benefits, Appendix E: Social Benefits and Appendix F: Environmental Benefits.

**Surprising Impacts and Unintended Results.** Respondents were also asked to describe any surprising or unintended impacts of the project – either positive or negative. Fourteen people responded to this question. None of the responses reported negative surprises and many could be categorized as greater than expected success with the project, exceeding original goals. Other responses reported activities that evolved from original project goals. For example:

“ The growing enthusiasm for supporting a healthy farm economy was greater than I expected.”

“I don’t know if this is surprising but the kids that are involved really learn so much from the program and it truly makes an impact on their lives.”

“Because of . . . this community supported market, our farm has since started our own CSA program which we learned how to organize and operate from their example.”

Appendix G provides all the responses to this question.

**Continuing Activities.** Respondents were also asked to describe any project or spin-off activities that have continued after the grant period ended. Each of the 15 people who responded indicated significant continuing activity, primarily continuing or expanding on the original project work. Their responses to this question are provided in Appendix H, with several examples here:

“Our SARE funded research and pilot projects have clarified our local goals, local opportunities, and enabled our community-based non-profit to secure both private and public resources to expand the impact and effectiveness of our work.”

“Activities are on-going. Ag Commission Google groups, listserv and site to post documents, ideas, resources. Annual Ag Commission member meeting/training.”

“The project continues, now in its 8<sup>th</sup> year.”

**Most Important Outcome.** Respondents were asked what the single most valuable/important outcome of the project was. This was an open-ended question. Responses were analyzed and categorized. Most focused largely on social dimensions and a few on very specific items. The complete list of responses is provided in Appendix J, and some examples here:

“Increased good will between community leaders, neighbors, farmers, and support by the community toward Agriculture.”

“The building connections between community members and farmers and development of a road map to create a more sustainable economic structure to support long term agricultural viability and local food security.”

“Building community interest and capacity for supporting local agriculture, especially among low income members of the community.”

“ A person dedicated to this effort.”

**Other Funding.** Two questions sought to determine the project’s impact on other funding. First, respondents were asked to indicate whether the project leveraged other funds to continue or expand the project; secured funding for a new but

related project, or enhanced general funding for an agency or organization involved in the project. If respondents indicated that any of these funding results had occurred with their project, they were asked to indicate the source and dollar amount of the funds, with options to enter three funding sources/amounts. Projects that secured some additional funding often secured funding from multiple sources.

Table 7 displays responses to this question:

**Table 7: Project funding results, n=29**

<b>Funding type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Leverage other funds to continue or expand project	5	17%
Secure funding for new but related project	0	0
Enhance general funding for agency/ organization involved in project	1	3%
Leverage other funds to continue or expand project AND Secure funding for new but related project	5	17%
Leverage other funds to continue or expand project AND Enhance general funding for agency/ organization involved in project	3	10%
All three types of funding	3	10%

Appendix I provides all responses to this question.

**Number of Farms/Farmers Directly Benefited.** Respondents were asked how many farms/farmers directly benefited from the project and how they determined that number. Beyond the options provided, respondents indicated that they determined the numbers by the following means: personally aware of business relationships with institutions; farm to cafeteria interviews and later follow-ups; number of farms at farmers market and that the youth worked directly with; farmers that have received loans as the follow up that resulted from this project. Table 8 summarizes the responses to these questions.

**Table 8: Farms/Farmers directly reached by project, n=19**

<b>Basis</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Total number farmers reported</b>	<b>Range of # farmers</b>
Registration, records	9	440	4-200+
Estimate	5		
No way to determine	1		NA
Other	4		4-12



## **Impacts Beyond Immediate Project Participants**

**Project Inquiries.** Respondents were asked whether and how many others have inquired about the project. 20 (74%) responded that there had been inquiries and seven (26%) responded that there had been no inquiries. Less than half of those who responded that there had been inquiries were able to estimate the number of inquiries. Their estimates ranged from a low of two to dozens. Others described the inquiries they had received, including: many out of town guests to our market have inquired about the whole market and others inquired about parts like our community bulletin board; many from all over the State of New York; other communities as well as residents inquire about the project; we had one conference call with 5 people, have talked about the work at a few conferences and the report continues to be downloaded from our website. Several others who had indicated inquiries did not provide either quantitative or qualitative information about them.

**Project Replication.** Respondents were asked whether and how many others have replicated the project idea. Nine (43%) responded that there had been replication, and four estimated the number of replications, which ranged from one to four.

**Institutional Changes.** Respondents were asked whether the project resulted in any institutional changes, and asked to describe these changes. Eighteen (51%) reported that there were institutional changes. Many positive changes were reported, with many focusing on initiating new ideas and relationships. Institutional changes reported were:

- A formal structure for developing a food coop is a direct result of this work. A critical outcome we are still working on upgrading the County Conservation District officer to be a benefited county employee.
- This was the first time that our organization engineered direct access to local foods for employees to consume at home.
- Provided a young farmer contact point.
- Institutions are new to being able to purchase direct from local farms.
- I think we have raised the level of conversation about the need to consider farm to school as part of school policies in participating schools, and about the need to support local farms in response to concerns about food security.
- Understanding recent municipal purchasing laws for purchasing direct from farms.
- Ag commissions are a new municipal land-use board.
- Student awareness of use of tribal lands.
- Some schools have made policy changes to buy local food.
- We've continued to adapt how we coordinate and implement these activities since we learned what worked and didn't work well in 2007.

- Yes, we set up a financing program the following year with a lender that didn't previously work with smaller farms and are will be working with two more lenders next year.
- Agriculture is seen as an important part of local town and county comprehensive plans, this was part of the realization, but people have been realizing this for a number of years.
- This is in the form of negative. We found that the paid Coordinator didn't work the way we thought, so we went to a volunteer coordinator.

## **Northeast SARE**

**Satisfaction and Suggestions.** Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the Northeast SARE grant application and management process. They were also invited to suggest the one thing they thought that Northeast SARE should do to improve the Sustainable Communities program. Table 9 displays the satisfaction responses. The suggestions for improvement were reviewed and categorized – indicate categories here. Appendix K lists all the suggested improvements for Northeast SARE.

**Table 9: Satisfaction with Northeast SARE, n=31**

<b>Satisfaction level</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very satisfied	13	72%
Somewhat satisfied	4	22%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	6%
Somewhat dissatisfied	0	0
Very dissatisfied	0	0

## **Organizational Profile**

Project Directors were asked to provide their organization's total budget for 2008, its number of paid full-time equivalent employees for 2008, and the year in which it was established. Appendix M displays all responses to these questions. Many respondents did not answer these questions and results form no clear patterns.

## **Additional Comments**

At the end of the survey, respondents were invited to share any additional comments they might have on their project, on the Sustainable Community Grant Program, on the survey, or on Northeast SARE. Comments included several

expressing appreciation to SARE and several commenting positively on the project. All responses are listed in Appendix L, and here is an example:

“This is a win/win project which makes it easily sustainable. Good for the farmer, good for the operator, good for the communities we serve.”

**Project Focus.** After reading and reflecting on the project reports, researchers created a summary of project goals and outcomes, provided in Appendix N.

**Project use of web.** Nearly all of the projects created or enhanced web sites as key parts of their work. The sites vary considerably regarding how much project and other information is provided and how frequently information is updated. Some sites were created particularly for the project; other projects added information to already existing websites. Table 10 displays the web sites or pages located for the projects evaluated.

**Table 10: Project web sites located**

<b>Project number and title</b>	<b>Web URL</b>
CNE 06-001 Farm Fresh – Buying Local	<a href="http://www.wvfarm2u.org">www.wvfarm2u.org</a>
CNE 06-002 Farm Transfer Planning	<a href="http://farmtransfernewengland.net">http://farmtransfernewengland.net</a>
CNE 06-003 City Seeds	<a href="http://pfp.dague.org/content/cityseeds">http://pfp.dague.org/content/cityseeds</a>
CNE 06-004 Canandaigua Lake Foodshed Farm to School	<a href="http://www.seekingcommonground.org">www.seekingcommonground.org</a> AND <a href="http://www.cceontario.org/Agriculture_FTC.html">www.cceontario.org/Agriculture_FTC.html</a>
CNE 06-005 Town of Rumford Community and Economic Development Planning for Agriculture	<a href="http://www.thresholdtomaine.org">www.thresholdtomaine.org</a>
CNE 06-006 Rutland Area Food and Farm Link	<a href="http://www.rutlandfarmandfood.org">www.rutlandfarmandfood.org</a>
CNE 06-007 South Hero Land Trust Initiative	<a href="http://www.shlt.org/Community2/thm">www.shlt.org/Community2/thm</a>
CNE 06-008 Ag Commissions	<a href="http://extension.unh.edu/Agric/AgComm/NHAGCom.htm">http://extension.unh.edu/Agric/AgComm/NHAGCom.htm</a>
CNE 06-009 Seeds to Success Youth Farmstand Project	<a href="http://gloucester.njaes.rutgers.edu/fcns/seeds_tosuccess.html">http://gloucester.njaes.rutgers.edu/fcns/seeds_tosuccess.html</a>
CNE 06-010 Building Partnerships and Support for a Regional Farm-Link Effort in Southeastern Massachusetts	<a href="http://www.umass.edu/semap/farms_forever.cfm">www.umass.edu/semap/farms_forever.cfm</a>
CNE 06-011 Farmworker Project on Social Justice in Organic Agriculture	<a href="http://www.cata-farmworkers.org/english%20pages/laborstandards.org.htm">www.cata-farmworkers.org/english%20pages/laborstandards.org.htm</a> AND <a href="http://www.agriculturaljusticeproject.org">www.agriculturaljusticeproject.org</a>

