Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education

www.sare.org

## 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 $8.5 million to more than 103 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 Sloven, Sweet Hollow Farm, was encouraged by early results of burying cardboard beneath deep layers of compost to keep bindweed at bay. Sloven 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.

Sloven 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, and search for project number FW22-393.

## SARE in Idaho

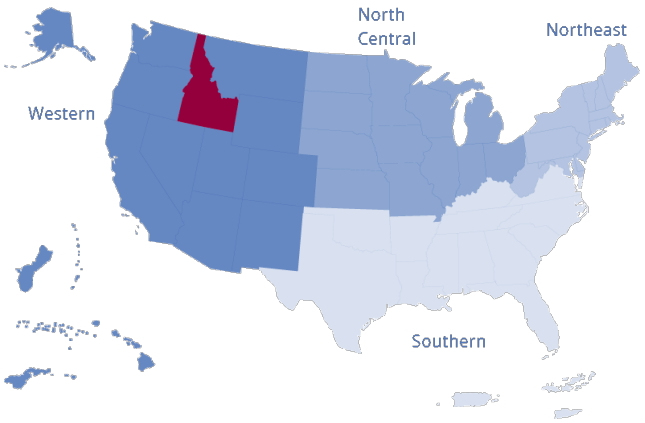
western.sare.org/state-profiles/idaho/

**$8,525,066 in total funding**

**103 grant projects**

(since 1988 [1])

For a complete list of Idaho grant projects, go to projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/




[1] These totals reflect available data; complete information may not be available for all grant programs prior to 2016.

# 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. For a list of all projects in Idaho visit projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/.

## Grants awarded

### Total awards: **30 grants**

| | |
|---|---|
| 4 | Farmer/Rancher |
| 10 | Research and Education |
| 4 | Professional Development Program |
| 1 | On Farm Research/Partnership |
| 8 | Graduate Student |
| 2 | PDP State Program [2] |
| 1 | Local Ed & Demo (formerly RGR) |

### Total funding: **$4,326,989**

| | |
|---|---|
| $104,754 | Farmer/Rancher |
| $3,220,315 | Research and Education |
| $388,493 | Professional Development Program |
| $75,000 | On Farm Research/Partnership |
| $239,882 | Graduate Student |
| $240,000 | PDP State Program [2] |
| $58,545 | Local Ed & Demo (formerly RGR) |

[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.

## Farmer and rancher impacts

SARE grantees have reported the following impacts from their projects:

**5,651 farmers participated in a SARE-funded project**

**36 farmers changed a practice**



Photo credit: Matt Yost

For a complete list of Idaho awards, visit:
projects.sare.org/state-fact-sheets/

Learn about local impacts at:
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/ to learn more.

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SARE Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education

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