

Report on Dakota SARE Program Activities in 2008

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The Dakota SARE Program is a joint effort of NDSU, SDSU, and the USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program. The mission of the program in the Dakotas is promoting SARE and professional development in sustainable agriculture among educators in North and South Dakota in order to achieve the NCR-SARE Professional Development Program mission:

Educators who are knowledgeable in the general concepts of sustainable agriculture and motivated to work in partnership with farmers, ranchers, and the general public on developing programs and activities that enhance the sustainability of rural communities and the food and agricultural system.

Input from a council of advisors was solicited several times in 2008 in order to help develop priorities for the program and to maintain connections with ag educators and farmers in North and South Dakota.

Table 1. Dakota SARE Advisory Council members and affiliations.

| Member Name | Affiliation |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Robin Salverson | SARE AC, SDSU CES |
| Hans Kandel | SARE AC, NDSU Extension |
| Karen Pearson | SDSU CES |
| Roger Haugen | NDSU Extension |
| April Borders | SDSU CES |
| Jim Hennessey | NDSU Extension |
| Brad Brummond | NDSU Extension |
| Roger Gates | SDSU CES |
| Ron Weiderholt | NDSU Extension |
| Pandy Pittman | Wall School Vo-Ag |
| Cheyenne Erickson | NDSU Extension/FRTEP |
| Julie Garreau | Cheyenne River Youth Project |
| Joe Dunn | Sitting Bull College |
| Jim Beddow | Rural Learning Center |
| Karri Stroh | FARRMS |
| Jayne Murray | Farmer |
| Gabe Brown | Farmer |
| Jim Gilkerson | Farmer |
| Ronny Mackaben | Farmer |
| Linda Grotberg | Farmer |
| David Clay | PDP Grantee |

Table 2. Meeting times for the Dakota SARE Advisory Council in 2008.

| Date | Location |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 7 February | Mandan, ND |
| 18 April | Pierre, SD |
| 14 May | Teleconference |
| 10 October | Pierre, SD |
| 25 November | Medina, ND |

In 2008 the following activities were carried out in order to promote the SARE program information services and grant opportunities in the Dakotas:

16 January – Booth at Marketplace for Entrepreneurs, Grand Forks, ND
31 January – Meet with NPSAS Director, Dickinson, ND
5 February – Presentation at Garrison FFA winter ag show, Garrison, ND
5-6 February – Mandak Zero Tillage Farming Association Workshop, Minot, ND
8 February – Northern Great Plains Research Laboratory Customer Focus Group, Mandan, ND
8-9 February – Booth and Presentation at Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society Conference, Mandan, ND
13-16 February – Organic Seed Foundation Conference, Salem, OR (Supported by NDSU)
19 February – Presentation for New York Certified Organic February Workshop (via satellite), several Dakota locations
20-23 February – Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service Conference, LaCrosse, WI
26 February – SOAR Meeting, Fort Yates, ND
7 March – Meet with NPSAS Director, Dickinson, ND
10 March – OCIA ND Chapter 1 meeting, Bismarck, ND
23-28 March – SARE National Conference, Kansas City, MO
31 March – 1 April – Presentations at NDSU Extension Spring Conference, Bismarck, ND
3 April – University of North Dakota Seminar, Grand Forks, ND
6 May – Soil Presentation at Heart River School, Dickinson, ND
21 May – Soil Field Trip for Heart River School, Dickinson, ND
16 June – NPSAS Program Committee Meeting, Jamestown, ND
17 June – Presentation to NDSU Extension Leadership Meeting, Fargo, ND
27 June – Gabe Brown Ranch Tour with Dickinson State University and NRCS, Bismarck, ND
30 June – Radio Interview for Fargo AM Radio Market
21-22 July – Display at NPSAS Summer Symposium, Madison, SD
22-23 July – Circle of Sustainability visit to Pine Ridge, Kyle, SD
29-30 July – Circle of Sustainability visit to Cheyenne River, Eagle Butte, SD
30 July – Circle of Sustainability visit to Standing Rock, Fort Yates, ND
4-5 August – Circle of Sustainability visit to Turtle Mountain, Belcourt, ND
5-7 August – Circle of Sustainability visit to Fort Berthold, New Town, ND
18-21 August – Dakotafest Booth, Mitchell, SD
28 August – Burleigh County SCD Tour, Bismarck, ND
11 September – Presentation at NDSU Extension Specialist Meeting, Fargo, ND
17-18 September – Circle of Sustainability visit to Spirit Lake, Fort Totten, ND
24-25 September – Presentation at NRCS Field Day, Glendive, MT
14 October – Grants discussion with Turtle Mountain Community College, Belcourt, ND
27-29 October – Presentation at NDSU Extension Fall Conference, Fargo, ND
17 December – Presentation at ND Dept of Ag Local Foods event, Dickinson, ND

