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North Central SARE Grant Programs Accepting Applications

URBANA – Sustainable agriculture research and education grant awards up to \$22,500 are now available to farmers, ranchers, youth and youth educators in the North Central Region that includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

The North Central Regional Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program recently opened a call for proposals for their Farmer-Rancher Grant Program and their Youth and Youth Educator Grant Program. More information is available at www.northcentralsare.org.

Sustainable agriculture covers a broad range of issues, including integrated pest management, soil erosion control, soil quality improvement, water quality improvement/wetlands, cover crops, crop/landscape diversity, nutrient management, agroforestry, value-added and direct marketing, beneficial insects, organic agriculture, and proactive weed control.

“Farmer-Rancher grants support efforts by farmers and ranchers to carry out sustainable agriculture research, demonstration, and education projects on their farms,” said Rick Weinzierl, Illinois SARE Coordinator.

Nearly \$400,000 is available for this program, he added. Grants to individuals are capped at \$7,500, and grants to three or more farmers working cooperatively on a single project are capped at \$22,500. Grant recipients have 25 months to complete their projects for sustainable agriculture research, demonstration, and education projects.

“Applicants must identify specific problems and potential solutions to those problems,” Weinzierl said. “These grants are not to be used for everyday farming expenses. Projects that involve whole farm systems and/or a youth component are encouraged.”

The deadline for applications for the Farmer-Rancher grant program is Dec. 2.

The Youth and Youth Educator grants are for youth, ages 8 to 18, and youth educators. These grants are intended to provide opportunities for youth in the North Central Region to learn more about sustainable agriculture – farming and ranching that is ecologically sound, profitable, and socially responsible, he said.

“Remember, 21st-century farming involves growing food and fiber and can include market gardens and urban agriculture,” Weinzierl said.

Youth grants should support on-farm research, demonstration, or education projects by youth ages 8 to 18. Research and demonstration projects are intended to be hands-on efforts to explore sustainable agriculture issues and practices. Education projects can involve teaching others about sustainable agriculture or attending a sustainable agriculture conference, workshop or camp. Youth grants are capped at \$400 each.

Youth educator grants are for educators to provide programming on sustainable agriculture for youth. These grants are capped at \$2,000 each.

The deadline for applications for the Youth and Youth Educator grant program is Jan. 12, 2012. Those interested in submitting a proposal are encouraged to attend a grant-writing workshop on Sept. 21 in Springfield. In addition, Illinois applicants are encouraged to contact Weinzierl directly for assistance and guidelines on grant proposal preparation.

For more information about Illinois SARE, visit www.illinoissare.org.

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