Utah State University and Western SARE Name New Regional Director

Utah State University and the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program (SARE) are proud to announce the selection of Dr. Teryl Roper as the program’s new regional director. Dr. Roper will assume his duties on July 1, 2014. The current director, Dr. V. Philip Rasmussen, will retire after 20 years with Western SARE on June 30, 2014. Dr. Roper and Dr. Rasmussen will work closely together during the transition. The director is responsible for jointly coordinating a mission-oriented program with an annual budget of approximately $4 million, which funds five distinct grants programs.

Dr. Roper is currently Professor and Head of the Department of Plant, Soils and Climate at Utah State University. A former Extension Specialist, he received his Ph.D. in Horticulture from Washington State University. He plans to transition his experience and love of agriculture into his newly announced position as Western SARE director.

Western SARE and the director’s position will remain at Utah State University, which has served as the Host Institution for the program since 1993.

Founded in 1988, Western SARE is a research and education grant program focused on the promotion of sustainable farming practices in the West. It serves 13 states and four Pacific territories. Western SARE engages farmers and ranchers in the research process, a unique and critical component to the program’s success, according to Roper.

“It increases the knowledge base on one side and helps educate on the other,” Roper said. “It’s the best of both worlds.”

Now, Roper is looking forward to leading the organization and using his experience to fulfill the mission of Western SARE.

“I’m most looking forward to working with the staff, growers and other agriculture leaders,” Roper said.

While he is looking forward to his new position, Roper acknowledges that the success of the organization he will soon lead is due in large part to the direction of its retiring leader, V. Philip Rasmussen.

“His vision and leadership for Western SARE for the past 20 years has made us successful,” Roper said. “I have very big shoes to fill.”

*SARE is a program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that functions through competitive grants conducted cooperatively by farmers, ranchers, researchers and agricultural professionals to advance farm and ranch systems that are profitable, environmentally sound and good for communities.*

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