CNE 06-012 Farm to School in Hancock County	<a href="http://www.healthyacadia.org/farmtoschool.html">www.healthyacadia.org/farmtoschool.html</a>
CNE 06-013 Foodlink Farmers Fulfillment Center	<a href="http://www.foodlinkny.org/programs_fulfillment.asp">www.foodlinkny.org/programs_fulfillment.asp</a> AND <a href="http://www.buyhereny.com">www.buyhereny.com</a>
CNE 06-014 New Ag Venture Support Program	<a href="http://www.wedcny.org/AgDevNewBegFarmer.html">www.wedcny.org/AgDevNewBegFarmer.html</a>
CNE 06-015 Planning for Community Farms across Connecticut	
CNE 06-016 Passamaquoddy Youth Wild Berry Project	
CNE 06-17 Roots and Wisdom Summer Youth Program	<a href="http://www.rootswisdom.org">www.rootswisdom.org</a>
CNE 07-018 Engaging and Growing Community through a Community Supported Market	<a href="http://www.cityseed.org">www.cityseed.org</a>
CNE 07-019 Strengthening Farm-to-School Relationships	<a href="http://www.buylocalfood.com/farmtoschool.htm">www.buylocalfood.com/farmtoschool.htm</a>
CNE 07-020 Building Community Health, Farm Viability, and Food Equity through Community Supported Agriculture	<a href="http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/tompkins">http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/tompkins</a>
CNE 07-022 Promoting Pennsylvania Cheese at Farmers Markets	
CNE 07-023 Food Processing and Community Sustainability Project	<a href="http://www.gardenshare.org">www.gardenshare.org</a>
CNE 07-024 Growing Carver Community Connections	<a href="http://www.carverfarmersmarket.org">www.carverfarmersmarket.org</a>
CNE 07-025 Mattapan Food System Project	
CNE 07-026 Bridging the Gap: Connecting Youth, Farms and Communities	
CNE 07-027 City Seeds II	<a href="http://www.cityseeds.org">www.cityseeds.org</a>
CNE 07-028 The Carrot Project: Farmers' Financing Needs Assessment	<a href="http://www.thecarrotproject.org">www.thecarrotproject.org</a>
CNE 07-029 Creating Sustainable Food Purchasing Guidelines in the Northeast	<a href="http://www.yale.edu/sustainablefood/food_purchasing.html">www.yale.edu/sustainablefood/food_purchasing.html</a>
CNE 07-030 Lots to Gardens	<a href="http://www.stmarysmaine.com/nutrition-center-of-maine/lots-to-gardens/">www.stmarysmaine.com/nutrition-center-of-maine/lots-to-gardens/</a>
CNE 07-031 Farmer and Community Feasibility Study	<a href="http://www.antiochne.edu/anei/programs/coolmonadonock/farm_connection.cfm">www.antiochne.edu/anei/programs/coolmonadonock/farm_connection.cfm</a>
CNE 08-049 Vermont Food Basket Program	<a href="http://www.foodbasketvt.com">www.foodbasketvt.com</a>

## Conclusions

How do the survey results speak to the questions to be answered by this research?

How and whether does the Northeast SARE Sustainable Community Grant program contribute to and maintain consistency with the Northeast SARE outcome statement that "Agriculture in the Northeast will be diversified and profitable, providing healthful products to its customers; it will be conducted by farmers who manage resources wisely, who are satisfied with their lifestyles, and have a positive influence on their communities and the environment."

- Have Sustainable Community Grant projects had a positive influence on the economic position of commercial farmers?

The **projects have definitely had a positive influence on the economic position of commercial farmers**, with many of the 31 projects studied including elements designed to address this and many survey respondents reporting outcomes that contribute to reaching this goal. A number of projects included work to more effectively link farmers with restaurant or institutional markets, and many projects provided evidence that the farmers engaged were able to expand markets and sell to new customers. Several projects included work to initiate or enhance farmers markets or CSA operations, and they also provided evidence of success. Several included efforts to assist farmers in securing needed capital and/or land, also adding to a positive influence on farmers' economics.

- Have Sustainable Community Grant projects had a positive influence on the economic position of the community?

The several projects that addressed agricultural economic development as well as the many projects that focused on increasing the amount of locally grown food purchased by individuals and institutions all **enhanced their host community's economic position**. Appropriate agricultural economic development can create and maintain both jobs and businesses. This is demonstrated in several of the projects. And increasing the amount of locally-produced food that a community's residents purchase keeps more money in the local economy.

- Have Sustainable Community Grant projects had a positive influence on quality of life, a cleaner environment, or improved farm stewardship?

None of these projects explicitly addressed cleaning the environment or improving farm stewardship, but many of them had **strong quality of life components**. The projects that sought to engage limited-income youth and other community residents in food and farming activities, as well as those that supported farmers markets and farm to school efforts clearly contributed to participants' quality of life. The many projects that focused on shifting food consumption to more locally-produced products have a less direct impact on the environment. As food production occurs closer to those who eat the food, people become much more aware of and interested in how it is produced. In the long run, that interest helps

assure production practices that are environmentally friendly. In addition one respondent indicated that the project had encouraged local farmers to consider and some to initiate transition to more sustainable practices, which will likely result in a cleaner environment.

- Do grantees and project cooperators agree about the value of project results?

The extent of agreement between grantees and cooperators **varied considerably among the projects** and the relatively low response rate made direct comparisons difficult. Using project final reports as a starting point for project accomplishments and value, many survey respondents – both grantees and cooperators – provided responses that reinforced and enhanced information in the report. Many project cooperators valued the project and its outcomes, but reported that they knew little of the project numbers. When contacted, one person knew of and supported the grantee organization, but could not recall the project. This individual thought that perhaps she had written a letter of recommendation as a part of the initial proposal, but she could not be certain. In another case, a respondent was very dissatisfied with a project for which the final report was positive. In several cases, persons who had been identified as cooperators responded that they had not been involved with the project or that the project had been only talk, diverging considerably from the project report. These cases do not appear in the results section because these individuals responded by email or telephone to decline the invitation to participate in the survey.

- Are the constituencies surveyed satisfied with SARE staff, program policies, and program delivery from initial proposal to final reporting?

**Satisfaction is high with the Northeast SARE** grant application and management process.

- What specific recommendations do SARE grantees have for improved SARE program management?

Respondents suggested streamlining and simplifying the process; increasing increased funding, both overall and for individual projects; clarifying grant reporting requirements; and having a staff member assigned to touch base with ongoing projects, to get a sense of how they are doing. These are all possibilities that Northeast SARE should consider, but it is also noteworthy that over one third of respondents came up with no suggested improvements.

- Have SARE grants had any surprising or unintended results, either good or bad, that affected the sustainability of farms and farming in the Northeast?

Nearly all reported surprising results were positive and **most spoke to exceeding project goals and expectations**. The project reports strongly support respondents' reports on this point. Two projects reported unanticipated results that

might be considered negative – the project did not work as anticipated. But in both those cases, respondents explained ways in which these “negative” results had also generated additional reflection and some redirection that has been positive and productive.

- How many projects have resulted in ongoing activity or impacts after the grant period ended?

**Nearly all projects are continuing in some way.** In some cases the Northeast SARE grant provided resources needed to start a new organization or collaborative that has continued to grow and thrive. In other cases, the SARE project started activities that have now been incorporated as a regular part of existing organizations’ ongoing work. In some cases, the SARE funding represented one of many funding sources, accessed as available, to keep a program operating and/or add new components. The review of project information on-line and reported in the listing of web sites confirms this high level of continuing activity.

- To what extent have SARE projects leveraged funds to continue the project?

The projects have leveraged funds. Neither the survey responses nor the project reports provide a complete picture of funds leveraged, but many of the projects indicated some funding leveraged.

- Has this grant program has been effective in addressing Northeast SARE’s outcome statement, based on the cumulative impact of these individual projects?

**The Northeast SARE Community Grant Program has been extremely successful in addressing and moving forward toward the overall program outcome,** in particular on the Italicized portions: “Agriculture in the Northeast will be *diversified and profitable*, providing *healthful products* to its customers; it will be conducted by farmers who manage resources wisely, who are satisfied with their lifestyles, and have a *positive influence on their communities* and the environment.”

### **Future Considerations:**

- If quantitative information from projects is important for Northeast SARE, it would be helpful to agree at the start of each project what information will be collected and reported. The funding amount for these projects is relatively low and the grantees are stretching the dollars to accomplish a lot. Collecting and analyzing data takes time and money that may not be allocated within the project unless there is a clear requirement. Even with such a requirement, there will likely be limited resources for this task.
- Assuming that all current Northeast SARE staff members are at least fully employed, perhaps a graduate student could work by telephone with each

grantee at the project start to develop a plan and simple instruments for required data collection. One reviewer suggested developing or securing simple evaluation instruments, possibly including the Northeast Region Center for Rural Development evaluation toolbox, that grantees would use to collect information from project beneficiaries.

