**2021 Northeast SARE Research and Education Grant Program Full Proposal Worksheet**

*This Word document is provided as a courtesy to help you develop your proposal content offline, ensuring it is accurate and complies with the word limits before copying and pasting into the online grant management system.* ***It is NOT intended as a substitute for the application itself*** *as you are required to provide more information in the proposal than what is provided here. Be sure to refer to the Call for Proposals—posted at* [*www.northeastsare.org/ResearchEducationGrant*](http://www.northeastsare.org/ResearchEducationGrant)*—for complete descriptions of proposal sections and review criteria.*

**Project Summary (450-word limit).** This is a standalone summary of the project; the summary should not refer to subsequent parts of the proposal by using language like, “This will be described later.” The summary should have two elements, as follows. Include the subheadings in the text you enter to identify each element.

Problem and Justification: A brief description of the problem or opportunity to be addressed, the target farmer audience affected, and justification for the project’s need from the perspective of farmers.

Solution and Approach: The proposed solution to the problem or opportunity and the approach for reaching or carrying out the solution.

**Performance Target Narrative (100-word limit).** Write a narrative statement that combines all sections of the performance target as one sentence.

**Statement of Need:**

**Description of Problem or Opportunity (400-word limit).** Explain the problem or opportunity for farmers in the Northeast that the project will address, the causes, and why it is important to sustainable agriculture in the Northeast and will contribute to Northeast SARE’s outcome statement. Provide the number, type, size and location of Northeast farms potentially affected. Provide evidence (data) to justify claims made in the description of the problem. Data may come from the literature, the unpublished work of others, farmer surveys, extension surveys, census data, etc.

**Solution and Benefits (400-word limit).** State the proposed solution(s) that will be the focus of the project’s educational efforts. Describe the expected measurable benefits to farmers. Provide evidence that supports how and why the solution is expected to be effective. Claims made about the proposed solution must be justified; the same sources listed in the section above may be used. The education component of your project must rely on proven information that can benefit farmers. The research component of a project (optional) should add to the body of established work, and support the education program by engaging farmers in the study of new practices or strategies that could improve or expand on existing knowledge, skills, attitudes or awareness. Examples include education about the use of known cover crops while studying optimal seeding rates or new cover crop species, or, the development of farm transfer plans while evaluating the most effective farm goal-setting tools.

**Farmer Interest (300-word limit).** Specify the number and type of farmers you will engage as participants, and the total pool, including geographic range, from which you will recruit. These should be farmers who experience the problem or opportunity and can benefit from the proposed solution.

Describe evidence you have that farmers need or want the work proposed by your project. Justify statements of interest with numerical data (not expressed as percentages of unknown numbers) from surveys or other quantified inquiries conducted by the applicant (or others) that demonstrate farmer interest in participating in the project.

**Achieving the Performance Target:**

**Education Plan (500-word limit).** Describe the education plan you will conduct to teach farmers. Describe the knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes they will acquire and how it will lead them to address the problem or opportunity identified previously. The plan must be realistic, describe content and methods appropriate to engaging farmers, and be likely to achieve the performance target. The education program should be based on information already proven useful and suitable for adoption (ie. the education plan cannot be contingent on this project’s research results, if applicable). However, engaging farmers in the project’s research activities may be an integral part of the educational approach. The education plan must include:

* Realistic number of farmers who will participate.
* Methods for recruiting and engaging those farmers.
* The type of project interactions and educational experiences in which farmers participate (in sequence) to facilitate learning (e.g., workshops, demonstrations, webinars, consultations, etc.).
* The specific knowledge, awareness, skills and attitudes farmers will acquire as a result of participating. List key educational curriculum topics.
* Methods for supporting farmers as they learn, plan and take actions (e.g., post-training contacts by email, phone, in-person; record-keeping tools or templates; fact sheets, videos and other instructive materials; etc.).

**Milestones (Limit of 12 milestones – 75 words each).** Milestones list logically connected learning, skills acquisition, knowledge gain, increased awareness, or changes in attitude that farmers will accomplish, in sequence, as they participate in activities outlined in the education plan (and research activities as appropriate). The milestones will also include verification steps. The Performance Target is not a milestone—rather, milestones are the changes or actions that will lead to the performance target. Milestones describe what farmers (quantified by number) will experience as they interact with the project team– from recruitment and pre-training engagement, through educational experiences, and support for implementation of new practices, to documentation of those practices and resulting benefits, to providing that information to the project team during verification. Milestones are written in terms of what the farmers will do and learn; they are not plans of work or list of activities that the project team will perform. If funded, the project’s milestones will become the benchmarks for required progress reports; as such, they must be verifiable (measurable). Each milestone is written as a statement with three required elements and one optional element. These are entered online into separate fields:

* What beneficiaries do and learn: the project interactions or educational experiences in which farmers participate; and the specific knowledge or skills they learn or the intermediate action step they complete as a result of participating;
* A realistic number of farmer beneficiaries who participate;
* (Optional) Number of agricultural service providers who participate; and
* Proposed completion date. Recurring milestones may be combined; list the completion date for these as its final occurrence.

