SARE: Advancing the Frontier of Sustainable Agriculture in...

Alaska

Project Highlight: Appropriate Technology and Cooperative Marketing to Increase Root Crop Production on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula

The Kenai Peninsula is the fastest-growing agricultural region in Alaska, with the number of farms increasing at nearly three times the rate of the rest of the state. But most of those farms are small – less than five acres – and selling direct to consumers at farmers markets or to local restaurants.

The Kenai Soil and Water Conservation District commissioned a study, completed in early 2017, that found for growers there to expand their distribution, they need to increase their production and look at coordinating marketing and distribution. The study also looked at potential cash crops. Potatoes were one of the crops identified.

The problem for small growers, however, isn’t how well potatoes grow. It’s how much work they are to harvest when you’re digging them up by hand with a pitchfork.

So, as a first step to expanding production and exploring cooperative marketing and distribution on the Kenai, the conservation district tested – and now rents out – a single-row potato digger and tub washer at a very reasonable rate.

It’s already paying off for the Alaskan farmers, where labor is always in short supply. One grower reduced his harvest and processing time from seven days to less than two. There is a four- to six-week window for harvest that allow the region’s growers to share the single machine.

For more information on this project, see sare.org/projects, and search for project number OW18-029.

SARE in Alaska

western.sare.org/sare-in-your-state/alaska

$915,958 in total funding

32 grant projects

(since 1988)

For a complete list of grant projects state by state, go to www.sare.org/state-summaries
SARE in Alaska

Grants awarded 2019–2024

Total awards: 4 grants

4 Farmer/Rancher

Total funding: $87,168

$87,168 Farmer/Rancher

Find a complete list of projects on page 3.

Farmer and rancher impacts 2019–2024

SARE grantees have reported the following impacts from their projects:

939 farmers participated in a SARE-funded project

77 farmers reported a change in knowledge, awareness, skills or attitude

16 farmers changed a practice

Learn about local impacts at:
western.sare.org/sare-in-your-state/alaska

Contact Your SARE State Coordinator

SARE sustainable ag coordinators run state-level educational programs for Extension and other ag professionals, and many help grant applicants and recipients with planning and outreach. Visit western.sare.org/state-pages/alaska to learn more.

Casey Matney
University of Alaska Fairbanks
9079072623443
camatney@alaska.edu

For detailed information on SARE projects, go to www.SARE.org

SARE is funded by the USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

This report includes summaries of competitive grant programs only. Some competitive grant programs that are no longer offered may be included or excluded from the totals in this report depending on the grant program and SARE region.
Alaska has been awarded $915,958 grants to support 31 projects, including but not limited to, 3 research and/or education projects, 2 professional development projects and 18 producer-led projects. Alaska has also received additional SARE support through multi-state projects.

### RESEARCH AND EDUCATION GRANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project #</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>SARE Support</th>
<th>Project Leaders</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| SW10-901  | Building Alaska Garden Soils from the Ground Up: Local Soils Research and Demonstration Projects | $48,497      | Dr. Stephen Sparrow  
University of Alaska Fairbanks |
| SW06-111  | Fruit and Berry Tree Crop Trial Program for Native Alaskan Rural Communities in Interior Alaska | $193,324     | Kendra Calhoun  
Cooperative Extension Service, University of Alaska Fairbanks  
Robert Wheeler  
Alaska Cooperative Extension Service  
Dr. Meriam Karlsson  
University of Alaska |
| SW97-012  | No-till Forage Establishment to Improve Soil and Water Conservation and Reduce Associated Production Risks | $99,209      | Dr. Stephen Sparrow  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  
Raymond Gavlak  
University of Alaska Fairbanks |

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM GRANTS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Project #</th>
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<th>SARE Support</th>
<th>Project Leaders</th>
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</table>
| EW15-022  | High tunnels at High Latitudes: Sustainable Crop Production for Alaska        | $32,315      | Dr. Casey Matney  
University of Alaska Fairbanks |
| EW10-024  | Educating Alaska Agriculture Professionals on Sustainable High Latitude Horticulture Production Practices | $50,002      | Jeff Smeenk  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  
Dr. Milan Shipka  
University of Alaska Fairbanks |