- It might be possible for this person to also play the role suggested by one respondent – to touch base periodically – maybe twice a year -- with each grantee just to see how things are going.
- Quantitative information about farmer cooperators may be particularly challenging to collect in this funding program. Most grantees represented non-farmer organizations and a major focus of many projects was to develop more of a connection between farmers and others. In many of these cases, grantees were not in a position to know or even request very much information from farmers. The individual farmers surveyed did share information about impacts – including financials. These reports make excellent case examples, but cannot be generalized.
- In addition to assistance with quantitative information collection, Northeast SARE may wish to ask each grantee as to provide names and contact information for three project beneficiaries as a part of the final report. Grantees should know of this requirement at the outset and know that someone representing Northeast SARE may contact these individuals to get their perspectives on the project.
- Northeast SARE may want to create support statement & logo package for grantees to use with websites, print materials, etc. to highlight the support and increase awareness of the program and its reach.
- Project reports include lots of valuable information and are underutilized. There may be opportunities to design student projects that collate and highlight some of this information.
- Northeast SARE may want to reconsider the project categories that it currently uses. Several of the projects reviewed had strong foci on youth engagement that seemed to be deeper and broader than a marketing focus. Reports and responses spoke to the importance of engaging and involving youth in the food system. An additional category for this work may be useful if Northeast SARE continues to fund in this area.



- In some cases, respondents had a very difficult time separating the impacts of the Northeast SARE funded project from the larger work of which it was just one part. With non-profit organizations as the most-common grantee type, it is not surprising that they seek multiple funding sources in order to accomplish organizational goals. The impacts they report may result from the total investment, not any one component. That makes assessing impacts more difficult and complicated – especially quantitative impacts.
- One challenge in analyzing and interpreting survey results has been the wide variation in roles of individuals who were listed as other than the project grantee. That group was extremely diverse regarding the nature and extent of their involvement and specific knowledge of the project.
- Securing responses to the survey was much more difficult than anticipated. Researchers were able to locate and validate email addresses for almost all of the potential respondents. But three waves of electronic invitations to the entire list and telephone contacts to over half the list were only minimally successful in generating responses. Researchers resorted to collecting information by telephone where possible, which elicits some information not likely to come through with web-based surveys but makes other information more challenging to secure. Some of the telephone surveys were with grantees and others with cooperators. With hindsight, a slightly different evaluation design might have been more effective. The survey as developed could be used with project grantees, but the contacts with project collaborators could be an abbreviated form conducted entirely by telephone.

## Appendix A: Copy of Call for Proposals

# Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education

## Call for Proposals for Survey and Evaluation—Sustainable Community Grants

### OVERVIEW

The Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program seeks proposals for the evaluation of its Sustainable Community Grant program. Sustainable Community Grants address economic and social issues in the farm community and support appropriate growth, improved farm profits, a better quality of life, a cleaner environment, or improved farm stewardship. We seek evaluation of the impact of these grants, including whether and how these grants advance the Northeast SARE mission. We expect 30 projects to be completed in time for this evaluation and we seek quantitative analysis and qualitative synthesis about grant program effectiveness.

### Background

SARE is a national USDA grant program with four regions; the Northeast region serves Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C. The SARE mission is to advance agriculture that is profitable, good for the environment, and has a positive effect on the community. The primary tool for achieving the mission is a competitive grants effort.

The Sustainable Community grant was funded in 2006 with each grant capped at \$10,000. Since 2006, the criteria for awards has been refined somewhat, with an increasing emphasis on specific aspects of community and economic development. All projects are expected to break new ground and offer fresh approaches to enhancing sustainable commercial agriculture and community development.

### SCOPE OF THE INQUIRY

There are about 30 completed Sustainable Community projects to be reviewed. The evaluator will survey each project manager and at least one project collaborator to see what specific accomplishments can be assigned to the grant award, to what extent the project achieved its written objectives, and to what extent subsequent benefits resulted from the seed money. The initial survey pool will be about 75 individuals.

Gathering survey data electronically is an acceptable and efficient strategy. Follow-up by e-mail, telephone, and U.S. mail will likely be necessary. Minimally, 25 projects of the 30 should be represented in the response pool. Northeast SARE will contact grantees subject to this evaluation to let them know the evaluation is pending, assure them of anonymity, and enhance their receptiveness to the survey.

### Consistency across regions

In 2005, the Western SARE region conducted an evaluation of its Farmer Grant program, which awards funds to commercial farmers to explore promising new production and marketing efforts that are likely to improve profits, advance good stewardship, and strengthen the community. This survey, which was done via the Internet, is a potential

model for developing an instrument specific to this type of inquiry. The evaluator is free to use materials from that survey, which are available on request by sending e-mail to [nesare@uvm.edu](mailto:nesare@uvm.edu).

That said, the content of the Sustainable Community projects overlaps the content of the Farmer Grant projects in a rather limited way. One of the key tasks for the evaluator will be to revise the previous Western SARE survey materials so that the inquiry will be specific to the goals of the Sustainable Community Grant program. Northeast SARE has issued a separate call for evaluation of its Farmer and Partnership grants that specifically requires the use of survey materials consistent with this previous evaluation. In this call for evaluation, Northeast SARE asks only that the selected evaluator use these prior materials as part of a context, and to look for ways to yield data that may be generally useful to this other, parallel, evaluation.

Also, in October of 2007, the Southern SARE region evaluated a community grant program very similar to this one but using different measurement techniques that relied on face-to-face interviews with a smaller pool of project participants. That effort yielded some data but also had a broad narrative focus. The evaluation report from that effort is available (send a request to [nesare@uvm.edu](mailto:nesare@uvm.edu)), but Northeast SARE explicitly seeks a more survey-based and data-driven evaluation, with techniques modeled chiefly on the Western SARE Farmer Grant effort.

### **The primary questions to be investigated**

Northeast SARE wants to know how and whether this grant program contributes to and is consistent with the Northeast SARE outcome statement, which says that **"Agriculture in the Northeast will be diversified and profitable, providing healthful products to its customers; it will be conducted by farmers who manage resources wisely, who are satisfied with their lifestyles, and have a positive influence on their communities and the environment."**

More specifically, Northeast SARE wants to determine:

- Whether Sustainable Community Grant projects had a positive influence on the economic position of commercial farmers;
- Whether Sustainable Community Grant projects had a positive influence on the economic position of the community;
- Whether Sustainable Community Grant projects had a positive influence on quality of life, a cleaner environment, or improved farm stewardship;
- Whether grantees and project cooperators agree about the value of project results;
- Whether the constituencies being surveyed are satisfied with SARE staff, program policies, and program delivery from initial proposal to final reporting, and whether SARE grantees have any specific recommendations for improved SARE program management;
- Whether the SARE grants had any surprising or unintended results, either good or bad, that affected the sustainability of farms and farming in the Northeast;

- Whether and how many projects resulted in ongoing activity or impacts after the grant period ended, including the leveraging of other funds to continue the project; and
- Whether this grant program has been effective in addressing Northeast SARE's outcome statement, based on the cumulative impact of these individual projects.

### **Access**

The evaluator will have access to Northeast SARE internal lists of contact information for the grantees and their cooperators, as well as annual and final reports for the projects being evaluated. Northeast SARE will make a good-faith effort to ensure that contact information and reports are as current as possible, with the understanding that some of this information has degraded over time. An online database ([www.sare.org/projects/index.htm](http://www.sare.org/projects/index.htm)) is also a resource for understanding project contents and results. These online reports are text only—no graphs, charts, or photos. Still, this database is an inventory of awards and can give the outlines of each project and its key reported results.

The evaluator will also have access to prior calls for proposals, instructional and outreach materials, and documents specific to this grant program, can assume discussion and coordination with Northeast SARE staff and leadership.

### **Work products**

**Products in draft:** A draft survey instrument should be submitted to Northeast SARE to make sure the survey content is directly linked to the primary questions to be investigated and offers appropriate consistency with prior survey work done for SARE in the West.

A draft of the evaluator's report is due 60 days before the close of the contracted performance period. This draft report will allow Northeast SARE to provide feedback and to make sure the report is addressing the primary questions to be investigated and are appropriately consistent with the prior survey work referenced above.

**Products in final form:** A final report from the evaluator should present survey results and use those results to assess program delivery, impacts, strengths, and flaws. We suggest strongly that both the draft and final reports use a structure that follows the sequence outlined under "primary questions to be investigated," above, and that each draft and final report also include summary findings and recommendations to Northeast SARE based on the evaluator's interpretation of the data. These summary recommendations should specifically address the effectiveness of the grant program and give an overview of program impacts based on survey findings.

On completion of the evaluation, Northeast SARE will need 30 hard copies and one soft copy of the final two program evaluation reports.

### **Timeline**

Northeast SARE anticipates awarding a contract for evaluation in the spring of 2009. We further anticipate that the evaluator will review project reports and develop the draft survey by June 1, 2009. Survey work should proceed over the summer of 2009, with a draft report ready on or before October 31, and a final report submitted to Northeast SARE on or before December 31, 2009.

## **Selection Criteria**

The following will be the criteria used to select an evaluator:

- Documented previous experience with similar program evaluation
- Clear evidence of familiarity with sustainable agriculture
- A specific and effective plan to address the scope of work described above
- Appropriate cost of the evaluation based on time needed to complete each step in the plan
- Feedback from references you provide for whom you have performed similar work

Specifics on the proposed budget, plan of work, and reporting products may be negotiated between the selected evaluator and Northeast SARE prior to entering into a contract. If a project agreement cannot be reached between the finalist and Northeast SARE, an alternate evaluator will be selected.

## **Proposal format**

Respond on separate sheets of 8 ½" x 11" plain paper. Use standard fonts such as Times Roman or Arial, no smaller than 11 points.

