



Northeast SARE’s Definition of a Farm and Topics Eligible for Northeast SARE Grants

Northeast SARE offers grants to farmers under its Farmer Grant program and to organizations collaborating with farmers under its Partnership Grant program. The question often arises: *What is a farm, and what type of activity is considered farming?*

For the purposes of Northeast SARE grants, a farm is defined as a commercial operation with an established farm income of at least \$1,000* from the regular harvest and sale of crop, nursery, livestock, or aquaculture products. Common examples are grain, fruit, vegetable, dairy, and livestock operations.

The ultimate goal of agriculture, as defined by the USDA, is to provide food and fiber to meet human needs. For example, farms raising plants or livestock that are part of the food or fiber value chain, like hay for livestock feed or stocker cattle for finishing, are eligible operations.

Some operations that do not produce food or fiber crops, like nurseries and turf farms, would qualify based on the fact that they are land-based and a part of the agricultural economy. Businesses that supply only services, raw resources, or land amendments to farmers would not; examples of these business would include a mobile slaughter unit, a fish emulsion fertilizer producer, or a compost company. Please see below for additional examples of eligible and non-eligible businesses.

Farms affiliated with an institution or an organization may qualify as a farm for Farmer and Partnership Grants if they produce and sell agricultural products.

Eligible

Eligible Food or and Fiber Operations:	Activity / Products:
Mushrooms from owned land or structure	Mushrooms for food or medicine
Sheep, llama, alpaca	Fiber
Aquaculture, land tanks, on-farm ponds, salt water farms	Cultured fish or shellfish, kelp for human consumption
Nurseries, greenhouses	Vegetable, fruit, berry, other food crops or plants
Honeybees/sugar bush	Honey or maple syrup
Eligible Nonfood and Non-fiber Operations:	Activity / Products:
Turf, nurseries, greenhouse, trees	Ornamental landscape products, Christmas trees
Horse breeding that is land-based with pasture and hay production	Sale of horses

Not Eligible

Not eligible / Not a farm:	Activity / Products:
Composting company (not part of a farming operation)	Production and sale of compost, vermicompost, worms
Landscaping company	Installation or maintenance of plants
Horse stable	Training, boarding, lessons
Suppliers of animals or organisms to pet stores or pet owners	Ornamental fish, sea animals, coral
Fisheries	Wild-caught, marine or fresh water
Woodlot (not part of a farming operation)	Biochar, pulpwood, firewood

Examples of Topics and Their Eligibility for Northeast SARE Grants

Proposals should touch on one or more topics that address agricultural sustainability issues such as profitability, environmental or health risks, natural resource conservation, farm labor, and quality of life. Many other topics may also be addressed provided the issue is substantive, the project results have clear potential to benefit farmers, and the approach explores new ways to advance sustainable agriculture.

In addition to traditional agricultural topics focused on the production and marketing of crops and livestock, SARE also funds proposals that address agritourism, aquaculture, on-farm composting, farm energy, land conservation, urban agriculture, and value-added processing. Both traditional and nontraditional topics are eligible for SARE funding *if the proposal describes a clear and strong connection to working farms and if there is a compelling potential benefit to agriculture*. Please see examples below.

Northeast SARE Could Fund:	Northeast SARE Could NOT Fund:
A proposal aimed at farms growing turfgrass to be sold to golf courses or landscapers.	A project aimed at golf course managers or landscapers.
A training program for extension educators that improves their ability to advise farmers on labor laws.	A program that simply catalogs existing labor laws.
A study of composting effects on soil fertility.	A proposal to study the economic impact of a composting business that is not clearly part of a farming operation.
Research into on-farm production of rabbits for a niche meat market.	Research into the use of rabbits for therapy in hospitals.
Business training for farms engaged in agritourism to help them improve their financial plans.	A project to establish ski trails that simply cross over farmland.
An effort to improve breeding stock for aquaculture operations.	An effort to improve harvest or marketing methods for non-cultivated fishes.
A project to strengthen woodlot management owned by farmers.	A woodlot project directed overwhelmingly at all types of rural landowners.
A pasture management project on a horse farm aimed at improved stewardship and reduced costs.	A proposal to support riding lessons or boarding of horses.
An institutional marketing effort that offers farmers better access to public school markets.	A project to develop and deliver classroom education materials on farming.
An urban farm cooperative marketing plan.	Education of community gardeners to help them grow extra vegetables.

Sometimes an idea for a project will fall in a gray area and it is up to the applicant to persuade reviewers that there is significant potential benefit to other farmers and to the region's agriculture. Contact Northeast SARE if you have any questions on eligibility.

*\$1,000 is the minimum income requirement to be classified as a farm as defined by USDA National Agricultural Statistical Service.

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