There were also 1) planning calls, visits and emails throughout the year for NPSAS events in North and South Dakota, Chuck Francis' PDP Project, SDSU Cooperative Extension events, Tri-Societies Committee on Organic and Sustainable Agriculture Annual Conference, South Dakota Federal Agencies integration (via NRCS), and the NCR-SARE Circle of Sustainability efforts; 2) promotion of SARE Grants and assistance to grant writers, 3) maintenance of DakotaSARE.info website, and 4) facilitation of SARE Youth Grants in the Dakotas.

This promotion resulted in several successes across the Dakotas. Three Graduate Student Grants were awarded, five Youth Grants were awarded, four Youth Educator Grants, one Professional Development Grant, four Research and Education grants, and five Farmer Rancher Grants were awarded to Dakota educators and researchers.

The primary activity of the Dakota SARE program is professional development of agriculture educators in the various areas of agricultural sustainability identified as priorities by the Advisory Council. In 2008 these trainings by the State Coordinator, mini-grants for trainings by other educators, and travel scholarships so educators could attend conferences and field days were carried out.

Organic Agriculture Initiative

Afternoon workshop held in Mandan, ND for seven educators on the 7th of February.

Travel Scholarships to five educators to attend the NPSAS Winter Conference or the MOSES Annual Conference.

Outcomes of these activities included:

Three of our Travel Scholarship awardees teamed up after the MOSES conference and delivered three field tours about organic agriculture and organic soil management, with funding from the ND Department of Agriculture.

One of our Travel Scholarship awardees gave a presentation about sustainable and organic agriculture to a legislative panel touring his county.

Two of our Travel Scholarship awardees helped the State Coordinator organize a three state video workshop on organic agriculture that included speakers from NDSU, NYCO and Cornell University.

Soil Conservation Initiative

One one-hour workshop about cover crops presented with Hans Kandel to 35 Extension educators in Fargo, ND on 29 October.

Mini-grants were provided to put on a distance education program about soil health for NDSU Extension and to support a no-till/soil health workshop in Bison, SD for Extension, SCD, and NRCS educators.

One travel scholarship allowed an educator to attend the regional SCD meeting.

Outcomes of these activities included:

The interest in cover crops is spreading across the Dakotas. After the session with Hans Kandel the State Coordinator was invited to take part in two more sessions about cover crops in 2009. This is the most interest in SARE that has been exhibited in 4 years!

One of our Mini-Grant awardees has assisted the State Coordinator in setting up further presentations about soil health and has applied for a second mini-grant to continue his PDP project in 2009.

Our Travel Scholarship awardee later applied for a mini-grant to help with a large field day held at her farm where she discussed soil conservation issues and soil health with the visiting public. She will also be presenting at the NPSAS Winter Conference in 2009.

Circle of Sustainability Listening Sessions

In cooperation with Tribal Colleges, NGOs, Extension in North and South Dakota, and area farmers and ranchers, the SARE program took part in listening sessions to gain insight in how to better serve the residents and educators on Reservations. Multi-day meetings were held at Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Cheyenne River, Standing Rock, Turtle Mountain, and Fort Berthold Reservations in July and August. A

one day visit was held in September with educators and students at Cankdeska Cikana Community College in Fort Totten.

A mini-grant helped cover costs for planning meetings about agricultural priorities by agency representatives at the Standing Rock Reservation.

Eight Travel Scholarships helped Extension educators attend the listening sessions, attend a follow up field day about no-till gardening near Fullerton, ND, or attend a conference about agriculture and science education at Tribal Colleges.

Outcomes and later activities that grew out of these included:

The small but significant strides in cross-cultural connection made via these listening sessions were so impressive to the Dakota SARE Advisors that continuing to strengthen these connections and taking this approach to other communities became the primary focus of the 2009 Dakota SARE plan of work.