1. Describe the professional context of your evaluation work (company or organization name and mission, support staff, typical clients, and years of experience).
2. Describe your previous experience with program evaluation, including the types of programs, the depth of evaluation required, and techniques deployed. In particular, describe any previous evaluation or similar work you have done within the farm community, with Cooperative Extension, farmers, and agricultural consultants.
3. Describe your background and familiarity with the key issues and themes in sustainable agriculture.
4. Provide a detailed description of your approach to addressing the scope of work as described above.
5. Estimate the cost of the evaluation and time needed to complete the survey, evaluation, and reports.
6. Provide the names and contact information of three references for whom you have completed similar evaluations.

## **HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL**

Send your proposal via e-mail to Northeast SARE, at [nesare@uvm.edu](mailto:nesare@uvm.edu). Include a cover letter and any relevant appendices. Proposals should be received no later than December 31, 2008. Questions about proposal format and content should be directed to the Northeast SARE office at 802/656-0471 or via e-mail to [nesare@uvm.edu](mailto:nesare@uvm.edu).

## Appendix B: Copy of email invitation

Date

Dear Grant Recipient,

The Northeast Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program is conducting research to evaluate the impact of its Sustainable Community Grant program. An important part of that effort is a survey of Northeast SARE R&E Community grant recipients and cooperators from 2003 through 2007. Please share your valuable feedback by completing an online survey that will help Northeast SARE to assess the impacts of the funded projects and to improve the grant program.

This evaluation is being conducted by Michigan State University. We estimate that the survey will take about 30 minutes to complete.

To complete the survey, please log on to:

<<<Survey link will be inserted here>>>

We encourage you to complete the survey on-line. However, if you would prefer to complete the evaluation by mail, using a printed questionnaire, please email Susan Smalley at [smalley3@msu.edu](mailto:smalley3@msu.edu), providing your name, access code and mailing address to request a paper copy of the NE SARE Community Survey.

Your completion of this survey is completely voluntary. You are free not to answer any questions or to stop participating at any time. All responses will be kept confidential by the researchers to the maximum extent allowable by law. There are no risks or individual benefits associated with taking this survey. Our reports will not associate any responses with any individual respondents. The survey has been reviewed and approved by Michigan State University's Institutional Review Board for human subject participation. If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail [irb@msu.edu](mailto:irb@msu.edu) or regular mail at 202 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

If you have questions about this study please contact Dr. Susan Smalley at [smalley3@msu.edu](mailto:smalley3@msu.edu) or 517-432-0049. On behalf of Northeast SARE, thank you very much for your assistance!

By completing the survey, you indicate your voluntary consent to participate in this study and have your answers included in the evaluation data set.

Sincerely,

Susan Smalley  
Director, C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at Michigan State University

Murari Suvedi  
Professor, Department of CARRS at Michigan State University

## Appendix C: Copy of survey instrument

# Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) *Sustainable Community Grants: Outcome Questionnaire*

Thank you for your participation in this online survey of the Community Grant Program of Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and your responses will remain completely confidential. Only group responses will be reported as research results.

Your participation is crucial, as the results of this study are very important to future grant programs. We urge you to complete and submit the survey by October 15, 2009.

**In what way(s) were you involved in this project? (*Please check any that apply*):**

- Project manager
- Project planner and/or collaborator
- Participated in project research and/or demonstration
- Provided land, site, facilities, etc.
- Spoke on behalf of project
- Wrote on behalf of project
- Other

If you selected other, please specify:

**On this project, what type of organization were you representing? (*Please check any that apply*):**

- Cooperative Extension
- Community-based non-profit
- Local government
- Cooperative
- Planning board

- Educational institution
- Incorporated citizen group
- Other

If you selected other, please specify:

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**Please check one of the following that best indicates the primary focus of this project: (*See examples below.*)**

- Finance
- Marketing
- Land use
- Water use
- Enterprise development
- Value-added activities
- Labor
- Other

If you selected other, please specify:

**Examples:**

- **Finance** issues include the availability and access to credit, financial management training, lack of equity, and the establishment and competitiveness of micro-enterprises.
- **Marketing** issues include health and safety standards, food quality, consumer-farmer relationships and market partnerships, ethnic and specialty niche markets, value-added marketing, green industry identification and labeling, and e-commerce.
- **Land use** issues include current use, zoning ordinances, the consideration of agricultural soils in development, and the status of agriculture in the land-use decision making process.
- **Water use** issues include access, water quantity, quality, and rights to use.
- **Enterprise development** issues include management consulting, developing business plans, training (train-the-trainer and entrepreneurship training), network development, applied research, and business incubation.
- **Value-added** product development issues include market access, technical services, regulations (zoning, licensing, food safety), insurance, entry costs,



adaptive reuse, and creating the conditions that allow businesses to cluster or agglomerate to surmount problems of small scale.

- **Labor issues** include availability, quality, training, regulations, transportation, and benefits.

Next Page

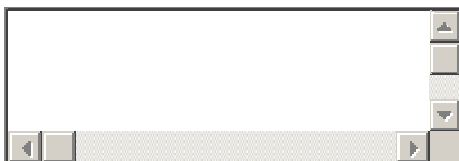
What **benefits** resulted from this project? (*Please check any that apply*):

- More public support for agriculture
- Improved farm profits
- Enhanced quality of life/satisfaction for farmers
- Improved environmental quality
- Improved stewardship of on-farm resources
- Agricultural diversification
- New market development
- Greater farmer engagement in the community
- Greater likelihood of farms remaining as farms
- Improved farm labor relations
- Establishment of new farms/farmers
- Other

If you selected other, please specify:

Please describe any specific **economic benefits** of this project and **who benefited**. (Estimate the dollar value of impacts on sales, profits, marketing costs, etc. as appropriate to the project; see example below.)

**Example:** The 25 farmers who were involved in the project increased annual farmers market sales by \$0 to \$2,900, with an average increase of \$1,150 per farmer over two years.



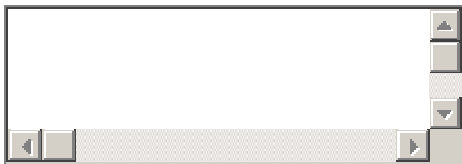
Please describe any specific **social benefits** of this project. (Estimate the number of people, towns, organizations, etc. and explain how they were affected, as appropriate to the project; see example below.)

**Example:** Ten youth interns provided a total of 1,000 hours to community gardens, learning and performing a range of tasks that included soil preparation, plant cultivation, pest management, harvesting, food preparation, food sales.

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Please describe any specific **environmental benefits** of this project. (Estimate acres of land or bodies of water or other measures of resources and explain how they were affected, as appropriate to the project; see example below.)

**Example:** Thirteen certified organic farms comprising a total of 179 acres transferred their development rights, assuring their preservation as farmland.

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Where did the main project activities occur? (Please check one)

- On farms
- At market place
- In community gatherings
- Other
- Other

If you selected other, please specify:

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What **surprising or unintended results** (positive or negative), if any, came from this project?

Please describe any project activities or related spin-off activities that have continued after the grant period ended:

Did this project (*Please check any that apply*):

- Leverage other funds to continue or expand this project?
- Secure funding for a new but related project?
- Enhance general funding for an agency or organization involved in the project?

If yes to any in Question 11, what were the source(s) and dollar amount(s) of those funds? (You may enter up to three separate funding sources and amount as you respond to questions 12, 13 and 14.)

**Funding Source # 1:**

Source:

Amount (\$): .00

**Funding Source # 2:**

Source:

Amount (\$): .00

**Funding Source # 3:**

Source:

Amount (\$): .00

Have others **inquired** about this project?

- Yes
- No

If you responded "yes" to question 15, about how many people have inquired?

Have others **replicated** the project's idea?

- Yes
- No

If you answered "yes" to question 17, about how many people have replicated the project idea?

Did this project result in any **institutional change(s)**?

**Example: Changes in the formal or informal "rules of the game", organization, structure, coordination or procedures.**

- Yes
- No

If you answered "yes" to question 19, please describe the changes.

How many farms/farmers **directly** benefited from this project?

How did you determine your response to item #21? (*Please check one*):

- Registration or other records of each person involved
- The number is an estimate
- No good way to determine this number
- Other
- Other

If you selected other, please specify:

In your opinion, what is the single **most important or valuable outcome** of this project?

How **satisfied** were you with the Northeast SARE grant application and management process?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

If Northeast SARE could do **one thing** to improve the Sustainable Community Grants program, what should it do?

**What else would you like to tell us? We welcome your comments on your project, on the Sustainable Community Grant Program, on this survey, or on Northeast SARE.**

**Now we would like to know a little about your organization.**

**What was your organization's total budget for 2008?**

\$  budget for 2008

**How many paid full-time equivalent employees did your organization have in 2008?**

full -time equivalent employees in 2008

**In what year did your organization begin?**

**Thank you for participating in this survey.**

## Appendix D: Economic benefits, n=22

- I don't have dollar numbers, but our farmers and vendors said on many market days they had increased their business by 20 to 25 %
- I don't have specific economic impact data, however, community awareness and interest has increased dramatically. Most meaningful economic benefits will likely take several years to realize, but this grant was critical to starting the process.
- 8 farmers sold \$10,000 of produce to 3 youth farmstands during July and August.
- Increased revenue for farmers connecting with previously untapped institutional cafeterias. 9 or more institutions accessing over a dozen farmers approximating \$20,000 to \$30,000 in purchases and climbing.
- Project staff would have this information.
- Expansion of our Foodshed Project under the grant involved adding 5 new farms and 14 new institutions. Opening up those new markets for local farms significantly benefited the farmers and also the institutions they did business with.
- I am one of the farmers who participated in the community supported market. I saw an increase of vegetable sales at that particular market because of this program. Many people who benefited from the project have very little income and their access to healthy food was very limited.
- I really can't answer that question because I am not involved in that part of the program.
- 5,000 school children eat fresh, local food at school; 20 farmers develop market relationships with schools; 20 farmers sell an additional \$100 - \$2,000 per year to schools.
- This was a multi-part project involving youth and young adults in a seed project, community education about food and farming, and a farmers market in a low income area. Direct economic benefits included increased farmers market sales.
- There was one farmer who participated in the pilot project. He received a \$30k loan to repair the roof on his barn. Using the upper floors of the barn, he was not only able to maintain his current business, but was able to increase his number of laying hens.
- This is a community-wide project so individual farm receipts were not tracked.
- Through this project, we grew our small farmers market in a low income area from 2 to 11 vendors, providing a market for 4 farms and 7 other local vendors.
- Two young adults who participated in our trainings have gone on to start their own farms and s
- Additional outlet for fruit and vegetables \$ # N/A
- 35 vendors, of which 13 were farmers, vendors on average increased sales 25 % thru the season
- 30% increase in number of restaurants/stores/institutions purchasing locally-grown food products .
- Did not track economics.

