

# *The Natural Farmer*

## **New Partnership Grants for Agricultural Professionals Working Directly with Farmers - Summer 2002 Special Supplement on On-Farm Research**

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The Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program (SARE) will now offer grants to Cooperative Extension, NRCS, and other agricultural professionals who work directly with farmers and who would like to conduct on-farm research or demonstrations in partnership with a producer.

The purpose of the Partnership Grant program is to build knowledge farmers can use, to encourage the adoption of sustainable agriculture techniques, to strengthen partnerships among growers and agricultural professionals and to explore how agriculture can be made more profitable through good stewardship.

Applicants must be affiliated with Cooperative Extension, NRCS, state departments of agriculture or private crop consulting firms, or represent an agriculturally oriented non-governmental organization that operates in the Northeast SARE region and works directly with farmers. The region is made up of Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia and Washington, D.C.

Research and demonstration can be in any area that speaks to key themes in sustainability, and can include alternative crops or animals, practices that make use of biological cycles for improved soil, plant and pest management, marketing, adding value, grazing, tool or technology development, agroforestry and water quality. Proposals should be relevant to farming and sustainability issues in the region, and should offer both research and outreach components so that results will be available to the wider farm community. The Northeast SARE portion of the budget is capped at \$10,000; matching funds are encouraged.

The first Partnership Grants will be awarded in March of 2003, and the postmark deadline for applications is December 2, 2002. Anyone interested in applying can request an application by calling 802/656-0471. These applications will be available in printed form in June, and will also be posted for downloading from the Northeast SARE web site at [www.uvm.edu/~nesare/](http://www.uvm.edu/~nesare/) at about the same time.

**Sustainability Grant Pre-proposals Due June 14**

The Northeast Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, which funds research and education grants and professional development grants, has made a change in the grant application process. For the 2003 funding cycle, SARE will require a pre-proposal—a one-page description of performance targets and project design—for early review. Writers whose projects are both compelling and consistent with the SARE outcome statement will be invited to proceed with a full application. Pre-proposals for 2003 must be postmarked on or before June 14, 2002.

This new process allows applicants to have proposal concepts reviewed before developing a detailed application. It also gives reviewers an opportunity to focus on projects that most advance the SARE mission. This change does not affect the Northeast SARE Farmer/Grower grant program, but does affect the Professional Development and the Research and Education grant programs.

Pre-proposal materials are now posted to the Northeast SARE web site at [www.uvm.edu/~nesare/](http://www.uvm.edu/~nesare/) and can be requested in hard copy by calling (802) 656-0471.