

November 28, 2022

Dear SARE Grant Evaluators,

I am writing to express my support for Gwenyn Hill Farm's (Farmer Ryan Heinen) SARE Farmer Rancher Grant proposal.

As a pollinator program co-director for the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, my team has been working with farmers in the Wisconsin region to create and enhance pollinator habitat in agricultural settings. Ryan Heinen is one of the few graziers in WI who is dedicated to experimenting with multifunctional, native prairie habitat that may maximize benefits for both pollinators and grazers, alike. We are excited to work with Ryan to better understand and document if planted prairies of native grasses and flowers can maintain the forage quality that farmers require for their dairy and beef cattle while also sustaining floral blooms that support our native bees and butterflies.

In support of Ryan's efforts and as detailed in this SARE proposal, Xerces WI Pollinator Habitat Specialist Micah Kloppenburg will contribute general technical guidance and on-the-ground field assistance in surveying for pollinators and plants in the grazed paddocks. The information collected from this collaborative case study will be used by Xerces to develop a guidance document with recommendations for planted prairie grazing specific to Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest. In addition, we will help advertise, organize, and co-facilitate at least one pasture walk highlighting the prairie grazing work and complementing Ryan's grazing knowledge with our pollinator expertise.

Ryan's experience as a grazer in the Great Plains with The Nature Conservancy, locally here in WI with Gwenyn Hill Farm, and his completion of the intensive Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship more than adequately prepares him to take on a planted prairie grazing research. Ryan's insistence in and subsequent action in establishing diverse prairie habitat on the Gwenyn Hill Farm demonstrates his commitment to finding innovative conservation practices to sustaining wildlife.

As such, we are fully supportive of the proposal being submitted by Gwenyn Hill Farm and farmer Ryan Heinen and will commit to providing time and resources to continue implementation of the projects laid out in this proposal.

Sincerely,

Eric Lee-Mäder

Eric Lee-Mäder
Xerces Society
Pollinator Program Co-Director