- Helped farmers and community groups make community farms financially viable. Perhaps 7 community farms were assisted in this manner. Business planning provided in project may also have helped.
- Generated better understanding of the possibilities for and barriers to potential markets.
- Farmers benefited because the program provided a guaranteed level of income that allowed them to attend a market where overall sales were often too low to be profitable.
- My farm focuses on a handful of crops and has been able to expand their volume and the size of the farm. About 15 farmers are benefiting in this way. one farm sales: 08--\$6500; 09-\$11,500; 10 goal-\$14,000.



## Appendix E: Social benefits, n=34

- The farmers market has become a center of social interaction every Sunday. The attendance has increase 40% over the last two years.
- Students were able to see how agriculture was able to benefit their community. Students also created labels for product.
- I don't have specific data, but 3-4 community forums have been held and attendance at each was significant. Focused work groups have formed, in particular with a group working on enhancing distribution channels.
- Employees in healthcare and at the university benefited from improved access to local foods, and education about the local farms providing foods.
- Outcomes/Impacts: In-School Component: 502 special needs youth enrolled; 5 schools participated in food/nutrition education and financial education; Food and Nutrition Education: 295 youth enrolled in an 8-week program called Jersey Fit.
- 9 or more (and increasing) institutions increased usage of fresh local farm products through lasting connections/relationship with farmers in their communities. Farmers realized a potential market in local institutional foodservice.
- Project staff will have details
- Networking within the farm and institutional communities expanded our work beyond our goals. Community-at-large became aware through events and positive press received.
- Three different towns in Gloucester County benefit from the program, allowing approximately 30 HS students to benefit from the program and hundreds of local residents and business owners. The benefits are many including educational, financial, social, nutritional.
- After researching the experience of Ag Commissions in MA and other states, and obtaining broad input from farmers, conservation organizations, planners, legislators, municipalities and other stakeholders at numerous workshops involving hundreds of people, the
- Junior High students became aware of tribal involvement in local crops.
- A wide array of community agencies collaborated at each Farmers market to inform the public as to what they do. Also numerous marketing strategies were used and a following survey documented an increase in traffic and agricultural awareness.
- -Schools begin to engage students and parents in the school food system.  
-Children from food insecure families have an opportunity to eat healthy local foods at school  
- Farmers develop new relationships with schools, parents and children (their future)
- In 2007, 37 at risk teens and 6 young adults (future farmers, educators or community food activists) completed either spring, summer, fall, or full season internships with City Seeds. They contributed to a seed project, a farmers market in a low income community.
- We did not track this information although the farmer involved did begin selling his milk and eggs directly to a Whole Foods Market. It is not clear,

with the milk, if there is a direct connection. However, the contact for the eggs at WFM may have helped.

- Following a seminar, over 100 local planning board and zoning board members felt their awareness of farming issues and concerns were much higher.
- A total of 36 households, comprising approximately 90 individuals were able to access fresh local produce through weekly subsidized CSA shares. They paid about 40% of the cost of shares. Additionally, the participants were enrolled in weekly cooking classes.
- I did not see any results and am not even sure what they actually did
- This project was the seed funding for what has become a vibrant local farm and food system organization [www.rutlandfarmandfood.org](http://www.rutlandfarmandfood.org).
- Each year, dozens of youth participated in practicing seed saving and in teaching dozens of community members how to save seeds.
- Hundreds of market customers enjoyed the products and community interaction that our farmers market provides.
- Three towns participated with several youths from each town as well as supervision by co-op extension
- Visitors increased to the market from 6/13/09 to 10/31/09 by about 25 % from a larger base than just our home town
- Following a seminar, over 100 local planning board and zoning board members felt their awareness of farming issues and concerns were much higher.
- Web infrastructure developed by project influenced one person to move into state and start farming.
- Raised awareness among cafeteria personnel regarding locally available food products. Raised community awareness regarding potential for farm to school. Parents and PTAs began pushing for more local food.
- The project created a network that lets the community farms draw on one another's experience. They can be more effective in their communities and their educational programs.
- Identified a network of farmers who could interact and learn from one another
- Market creates a vibrant time and place for local residents to gather, socialize and interact with farmer/vendors
- Project has made better food available to consumers.

## Appendix E: Environmental benefits, n=20

- We have added two small start-up farms and the farmer in town this past year. It may be slow but it is positive.
- Reduced transportation related to food purchases because foods were delivered to a central location.
- Bridging into the second year, farmers grew specific crops for their new institutional customers, helping to maintain farmland and in a couple cases disillusioned farmers.
- Project staff will have details.
- I can only answer from a personal standpoint, but my experience was that several farmers grew a specific planting for our use after realizing our potential as customers.
- I really don't have the information to answer this question.
- Junior High students became aware of tribal involvement in local crops.
- Increased awareness of farming and its importance to the community and if no farms no food.
- Sustainable, small scale local agriculture becoming more viable. Protection & preservation of local rural farms.
- The project taught and promoted organic agriculture and seed saving.
- No direct changes to the environment could be measured or were from this project.
- None
- None known
- Dozens of youth and hundreds of community members learned organic gardening and farming skills and information on how to access and use locally grown vegetables.
- N/A
- Hard to place a value on this, because many of our town com. sponsored info tables (Green Com., Ag. Com. Con.Com..Planning Bd.
- Several hundred farmers registered in project have signed pledge to use sustainable farming practices.
- Shifts to local food meant less energy for transport.
- Connecting non-farmers with farmers resulted in increased awareness and understanding of soil health and other ways in which agriculture impacts the environment.
- The market supported by this project plus others operated by the project leader collectively have motivated some area farmers to transition to more sustainable farming practices.

## Appendix G: Surprising or unintended results, n=23

- There were no real surprises either positive or negative. The farmers market has completed its 3rd year and has grown in attendance and vendors each year!!!
- Students enjoyed the tour of the barrens and facilities.
- The growing enthusiasm for supporting a healthy farm economy was greater than I expected.
- The energy around the receiving process was a surprise; customers were so excited and engaged to receive their shares.
- Easily surpassed our goals. Farm to cafeteria quickly takes on a life of its own. Haven't mentioned the benefit to people eating in the target institutions yet.
- Exceeding our goals and realizing this is a topic that is easy for all stakeholders to see the benefits.
- Because of City Seeds initiative of this community supported market, our farm has since started our own CSA program which we learned how to organize and operate from their example.
- I don't know if this is surprising but the kids that are involved really learn so much from the program and it truly makes an impact in their lives.
- An Ag Commission is a means of changing and uplifting the relationship between the agriculture and the community. Towns and cities do want to retain farms and farmland and it is upon this shared interest that the Ag Commission is established: to provide voice and visibility for farmers.
- It was nice to see the students appreciate what the tribe is doing to support the tribal lands and communities.
- More vendors wanted into the market because of a increasingly positive reputation the market received just over the year of the grant.
- We have come to produce more seeds than needed just for passing on to the participating youth and young adults and are now facilitating the youth selling seeds in the community.
- That farmers all over the survey area had the same rate of credit denial and for the same stages of businesses.
- NA
- About 1/3 of the participants receiving subsidized summer shares chose to continue into the fall.
- I was under the impression that The Food Trust planned on doing market research at our market. They only set up a booth one time and we saw no results or benefit. They did buy us a banner with our farm name. It was very disappointing.
- We learned over several years how to shift the focus of the youth education from interactive but more theoretical lessons to training the youth in something that they would implement right away.
- Cooperative Extension received National Award for program.
- Improved support by residents for the Farmers market and the Ag Community.
- NA

- Students responded with delight at availability of fresh local produce. Many students had little home exposure to fresh produce.
- We learned that holistic management did not work well with community farms. Also community farms keep being created, often with no prior knowledge of the network or other supports.
- We learned that area farmers were not ready for the opportunity presented, but that there is great potential if and when that situation changes.