### FARMER/RANCHER GRANTS

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<th>Project #</th>
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<th>Project Leaders</th>
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</table>
| FW23-432  | Viability of all-season Greenhouses for Interior Alaska Using Geodesic Domes and Vertical Hydroponics | $25,000      | Michael Harrington  
The Magic Gardenbus LLC |
| FW23-415  | Determining the Productivity Benefits of Two Novel Kelp Farming Systems       | $24,868      | Melissa Skye Steritz  
Noble Ocean Farms |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project ID</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| FW23-410   | Using Flowering Cover Crops to Attract Natural Predators of Floriculture Pests | $25,000 | Meridith Rooney
                       |                                                      |         | Brown Dog Farm                            |
| FW20-361   | Alaska vegetable production using a high residue cover crop system to reduce erosion and decrease weeds | $12,300 | Jeff Smeenk
                       |                                                      |         | Alaska Specialty Crops                    |
| FW17-026   | Grafted Watermelon Production in Southcentral Alaska                 | $19,999 | Robert Brown
                       |                                                      |         | Robert Brown                               |
| FW13-149   | Selection and Propagation of Bog Blueberry Plants for Alaskan Food Security | $14,688 | Charles Knight
                       |                                                      |         | Knight Farms                               |
| FW12-046   | Monitoring Impacts of High Tunnels on Growing Conditions and Season Extension in Southcentral Alaska | $19,615 | Rachel Lord
                       |                                                      |         | Alaska Stems (formerly Harambee Gardens)   |
| FW10-007   | Using high tunnels to provide peony with a longer growing season to increase productivity in northern latitudes and cold soils | $14,751 | Jan Hanscom
                       |                                                      |         | Polar Peonies, LLC                         |
| FW08-017   | Weed Management and Soil Fertility on a Sub-Arctic Farm             | $14,803 | Michael Emers
                       |                                                      |         | Rosie Creek Farm                           |
| FW04-103   | Kuskokwim Native Association Farm Vegetable Marketing Project       | $3,750  | Diana Lehman
                       |                                                      |         | Kuskokwim Native Association               |
| FW02-045   | Propagation of Alaska Native Plants for Landscape and Restoration Use | $7,500  | Michael Emers
                       |                                                      |         | Rosie Creek Farm                           |
| FW02-004   | Sub-Arctic Top-Bar-Hive Beekeeping and Natural Honeycomb Production Combined with the Introduction of New Winter Hardy Red Raspberry Cultivars | $3,129  | Lance Gillette                             |
| FW00-050   | Propagation of Alaska Native Plants for Restoration and Landscape Use | $5,000  | Michael Emers
<pre><code>                   |                                                      |         | Rosie Creek Farm                           |
</code></pre>
<p>| FW99-021   | Development of Late Blight Forecasting Model                        | $6,078  | Bob Boyd                                  |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FW98-064</td>
<td>Propagation of Indigenous Lingonberry Species for Sustainable Development</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>Vickie Talbot</td>
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<tr>
<td>FW97-026</td>
<td>Growing American and Korean Ginseng in Alaska</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>David C. Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FW96-082</td>
<td>Establish More Efficient and Biological Practice for Bringing Forest Land into Agricultural Use through Sustainable Development Using Indigenous Species for Alaska</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>Vickie Talbot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FW95-111</td>
<td>Establish More Efficient and Biological Practice for Bringing Forest Land into Agricultural Use Through Sustainable Development Using Indigenous Species in Alaska</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>Vickie Talbot</td>
</tr>
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**GRADUATE STUDENT GRANTS**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GW15-015</td>
<td>Exploring the Importance of Locally Sourced Food in Remote Regions: insights from community supported agriculture in the Tanana Valley of Alaska</td>
<td>$24,970</td>
<td>Joseph Little UAF Anaastasia Thayer University of Alaska Fairbanks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW15-005</td>
<td>Sustainable Livestock Production on the Frontier: Plant and Soil Responses to Simulated Managed Grazing in Sub-Arctic Alaska</td>
<td>$24,329</td>
<td>Dr. Janice Rowell University of Alaska Fairbanks Laura Starr SNRES - UAF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW07-013</td>
<td>Community Supported Gardening and Food Security in Rural Alaska</td>
<td>$10,347</td>
<td>S. Craig Gerlach University of Alaska Fairbanks Philip Loring University of Alaska Fairbanks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ON FARM RESEARCH/PARTNERSHIP GRANTS**

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OW18-029</td>
<td>Appropriate Technology and Cooperative Marketing to Increase Root Crop Production on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula</td>
<td>$21,631</td>
<td>Heidi Chay Kenai Soil and Water Conservation District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OW18-031</td>
<td>The use of modified insect traps to attract essential native pollinators into greenhouses and increase pollination success</td>
<td>$49,177</td>
<td>Aleya Brinkman Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OW16-031</td>
<td>Building Leadership Capacity with Rural Alaskan Youth</td>
<td>$49,355</td>
<td>Greg Finstad University of Alaska Fairbanks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**OW15-030**  Insect IPM Protocols for Fresh Cut Peonies: Protecting a New Alaskan Export Crop  
$48,872  
Gino Graziano  
University of Alaska Fairbanks, Cooperative Extension Service

**OW14-040**  Interior Alaska Hay Field Renovation Project  
$49,449  
Brian Atkinson  
Fairbanks Soil & Water Conservation District  
Jessica Guritz  
Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District

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**Total funding from the USDA SARE program to Alaska**  
$915,958

For further information on projects, contact Western SARE at (406) 994-4785 or wsare@montana.edu.  
Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) is funded by USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).