**Verification Plan (300-word limit)**. Describe how and when data will be collected to measure the extent to which each milestone was achieved and, ultimately, how the performance target was reached. The verification plan should include:

* Data collection methods and tools project leaders will use to collect milestone and performance target data from farmers.
* Timing of when data will be collected and/or reported to you by farmers.
* Supportive guidance and tools you will provide to farmers to inform them of the performance target, help them record data about actions and results, if appropriate, and be prepared to respond to your requests for data about their follow-up actions.

**Research – Only for projects that include a research component:**

**Research Hypothesis or Question (100-word limit).** If the project includes a research component, state the hypothesis(es) or research question(s) to be tested or evaluated. Please note: Any proposed research must have the potential to add to the information that farmers will acquire during the education program. Since research results cannot be guaranteed, the extent to which participants achieve the performance target must not depend on the findings of the research program.

**Research Description (1,200-word limit).** Describe the research proposed to test the stated hypothesis(es) or research question(s).

For field and laboratory research, describe the elements listed below. Include the subheadings in bold in the text you enter to identify each element.

1. Treatments: Proposed treatments with rationale for selection.
2. Methods: Experimental design, experimental unit size, and treatment application.
3. Data Collection and Analysis: Data to be collected, measurement protocols, and statistical methods of analysis.
4. Farmer Input: How farmers contributed to the development of the hypothesis and treatment selection, and the ways they may contribute to conducting the research.
5. (Optional) Additional Information: Other relevant features of the proposed research.

For social science research, describe the elements listed below. Include the subheadings in bold in the text you enter to identify each element.

1. Study Population(s).
2. Methods: Experimental design, methods and instruments to be used.
3. Data Collection and Analysis: Data to be collected, measurement protocols, and methods of analysis.
4. Farmer Input: How farmers contributed to the development of the research and its design, and the ways they may contribute to conducting or participating in the research.
5. (Optional) Additional Information: Other relevant features of the proposed research.

**Project Team:**

**Key Individuals (400-word limit)**. Briefly describe yourself as the project leader (principal investigator) and other key individuals (cooperators) who will devote significant time to the project. Descriptions include name, title, business or organization, skills, relevant experience, and primary responsibilities on the project. You should demonstrate your team’s ability to manage the project and conduct its activities. If some key individuals have not yet been identified, provide a description of the type/qualifications of the persons who would be recruited to fill those positions. Also name any other individuals and their organizations, outside of your own, that will be receiving funds requested from SARE to carry out the project, as well as those organizations who will be contributing significant money, personnel time, facilities or equipment to the project.

**Project Advisory Committee (350-word limit)**. An advisory committee consisting of at least two farmers and one agricultural service provider (eg., Extension, NRCS or other federal or state agency, private or non-profit organizations, veterinarian, or other farm advisor) is required to provide input on project design and implementation. Additional people representing other affiliations, such as researchers, may also be included on the committee. The committee does not include Key Individuals, but may include others involved in the project. Provide the names and affiliations of those who will serve on the advisory committee. Describe the extent to which advisory committee members have provided input during proposal development, and how they will be engaged during the project, for example in assessment of farmer interest, providing feedback on preliminary findings, and sharing project activities and findings. Describe how and when advisory committee meetings will occur.

**Previous Work:**

**Literature Review (1,200-word limit).** Outline the scientific foundation and merits of your project and identify and explain the references used to understand the problems, challenges, and opportunities your project will address, as well as current knowledge associated with the proposed solution and educational methods used. Include only those sources most relevant to your project. This section is the place to convince reviewers that there is a body of knowledge that provides a compelling rationale for the project. It is applicable to projects with and without a research component. Clearly describe what others have done and how your project will complement or build upon the results of previous efforts. Show that you are informed about previous relevant research or initiatives including grants from SARE if they are relevant to your project. The national SARE database of projects (projects.sare.org/search-projects) contains projects from all four SARE regions and is searchable by state, type of grant, author and keyword.

**Citation List.** Provide a list of publications referenced in the literature review and elsewhere in your proposal. Include only those citations directly related to the proposed project.