## Appendix H: Activities after grant ended, n=27

- Local Extension office has continued with Exploring the Small Farm Dream course.
- We have set up a the Strolling of the Heifers Microloan Fund for New England Farmers and financial and business management links on our website at [www.thecarrotproject.org/farmer\\_resources](http://www.thecarrotproject.org/farmer_resources).
- We have continued the work of City Seeds, involving youth and young adults in the seed project, market, and community education on food and farming.
- The project continues today, now in its 8th year.
- There are many more interest items for families and kids. Community organizations are making more use of the market for outreach.
- Continued work is being done on organizing producers, building the local farmers market, developing a food coop, and reaching out to citizens of the region.
- Farmers market continues.
- We continue to do the Seeds to Success program with limited funds but we are always searching for additional funding to make it better or at least sustain it.
- The community outreach remains; the collaboration between agencies has increased as well as the activity of new merchants for the Market.
- We have experienced more farmers, and more institutions becoming involved. Previously mentioned farmers growing specific crops for realized customers.
- This continues to be a focus for the organization, and they have expanded the geographic scope of ongoing farm to school activities.
- The Farmer/Cafeteria relationships continue to grow as institutions discover more ways to use local farm products. Also expanded interest beyond the boundaries of our project.
- Our SARE funded research and pilot projects have clarified our local goals, local opportunities, and enabled our community based non-profit to secure both private and public resources to expand the impact and effectiveness of our work increasing access to healthy local food.
- Our farm has started its own CSA program that is directly responsible for keeping hundreds of acres still farmed in Shelton, CT.
- Activities are on-going. Ag Commission Google groups listserv and site to post documents, ideas, resources and annual Ag Com member meeting/training.
- The Subsidized CSA share program has continued to expand. We are now up to 8 farms and 120 households or a total of 250 individuals benefitting. Farmers earn more, low income families have access to local fresh foods, and the community has been an acti
- None known
- A strong, structured farmers market along with increased awareness of local, fresh products and healthier eating habits in a ten-town community.
- Many, many... [www.rutlandfarmandfood.org](http://www.rutlandfarmandfood.org)
- We have continued the project for two years after the SARE funding was over. We plan to still continue aspects of the project in 2011 but our project

partner that helped us engage at risk youth in these activities has had to stop most of their programming.

- Project was funded through local donations after three year pilot project
- Continued Community participation in the Farmers Market, but also Community Financial support for specialty interest items for the market
- Activity has continued to grow beyond initial grant period. Additional farmers and buyers are involved. Annual surveys of participating restaurant buyers indicate increase in local food purchases from ~\$150K in 2006 to ~\$850K in 2009.
- The committee did not disband and has remained active. They will provide training in May 2010 at NY Wine & Culinary Center to teach institutional culinary staff how to use local food.
- Annual conference for community farms; small network for farm-based education; email list; NOFA CT maintains and shares list of community farms
- Project results have been widely circulated and people are still considering what to do next, how to utilize the information collected, how to move forward to link farms with local food interest.

## Appendix I: Funding Sources and Amounts

<b>Funding Source 1</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Funding Source 2</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Funding Source 3</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Makepeace Neighborhood Fund	\$2,500	Mass Dept of Ag Resources	\$5,000		
Gloucester County	\$20,000	American Recovery and Reintervention Act	\$55,000	Valero Fund for Children	\$25,000
Private	\$3,000	Thompson Health System	\$4,000	Agriculture Enhancement Board	\$2,875
Mary Clark Thompson Foundation		Private investor	\$		
Community Fundraising – Healthy Food for All dinners on farm	\$10,000				
Private foundations	\$150,000	CDBG	\$18,000		
Ag Com budget	\$400	MDAR	\$2,500	Makepeace Community Fund	\$2,500
AD Makepeace Foundation	\$4,000				
Private Philanthropy	\$225,000	Community Foundations	\$15,000	Maine Community Foundation	\$3,500
Sandy River Charitable Foundation	\$10,000	Anonymous individual	\$20,000		
CSREES Higher Education	\$200,000	Benefum Foundation	\$	Appalacian Regional Commission	
County Ag Enhancement Board	\$5,000	NY Wine & Culinary Institute	Reduced rates for use		



## Appendix J: Most Important/Valuable Outcome, n=31

- Increased good will between community leaders, neighbors, farmers, and support by the community toward agriculture.
- Students could see how the barrens benefit the community.
- The building connections between community members and farmers and development of a road map to create a more sustainable economic structure to support long term agricultural viability and local food security.
- Consumer education about local, healthy foods.
- It generates more support from our county than any other Extension program. They love the benefits...to farmers, youth and the community. And, it generates significant publicity -- so it is appealing to them in that way, as well.
- A person dedicated to this effort.
- Providing local healthy food to food service customers while supporting local farms.
- Building community interest and capacity for supporting local agriculture, especially among low income members of the community.
- A better understanding of farmers financing needs.
- Training for 23 people from 18 farms exploring new enterprises or businesses.
- We have begun to engage schools, community members and farmers in the issue of food security.
- It gave the community a much better idea of agriculture development.
- Facilitating relationships between farmers and operators
- Directly benefitting the actual farmers growing the food, giving us another resource to sell our products where to people who need and want it.
- The impact it makes on the youth that are involved. This is a major learning experience for them.
- NH farmers and NH towns and cities have a new local governance tool they can use to sustain agricultural enterprises. NH farmers know where to get information about this tool, know the process for getting this tool adopted in their town or city and how to participate.
- Student awareness of use of tribal lands.
- The monies available to outreach and market the market so to speak.
- Farmers are able to provide for less fortunate citizens while not sacrificing income for their own families. Low income families have improved access to fresh local produce and their diets have improved as a result.
- It was disappointing
- Gained community support for agriculture that resulted in a plan to identify obstacles/future opportunities, etc. encompassing ten towns.
- The formation of an on-going, long term effort to reinvent the local food and farm system.
- Building awareness of the importance of local agriculture and community engagement in local agriculture
- Getting agricultue directly in front of the consumer.
- The increase in attendance, which increased vendors' profitability, and the community attitudes toward our farm community (buy local) .

- Project created a common vocabulary that allowed people to talk about a new concept.
- The project started a process that continues today. It will take persistence and many steps to create generational change.
- Creation of the community farms network .
- The project provided support to help a community-based group generate some awareness and involvement of farmers.
- Education sessions for youth were excellent .
- Allowing farmers who do not operate with the CSA model tap that model for a part of their market share.

## **Appendix K: Suggested Improvements for Northeast SARE Community Grant program, n=19**

- Continue to support activities that will foster grown local, buy from local farmers, encourage people to start farming (however small).
- I do not feel qualified to answer this question.
- Not sure.
- Streamline application process and timeline to approval.
- Simplify and streamline the process where possible, within understanding of the need to be good stewards of funding.
- Again, LuAnne really handled the grant so I couldn't answer this question.
- Make the close out easier.
- Provide larger loans and to more applicants.
- Increase level of funding overall and per project; make all aspects of grant submission on-line; have a query/pre-app phase; shorten time frame from submission to award.
- This project was a bit of a stretch from the original intent of SARE Community Projects, but I think that community food program support is a critical direction as long as farmers also benefit.
- I am not sure how the group presented the results, but I think following up with the producers was smart on your part. I would love to hear what they thought they accomplished.
- They have now shifted their focus away from programs that work with youth and building community support for agriculture towards programs that have a more direct benefit to farmers, so programs like ours no longer qualify for these grants.
- Continue them for longer periods.
- Not really, in the case of our grant, it was most timely, we were floundering, when we got the grant and it got us over the hill.
- Increase the amount of funding available to applicants and raise the size of annual award.
- The grant reporting requirements have been unclear at times - they could be more clear
- SARE Project Database needs to be re-engineered
- Have someone to touch base with ongoing projects to get a sense of how they are going.
- Provide additional funds.

## Appendix L: Other Comments, n=16

- Like I said, encourage the next generation to begin part time or small farms. We someday must raise our food locally.
- This is a win/win project which makes it easily sustainable. Good for the farmer, good for the operator, good for the communities we serve.
- We would of course appreciate any other funding opportunities you have.
- Thank you.
- Because this survey is called 'Outcome Questionnaire' and you already have all my reports, I wasn't sure if you wanted answers pertaining to the direct results of the project, i.e. what the grant covered, or what happened as a result of the grant over time.
- This is a great program, thank you so much for your support.
- It's impossible for me to answer some of these questions as I was not directly involved in the oversight of the grant.
- A great program that ultimately brings collaboration among similiar towns to allow the resources that will enhance the agriculture sector in rural communities and provide future opportunities.
- This is just the farmer's perspective; we have no access to financial numbers or numbers of participants.
- Thank you.
- This is a great program, thank you so much for your support.
- Northeast SARE staff members David Holm, Helen Husher, Lee Hendrickwon very helpful, good to work with
- Project provided an opportunity for PI to do community work that her organization may not have supported without the grant.
- Organization began this work in about 1998; this project was one step in many.
- I am glad for the opportunity to be involved in the project
- City Seed, the funded organization, makes a huge contribution and it's good for them to link with SARE. Glad SARE is supporting projects like this one.
- Overall, Lots to Gardens project has gone on for over 10 years and consistently exceeds our expectations. This project represents one segment during a short time.