In September the State Coordinator led a tour for 2 Extension educators and 1 FCS Indian Credit Outreach educator to David Podoll's farm where the Podolls toured all four of us through their no-till, organic garden. All three received travel support for mileage and lodging. All three have expressed interest in further work in this area. Two attended the Great Lakes Indigenous Farming Conference in 2009 and one wrote a Youth Educator Grant to incorporate some of the garden techniques into a youth garden program. Two of these educators were Circle of Sustainability partners.

The State Coordinator presented a 1 hour tele-workshop for an NGO educator at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation about how to access seeds via the GRIN website for the National Plant Germplasm System. This educator was a Circle of Sustainability partner who may be submitting a Youth Educator Grant and who may be seeking further travel support from SARE in 2009.

Another of our Travel Scholarship awardees is planning a "women in agriculture" project and a SARE sponsored youth project for 2009 which was funded. She is one of our Circle of Sustainability partners at Cheyenne River.

One of our Circle of Sustainability partners at Fort Totten, ND has been using SARE handbooks in courses offered at Cankdeska Cikana Community College since first meeting with the State Coordinator in an informal visit in 2006. After the visits in 2008 he and partners at three other Tribal Colleges in North Dakota have sought to develop new projects in agriculture and natural resources with NDSU.

One of our Circle of Sustainability partners at Kyle, SD borrowed vegetable production DVDs from the State coordinator and showed them to residents of Pine Ridge via community access television.

Several Circle of Sustainability partners in South Dakota will be presenting at the NPSAS Winter Conference in Huron, SD in 2009 and several from Pine Ridge and Rosebud also submitted a SARE R & E proposal.

A one-time grant opportunity of up to \$275,000 for Native American communities was developed and announced by NCR-SARE by spring 2009. This was a direct outcome of these listening sessions and the call for proposals adapted language directly from the conversations.

Sustainability for Youth Initiative

A workshop on developing sustainable agriculture programming for 4H youth was held in Bismarck on 31 March to 8 Extension educators.

Promotion of the SARE Youth Grants in North and South Dakota resulted in 13 successful applicants funded by this NCR-SARE program.

Outcomes of these activities:

One of the invited speakers for the youth session in Bismarck has been so enthused by the experiences of being asked to present to youth educators that she wrote up a set of soil health activities that will now become the basis for the new 4H Soil Health Activity Trunk in North Dakota. Her curriculum has been forwarded to Vo-Ag, 4H, NGO, and other youth educators in both North and South Dakota.

A similar workshop for SDSU Youth Development Educators was discussed through 2008 and in fall, SDSU CES decided to hold it at the spring conference.

SARE Youth Grantees were invited to speak at the 2009 NPSAS Winter Conference.

SARE Youth and Youth Educator Grants have developed as a regional program coordinated by North Central Region SARE.

Sustainability and Nutrition Initiative

A Julie Garden-Robinson teamed up with the State Coordinator to present a fun workshop on nutrition and how it relates to agriculture in North Dakota. Sustainability in this production was a part of the presentation to 17 educators.

Travel Scholarships were awarded to two SDSU Extension educators to attend the SARE National Conference in Kansas City.

Outcomes of these activities included:

The workshop has led to increased interaction between SARE and the NDSU nutrition program. Other specialists are now looking to SARE for support to work on “bridge issues” like local foods.

Planning for a sustainability training for nutrition educators in South Dakota continued throughout 2008 and in fall SDSU CES decided to hold one during the spring extension conference.

Both Travel Scholarship awardees agreed to speak at the NPSAS Winter Conference in Huron, SD in 2009.

Sustainability and Community Initiative

One travel scholarship was awarded to an NDSU Leadership Specialist to attend the SARE National Conference in Kansas City.

Outcomes of these activities included:

Ongoing discussions led to the decision by SDSU CES to hold a training session at spring extension conference in 2009 for Community Leadership educators.

Leadership educators with NDSU are now more supportive of what sustainability might mean after the travel to the National Conference and conversations about holding a Circle of Sustainability type of listening session with a community working with the Horizons program have resulted.

General Sustainable Agriculture Education

Five mini-grants were awarded for programs on beef production, gentle livestock handling techniques, a tour of a farm demonstrating several elements of sustainability, integrated pest management, and soil biology.

Seven travel scholarships were awarded for attendance at a range of conferences and field days.