

## What is SARE?

Since 1988, the Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) program has been the go-to USDA grants and outreach program for farmers, ranchers, researchers and educators who want to develop innovations that improve farm profitability, protect water and land, and revitalize communities. To date, SARE has awarded over \$3.6 million to more than 22 initiatives [1].

### SARE is grassroots with far-reaching impact

Four regional councils of expert practitioners set priorities and make grants in every state and island protectorate.

### SARE communicates results

SARE shares project results by requiring grantees to conduct outreach and grower engagement; and by maintaining an online library of practical publications, grantee-produced information products and other educational materials.

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

# Idaho

Project Highlight: *Cardboard Layering Deep Compost Mulch for Weed Suppression, Soil Health, and Profitability*

Bindweed can be the bane of farmers' existence. The climbing vine spreads easily by seed and rigorous root system, choking off crops and other plants along the way.

Annual tilling is not ideal for soil health, and the labor cost of hand weeding is high. What if farmers could find a low-cost, sustainable way to control bindweed by harnessing something as basic as cardboard?

Jonah Slopen, Sweet Hollow Farm, was encouraged by early results of burying cardboard beneath deep layers of compost to keep bindweed at bay. Slopen and his colleagues explored whether cardboard layers can suppress weeds, improve soil health and increase profits.

Cardboard is especially good at suppressing grassy weeds, like crabgrass, by blocking seed banks from the sun. But researchers have suspected that bindweed, with its aggressive, horizontal root system, could make its way through or around a blanket of cardboard.

Slopen at others at Sweet Hollow Farm decided to give it a try. They cleared out the weeds within 30-by-96 feet high tunnel, laid down two layers of cardboard, covered it with a thick layer of compost, and planted tomatoes.

The cardboard biodegraded and the soil beneath it is rich with worm activity, aggregate formation and moisture retention – all signs of soil health. Bindweed is not a problem inside the tunnel. They also found a significant decrease in weed pressure in outdoor plots of squash.

For more information on this project, see [sare.org/projects](http://sare.org/projects), and search for project number FW22-393.

## SARE in Idaho

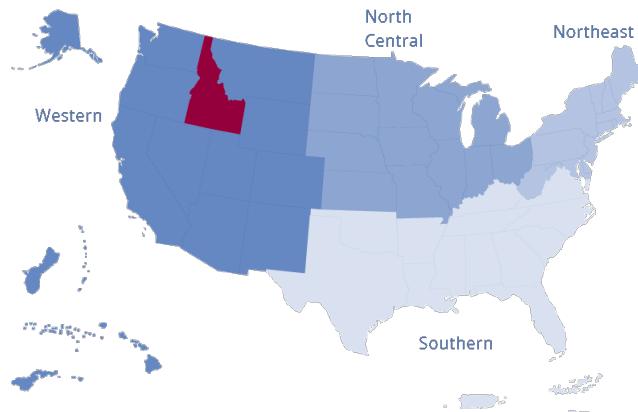
[western.sare.org/state-profiles/idaho/](http://western.sare.org/state-profiles/idaho/)

**\$3,648,472  
in total funding**

**22 grant projects**

(since 1988 [1])

For a complete list of Idaho grant projects, go to [projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/](http://projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/)



# SARE in Idaho, 2021-2026

This is a summary of recent SARE-funded activities and impacts in the state. To search all SARE projects visit [projects.sare.org](https://projects.sare.org). For a list of all projects in Idaho visit [projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/](https://projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/).

## Grants awarded

### Total awards: **22 grants**

- 3 Farmer/Rancher
- 9 Research and Education
- 4 Professional Development Program
- 1 On Farm Research/Partnership
- 4 Graduate Student
- 1 PDP State Program [2]

### Total funding: **\$3,648,472**

- \$74,754 Farmer/Rancher
- \$2,870,316 Research and Education
- \$388,493 Professional Development Program
- \$75,000 On Farm Research/Partnership
- \$119,909 Graduate Student
- \$120,000 PDP State Program [2]

[2] The Professional Development Program (PDP) State Program is a non-competitive award that funds the activities of the state coordinator(s). See more below.

For a complete list of Idaho awards, visit:  
[projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/](https://projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/)

## Farmer and rancher impacts

SARE grantees have reported the following impacts from their projects:

**5,258 farmers participated in a SARE-funded project**

**23 farmers changed a practice**



Photo credit: Matt Yost

Learn about local impacts at:  
[western.sare.org/sare-in-your-state/idaho/](https://western.sare.org/sare-in-your-state/idaho/)

## 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-profiles/idaho/](https://western.sare.org/state-profiles/idaho/) to learn more.

Grant Loomis  
University of Idaho Extension  
(208) 788-5585  
[gloomis@uidaho.edu](mailto:gloomis@uidaho.edu)

Carmen Willmore  
University of Idaho Extension  
(208) 886-2406  
[cwillmore@uidaho.edu](mailto:cwillmore@uidaho.edu)



National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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