### Appendix M: Organizational Budgets, Employees, Founding Years

<b>2008 Budget</b>	<b>2008 Employees</b>	<b>Year Organization Began</b>
\$6,000	0	2007
\$500,000	6	1989
	6500	
N/A	17	1766
\$100,000	1	1999
\$400,000 (mine not recipients)	1	
N/A	N/A	1914
		2005
\$6000	0	1984
\$10,000	1	2005
\$400,000	5	2001
\$272,000	6	1999
\$75,000	1	2005
\$340,000	5	1960
\$2,500,000	65	1912
	1	1995
\$48,000	0.5	2004
\$272,000	3	1999
\$11,000	0	2006
\$250,000	1	2005
		1919

## **Appendix N: Northeast SARE Sustainable Community Grant Project Summaries**

1. **Farm Fresh Buying Local** (WV) sought to demonstrate to farmers the financial value of selling to chefs and help to connect chefs and farmers. Outcomes:
  - a. Produced statewide plan to provide education needed to help farmers sell to chefs
  - b. Created a strategic technology plan and specs for farmer to chef website.
  - c. Created awareness of need to enhance chefs' demand for local products
  - d. Great case example of farm profiting from sales of Bloody Butcher corn
  - e. Numbers: 62 farmers attended sessions; 49 signed to be on mailing list; 27 involved in informal cooperative; \$365,000 of product redirected
  - f. Received additional funding to follow through on initial plans
  - g. Current & active web site [www.wvfarm2u.org](http://www.wvfarm2u.org)
2. **Farm Transfer Planning: Tools for Revitalizing Rural Life** (NH) sought to enable and ease farm transfer processes through outreach, support teams, referral services, educational material development and dissemination, and training. Outcomes:
  - a. Established network of New England farm transfer services
  - b. Developed and still maintain: <http://farmtransfernewengland.net>
  - c. Developed directory of New England farm transfer service providers
  - d. Developed comprehensive topical library of linked resources for farm transfers
  - e. Produced brochure, press release, flyer
  - f. Numbers: >500 discreet visits to web in first 4 months; 75 people attended community meetings.
3. **City Seeds** (NY) sought to engage limited resource youth ages 14-24 in urban growing and marketing and seed saving. Intensive work with participants Outcomes:
  - a. Numbers: engaged 6 interns/fellows plus 16 youth in summer program
  - b. Developed grassroot Friends of the Market program
  - c. Began process to establish seed bank
  - d. Initiated curriculum development for after-school programs and workshops
4. **Canandaigua Lake Foodshed: Farm –to-Cafeteria Program** (NY) sought to raise awareness about using local farm produce and products in institutions and increase their volume. Outcomes:

- a. Numbers: generated \$9745 in new local product sales in one school year; increased farm-to-cafeteria sales 10-40% over 12 months; 6 institutions established new farm connections; 8 farms established new institutional connections.
  - b. Established web page:  
[http://www.cceontario.org/Agriculture\\_FTC.html](http://www.cceontario.org/Agriculture_FTC.html) AND  
[www.seekingcommonground.org](http://www.seekingcommonground.org)
  - c. Developed fact sheet: How we did it ... You can do it too!/Forming Farm-to-Cafeteria Connections in Your Community
5. **Town of Rumford Community and Economic Development Planning for Agriculture** (ME) sought to draft a community and economic development plan focused on agriculture; to get towns in the region to adopt the plan; and to establish the River Valley Agriculture Commission. Outcomes:
- a. River Valley Agriculture Commission was formed and was formally aligned with the River Valley Growth Council
  - b. Ag economic development plan was completed and endorsed by towns
  - c. River Valley Farmers Market was re-established
  - d. Shared use kitchen survey was conducted.
6. **Rutland Area Farm and Food Link: Community Farm and Agricultural Resource Center** (VT) sought to develop a place that could provide land and equipment for beginning farmers and an agricultural learning place for the public and to expand the market for locally produced foods. Outcomes:
- a. Completed a business plan for the center
  - b. Investigated numerous potential locations
  - c. Surveyed consumers regarding local food consumption
  - d. Produced and distributed Rutland County Locally Grown Guide (4<sup>th</sup> edition -- 2009-2010 – now available)
  - e. Numbers: sourced local food from 27 farms/value-added operations; 23 farms using “Heart of Vermont” branding materials
  - f. Still searching for land for center
  - g. [www.rutlandfarmandfood.org](http://www.rutlandfarmandfood.org)
7. **South Hero Land Trust Initiative** (VT) sought to create a Champlain Islands Grown guide to local agriculture; provide an educational program at the Champlain Islands Farmers Market; and create an South Hero Land Trust Farm Initiative Steering committee. Outcomes:
- a. Created, distributed and evaluated Champlain Islands Grown Guide to Agriculture
  - b. Conducted six special educational theme days at farmers market and surveyed market shoppers
  - c. Formed steering committee

- d. Numbers: 44 farms included in initial local food guide; 3,000 guides distributed through >30 businesses and information centers
8. **Agricultural Commissions: A New Resource for Sustaining New Hampshire Farms and Communities** (NH) sought to develop criteria for agricultural commissions in New Hampshire; develop and disseminate information about ag commissions; educate farmers and communities about ag commissions. Outcomes:
- a. Statutes to enable Agricultural Commissions in NH communities were developed and adopted by Legislature
  - b. Material explaining Ag Comms were developed and published in print and on line.
  - c. Web: <http://extension.unh.edu/Agric/AgComm/NHAGCom.htm>
  - d. Creating an Agricultural Commission in Your Hometown (organizational guide and PowerPoint)
  - e. Numbers: 25 communities have or are in process of establishing Ag Commissions; >70 people attended Ag Comm training program
9. **Seeds to Success Youth Farmstand Project: Using Social Marketing to Increase Community Presence and Create a Self-Supporting Project** (NJ) sought to help residents in three limited resource communities access locally grown produce via a retail outlet that was profitable for farmers, benefited the community and provided opportunities to special needs youth. Outcomes:
- a. Developed social marketing campaign to increase outreach and stand income and attract benefactors
  - b. Conducted community surveys to better target marketing messages
  - c. Became authorized as food stamp vendor
  - d. Initiated web development  
<http://gloucester.njaes.rutgers.edu/fcns/seedstosuccess.html>
  - e. Featured in USDA CSREES video magazine
  - f. Secured ongoing financial support
  - g. Numbers: Purchased and resold \$10,240 of produce from 6 local farmers; generated \$14,864 in sales; served 1,900 customers; redeemed 138 Farmers Market Nutrition Program vouchers; donated \$1,000 in food to qualifying charities
10. **Building Partnerships and Support for a Regional Farm-Link Effort in Southeastern Massachusetts** (MA) sought to help new and next-generation farmers start up. Outcomes:
- a. Formed advisory group
  - b. Developed action plan
  - c. Secured additional funding from MA Office of Small Business Entrepreneurship (\$20,000); Northeast SARE Research & Education; Northeast Center for Risk Management Education



- d. Employed Farms Forever Coordinator
  - e. Developed information and posted on-line at [www.umassd.edu/semap/farms\\_forever.cfm](http://www.umassd.edu/semap/farms_forever.cfm)
11. **Farmworker Project on social Justice in Organic Agriculture** (NY) sought to engage farmworkers in developing and piloting the Agricultural Justice Project. Outcomes:
- a. Developed information on line at [www.agriculturaljusticeproject.org](http://www.agriculturaljusticeproject.org) and <http://cata-farmworkers.org/english%20pages/laborstandardsorg.htm>
  - b. Developed methodology to conduct audits on participating farms
12. **Farm to School in Hancock County** (ME) sought to develop mutually beneficial purchasing relationships between farmers and schools. Outcomes:
- a. Developed Hancock County Farm to School Directory, with contacts to over 50 businesses and listings of 29 businesses
  - b. Established [www.healthyacadia.org/farmentoschool.html](http://www.healthyacadia.org/farmentoschool.html)
  - c. Catalyzed changes in school practices related to food
  - d. Secured additional funds
  - e. Numbers: 35 farms expressed strong interest in selling produce to local schools; 8 selling in fall 2007
13. **Foodlink Farmers Fulfillment Center** (NY) sought to develop a transportation and distribution hub to bring locally-produced items to local markets. Outcomes:
- a. Numbers: made 174 deliveries with 1,054,410 pounds of produce from 15 farmers
  - b. Developed farm-to-school, farm to institution partnerships
  - c. Developed new outlets for fresh, local produce
  - d. Enhanced farmers' ability for future planning
  - e. [www.buyhereny.com](http://www.buyhereny.com)
14. **New Ag Venture Support Program** (NY) sought to enhance an agricultural economic development program by training planning and zoning board members; providing Small Farm Dream short course; and creating a web-based farm resource contact point. Outcomes:
- a. Provided Small Farm Dream course
  - b. Provided agriculture training for planning, zoning board members
  - c. Numbers: 23 Small Farm Dream participants from 18 farms; 35 planning/zoning board members trained
  - d. New material added to web using existing Wayne County Cornell CS and Wayne County Industrial Development Agency sites: Guide to Farming in New York: A Beginning Farmer Project and link to NY Farm Link program
15. **Planning for Community Farms across Connecticut** (CT) sought to assist groups managing and operating community farms. Outcomes:

- a. Developed Farm-Based Education in Connecticut and posted at CT AES, Yale University web sites
  - b. Numbers: provided holistic management education to 5 community farms; engaged 60 participants from 11 farming groups in statewide Community Farming Conference
16. **Passamaquoddy Youth Wild Berry Package Development** (ME) sought to engage Tribal youth in agriculture and business through experiential education at and associated with Tribally-owned wild blueberry farm.
- Outcomes:
- a. Students visited farm and processing plant during spring pollination, blueberry harvest/migrant camp/berry raking, cranberry harvest & canning
  - b. Blueberry curriculum shared with participating schools
  - c. Students created and presented PowerPoint presentations using photos from farm visit
  - d. Held student design competitions for berry package and berry value-added package; blueberry recipe contest
  - e. Students created recipe books in English and Passamaquoddy
  - f. Numbers: 45 students and 7 teachers from 2 reservations visited farm; 30 students participated in recipe contest; 80 community members attended award ceremonies
17. **Roots and Wisdom Summer Youth Program** (NY) sought to provide organic produce for people in need; engage diverse youth to work, learn and lead together; help participants learn about sustainable agriculture, local food systems, good nutrition: Outcomes:
- a. 18 youth hired to participate in summer program; 17 completed program; 6 community sites provided produce & service by project; served 15,000 lunches; grew & distributed >5,000 pounds of produce; prepared community luncheon for >75 community supporters; logged >500 hours volunteer labor; expanded DIG Ideas newsletter from 309 to 504
  - b. Provided produce and community service to support meal programs at a food pantry, an adult lunch program and four summer lunch programs
  - c. Sold youth-grown produce at St. Luke's weekly Farmers Market
  - d. Donated >20% of produce raised by youth
  - e. Spearheaded local Be Vocal Eat Local activities
  - f. Secured additional funding
  - g. Secured newspaper and television coverage
18. **Engaging and Growing community through a Community Supported Market** (CT) sought to increase program income and vendor revenue for a

Community Supported Market and to recruit one additional farmer.

