

## SARE Seeks Applicants for 2005/2006 Farmer plus Professional Grants



*drip irrigation system*

In the dry and windy southeast corner of Colorado, where annual rainfall averages just 11 to 18 inches per year, growers have been laying drip lines with the help of the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds since 2003. But early users of drip irrigation, which conserves soil moisture and reduces water inputs, are still struggling to manage their new systems. In particular, growers are trying to figure out how to get water from the drip lines, typically buried eight inches deep, to the germinating seeds near the soil

surface.

Armed with a [Producer Plus Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education \(SARE\) program Grant](#), Irrigation Specialist Jim Valliant, of Rocky Ford has teamed up with vegetable grower Brent Morris to investigate the efficacy of “Agriblend,” a product that may help pull water from the buried drip line and store it in the seedbed. Their research also will test other ways to conserve soil and water, including planting oats as a windbreak for young seedlings and exploring new tillage methods to protect the buried drip lines.

“We’re looking forward to seeing the yield and input data so that we can incorporate it into our future planning efforts,” said Joel Moffett, NRCS District Conservationist, Baca County, Colo.

SARE’s Producer Plus grants, also known as [Partnership and On-Farm Research grants](#) in SARE’s [Northeastern and Southern regions](#), are for agricultural professionals who work directly with farmers – specifically Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, NRCS personnel, non-governmental organizations, and others – who are interested in developing on-farm demonstration, research, or marketing projects related to sustainable agriculture. The grants are to advance the understanding and widespread use of sustainable techniques and to strengthen partnerships among farmers, extension, non-governmental organizations, and NRCS personnel

In the [Western SARE region](#), agriculture professionals can apply for [Professional+Producer grants](#) to fund projects that focus on on-farm research, demonstration, or educational outreach in an area of sustainable agriculture. Projects must include at least one farmer/rancher acting as technical advisor. Funds of up to \$10,000 are available for projects including one professional and one producer; projects involving one professional and three or more producers may receive

up to \$20,000.

[On-Farm Research grants](#) from [Southern SARE](#) are available in amounts up to \$15,000 to agriculture professionals who seek to conduct research or marketing projects on the farm with a farmer/rancher cooperator. Priority areas include: beneficial insect habitat, alternative crops/animals, organic agriculture, sustainable marketing projects, sustainable grazing systems, soil organic matter building/protection/management, increasing sustainability of existing farming practices, appropriate technology, and agroforestry.

[Partnership Grants](#) of up to \$10,000 are available to agriculture professionals in the [Northeast SARE region](#) who work directly with farmers to research or demonstrate sustainable agriculture methods. Projects should aim to increase farmer knowledge and use of sustainable agriculture techniques, including sustainable marketing strategies, and strengthen the relationships between farmers and agricultural professionals.

2006 SARE Partnership/On-Farm Research/ Professional + Producer Grant Proposal Deadlines

[Northeast \(Partnership\)](#): November 29, 2005

[South \(On-Farm Research\)](#): November 15, 2005

[West \(Professional + Producer\)](#): December 12, 2005

### **About SARE**

Since 1988, the [Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education \(SARE\) program](#) has helped advance farming systems that are profitable, environmentally sound and good for communities through a nationwide grants program. The program, administered by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA, funds projects and conducts outreach designed to improve agricultural systems and natural resources.

NRCS field office professionals frequently collaborate on SARE-funded projects and are valuable partners to the SARE program. NRCS staff serve on SARE's national Operations Committee, on regional Administrative Councils, on State committees and are actively engaged as technical advisers and collaborators on SARE-funded research grants around the U.S.