Outcomes:

- a. Numbers: increased program income by 100%; increased vendor revenue by 31%; recruited 2 new farmers
- b. Secured additional funding
- c. Market continues operating with two community-based sponsors in 2009
- d. [www.cityseed.org](http://www.cityseed.org)

19. **Building the Skills: Strengthening Farm-to-School Relationships, Strengthening Communities** (MA)(sought to develop an advisory group; provide training workshops; develop information; facilitate outreach and communication. Outcomes:

- a. Established advisory committee
- b. Provided three workshops on farm-to-school issues engaging diverse organizations
- c. Developed Massachusetts-specific farm to school resource guide available at [www.buylocalfood.com/farmtoschool.htm](http://www.buylocalfood.com/farmtoschool.htm) (no longer available there; but considerable farm to school information on MA Dept of Ag site
- d. Numbers: 6 people participated in 2 advisory meetings; engaged 29 people representing 22 organizations in workshops; 80 public schools purchased food directly from >60 farms; 24 private schools/colleges purchased food directly from 20 farms

20. **Building Community Health, Farm Viability, and Food Equity through Community Supported Agriculture** (NY) sought to expand and diversify participants in subsidized CSAs; increase farmer income; accept food stamps as CSA payment; raise additional program funds. Outcomes:

- a. Numbers: subsidized CSA reached 62 households representing 94 children and 93 adults; provided opportunity for 17 participants to pay with food stamps; diversified CSA to include 22 non-white households; established relationships with 16 community-based organizations and programs; engaged 32 participants in cooking/nutrition class; raised \$7,600 to subsidize shares and pay farmers full share price
- b. Secured ability for participants to pay for CSA shares with food stamps
- c. Engaged with Cornell University Eat Your Vegetables research project
- d. Prepared and circulated annual report
- e. 2009-2010 Buy Local Guide lists one CSA that accepts food stamps

21.No project

22. **Promoting Pennsylvania Cheese at Farmers Markets** (PA) sought to recruit more local cheese vendors to region's farmers markets and improve their marketing efforts and profitability. Outcomes:

- a. Customer survey indicated importance of flavor, preference for non-traditional styles, possible price ceiling of \$10/pound,
  - b. Added cheese marketing tips to Farmers Market Vendor Handbook
  - c. Created vendor banners and provided cheese sampling utensils
  - d. Numbers: surveyed 100 patrons at farmers markets regarding cheese purchasing habits and product preferences; recruited 3 cheese vendors
23. **Food Processing and Community Sustainability Project** (NY) sought to explore viability of establishing and operating a food processing/storage facility. Outcomes:
- a. Greatly enhanced community awareness about food processing potential through project advisory committee that met regularly, established operational guidelines, made fact-finding trips, identified key stakeholders, surveyed local farmers, held stakeholder forum, commissioned formal feasibility study
  - b. Secured additional funding from university dining service and farmer cooperative to support feasibility study that included buyer analysis, producer data, research on comparable facilities, first-cut analysis (legal/operational structure and estimated start-up capital, soft costs, operational costs); gross revenue requirements, required increases in local production
  - c. Feasibility study surfaced barriers in time to avoid investment
  - d. Identified farmer segment with strong value-added interest and connected them to opportunities
  - e. Numbers: 8 advisory committee members; 3 fact-finding trips; 60 people (32 farmers, 8 buyers, 31 others) + organizers attended public forum; survey and focus groups engaged >100 people; 60 hours research for feasibility study
24. **Growing Carver Community Connections** (MA) sought to strengthen fledgling farmers market. Outcomes:
- a. Numbers: market open 21 weeks; 75% of market customers are local residents; 41 vendors sold at market, with 26 from local and abutting towns; 24 community organizations had informational booths at market during season; 1500 copies each of 3 newsletter issues printed and distributed
  - b. Surveys conducted of market vendors, market customers, town and community organizations
  - c. Market promotion was enhanced
  - d. Market still operating [www.carverfarmersmarket.org](http://www.carverfarmersmarket.org)
25. **Mattapan Food System Project** (MA) sought to provide lower income urban residents increased access to healthy local food. Outcomes:
- a. Developed Mattapan Food and Fitness Council
  - b. Established seasonal farmers market in neighborhood

- c. Developed outreach materials in English, Spanish Creole
  - d. Promising start, but limited by short time and funds
26. **Bridging the Gap: Connecting Youth, Farms and Communities** (VT) sought engage community members (especially those with lower incomes) with local farmers. Outcomes:
- a. Teens conducted taste tests at farmers market (preparing/distributing food & recipes); developed /distributed educational materials; provided weekly local food lessons & produce samples for summer feeding program sites
  - b. Low-income families received weekly produce shares and cooking classes
  - c. Increased fresh produce in participating families' diets
  - d. Numbers: >300 food samples & recipes distributed; >2,000 print educational materials distributed; 12 families received produce for 8 weeks; 5 cooking classes; 2 farm events for public; 7 youth workshops on local food; 30 youth provided weekly food mini-lessons; 25 youth provided one-time nutrition lesson
27. **City Seeds: Phase II** (NY) sought to engage youth from food-access-limited neighborhoods to learn food and farming connections and develop a local seed bank. Outcomes:
- a. Numbers: 22 youth ages 14-19 completed 10-week Green Teen program; 7 young adults ages 16-22 completed internships/fellowships; 42 pounds garlic and 3 pounds other seeds produced in seed garden; 19 teens participated in fall farm hands-on program; >100 participants in Community Meal
  - b. Teen participants increased knowledge of food systems, sustainability, local foods
  - c. Farmers market added vendors, increased net market sales and food stamp sales
  - d. Curriculum collected/created about seed saving, community food systems, farming, marketing
  - e. Developed [www.cityseeds.org](http://www.cityseeds.org)
28. **The Carrot Project: Farmers' Financing Needs Assessment** (MA) sought to fill a research gap about debt and financing issues for smaller farms. Outcomes:
- a. Lender focus groups focused financing situation for smaller farms
  - b. Farmers' Financing survey profiled farmers' financing needs by geography, stage of business, type of business and quantified need
  - c. Outreach campaign was conducted resulting in national awareness of project results
  - d. Detailed *Are Northeast Farmers in a Financing Fix?* report available on line at [www.thecarrotproject.org](http://www.thecarrotproject.org)

- e. Numbers: ~5,000 farmers mailed introductory letter and follow-up postcards; 706 usable farmer responses to survey
29. **Creating Sustainable Food Purchasing Guidelines** (CT) in the Northeast sought to collect and provide information needed by institutional food purchasers to effectively purchase sustainably grown food. Outcomes:
- a. Sustainable Food Purchasing Guide available at [www.yale.edu/sustainablefood/food\\_purchasing.html](http://www.yale.edu/sustainablefood/food_purchasing.html)
  - b. Numbers: interviews with ~20 topical experts; \$1.6 million in Yale regional food purchasing
30. **Lots to Gardens** (ME) sought to assist limited-income residents grow food; enhance local farmers market; improve nutrition knowledge; expand teen opportunities; encourage teen civic engagement. Outcomes:
- a. Numbers: 10 summer youth gardeners; 3 youth interns; 133 youth program participants; 316 youth volunteers; >3,000 hours youth community service; >60 community & senior gardeners grew food in community gardens; >110 cooking classes offered at 4 sites attended by >820 people
  - b. Chef cooking demonstrations used seasonal, local food
  - c. Wireless EBT terminal provided to farmers market and WIC outreach enhanced
31. **Farmer and Community Feasibility Study** (NH) sought to examine feasibility of a cooperative market venture for local food. Outcomes:
- a. Created database of local farms and products
  - b. Monadnock Farm and Community Connection (MFCC) program initiated [www.antiochne.edu/anei/programs/coolmonadnock/farm\\_connection.cfm](http://www.antiochne.edu/anei/programs/coolmonadnock/farm_connection.cfm)
  - c. Numbers: 28 on-farm interviews; 667 years farming experience represented among interviewees; 2 community forums attended by ~100 people each; 5 food co-ops visited & interviewed; 40 steering committee members started MFCC
32. **Vermont Food Basket Program** (VT) sought to support pilot launch of multi-farm Community Supported Agriculture-inspired drop box scheme. Outcomes:
- a. Numbers: 15 farms engaged in business plan development; 7 business drop-off sites; 120 enrolled households; \$68,000 summer share gross; \$31,000 winter share gross; ~\$70,000 returned to farmers
  - b. Initiated winter share program
  - c. Comprehensive shareholder evaluation showed high (80% plus) satisfaction
  - d. Ongoing at [www.foodbasketvt.com](http://www.foodbasketvt.com)
  - e. One component of Food Hub project