

## 2007 Farmer/Rancher Grant Application

Please type or print legibly in dark ink. There are five pages to the application (not including the budget). Do not exceed the page limit. If your proposed project requires assistance from a financial institution, please enclose a letter from them indicating their commitment. (This letter is only necessary if you must take out a loan in order to carry out your project.)

**Project Title:** (The title lets reviewers know what your project is about at a glance – be descriptive but not too wordy.)

The River Hills Purebred Poultry Marketing Alliance Research Project.

**One or Two Sentence Description of Project** (This will be posted on the SARE website if your project is selected for funding.):

**Our group has come together out of a need to expand potential marketing options for its poultry output beyond those that are available in the immediate area. Further, we are seeking to develop and expand a market for the year around production of table eggs from our various heirloom poultry flocks.**

**Project Leader:** Kelly Klober

**Address:** 136 Zumwalt Rd. Silex, MO. 63377

**Phone:** 573-485-7261

**Fax:**

**E-Mail:** pbr4320@sbcglobal.net

**Is the applicant a Farmer/Rancher?** Yes

**Is this an Individual or Group Project?**  
Group Project.

**Grant Funds Requested:** ~~\$6,963.50~~ \$5,987.00  
(This must not exceed \$6,000 for an individual grant or \$18,000 for a group grant.)

**Have you previously received a SARE Farmer/Rancher Grant?** Yes

**If yes, was the project successfully completed?** Yes

**If project was not completed, explain why not.** \_\_\_\_\_

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**1) Describe the problem your project will address, and provide a detailed description of the innovative plan you are proposing to test possible solutions to the problem.**

Our group came together through a mutual interest in preserving and promoting heirloom poultry breeds as a means to give small farm poultry flocks greater sustainability.

Initially, we have been marketing our birds through a local farmers' market and surplus eggs were sold there or directly to a small group of neighbors and friends. The members have been building numbers and improving performance levels and now need to develop market outlets that; 1) are larger and beyond those that are available locally and 2) are believed to be a premium market for these types of production.

Essentially, we are approaching the next era of poultry breed preservation work and believe that this is the point that soon will be reached by all across the country with heirloom poultry varieties and the more traditional, natural types of production.

By the numbers we see the needs to be addressed as; 1) breeders need to explore and more fully evaluate marketing options from a regular presence on the internet to directory or catalog sales, 2) birds that are being performance bred need to become the norm, 3) hatching egg sales are an option badly in need of upgrading and especially if mail shipment of live birds is lost, and 4) table egg sales need to be moved beyond the egg as a mere generic product.

Our plan is to work through an alliance of small-scale producers of a number of breeds to form a plan of work to guide movement beyond local markets. To those ends we propose: 1) the creation of a trial web presence, 2) a trial of a publication that is both a catalog and a basic manual for the breeds being produced, 3) a number of outreach projects from which to draw input, 4) defining market demand potential as we build a data base and how to best address it, 5) explore shipping methods for cost effectiveness for both seed stock(chicks and started birds) and hatching eggs, 6) exploring how best to market a table egg as a distinct product of our region.

**2) Describe how you will add to or build on previous work done on this problem.**

Most of us have been involved with sustainable poultry production for some time, have helped others to launch heirloom poultry flocks (Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Co., most recently), and have been active in farmers' markets and youth poultry work. We have regularly participated in the Small Farm Today show with poultry exhibits and have made frequent presentations on breed preservation topics.

Many have also been active in a Food for Forty Families program run by the Missouri Extension to bring farm fresh goods and eggs to urban families. There our eggs have been sold for a true premium and have been exposed to some specialty stores. A strong demand has been detected if we can work out a plan for effective quality control and retail presentation.

Heirloom breeds have been brought before a great many now and their potential value has been recognized. They are, however, still not widely available and most lines are in need of selective breeding for improved economic performance. We are hoping to build into this moment of opportunity greater economic viability, an improved base for better and more effective distribution, and to return them to their historical role as not mere novelties but real, working fowl. This is the role that they held through at least the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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**3) How will you share information from your project with other farmers/ranchers? Be innovative in your outreach. (Each project must include outreach – the more the better.)**

We propose outreach in a number of ways including the following:

- a) The creation of a web site and internet point for answering on-line question,
- b) The creation of a primer/directory of breed and their availability,
- c) Participation in a number of nationally known and promoted regional events such as Family Farm Day 2008 and Fall Poultry Fest,
- d) Participation in the Small Farm Today national show at Columbia, Missouri,
- e) The preparation of a number of articles such as recent local market feature articles than ran with New Farm Online and ACRES USA,
- f) Appearance at various poultry themed events and fairs, and
- g) Continued involvement in the sustainability program of the Missouri Department of Agriculture.

**4) SARE defines sustainable agriculture as good for the environment, profitable, and good for your family and community. How will you evaluate the environmental, economic, and social impacts of your project and how will those impacts contribute to the growth of sustainable agriculture?\***

Environmental; we will continue to position heirloom birds for range and/or loose housed production systems as the true alternative to confinement housed poultry. Small flocks of birds offer an important option for greater family farm diversification thus giving the farm a more natural balance and greater environmental integrity. These birds also tend to be hardier and more durable, suited to cold housing, and thus there is far less energy consumption involved in their keeping.

Economic; we are advocating the creation of purebred poultry flocks that will be largely self-sustaining. What will emerge beyond the need for initial seed stock should be a market for well-bred, performance improving “new blood” to then be added to established flocks. We hope to advance to poultry the type of thinking that is now seen with purebred sheep or swine.

On the table egg side we hope to move beyond the selling of simple surplus products to the marketing of one of the great staples of the American diet. We hope to find a way to create an identifiable “River Hills” region egg to be sold in nearby urban areas.

Societal; butter and egg money were about as close to a regular paycheck as some family farmers ever came. By building on the positive image associated with heirloom varieties and traditional production methods we hope that at least a portion of that can be returned along with continuing to cultivate positive images and buyer goodwill.

Small scale poultry keeping will come all the way back only if it is built upon a real business sense. That kind of thinking needs to be fostered in all family farm endeavors.

Through outreach events, market research, buyer feedback, and participant records we will endeavor to create a data base that will substantiate these beliefs. We do know that we have in place a cooperative community of like minded producers and that with our early, tentative steps we are starting to detect strong interest in what can come from these birds. Although having been in a state of stasis for over fifty years, these birds do have a proven history as good

performers in a simple, small farm environment.

\*Environmental, economic, and social impacts can be evaluated in a variety of ways, depending on your personal goals and farming/ranching operation. Impacts could be evaluated, for example, by anticipated effect on water resources, soil erosion, wildlife, cash flow, community, and quality of life. Call the NCR-SARE office if you have any questions about these indicators, which are an important part of this application.

**5) Describe your farm or ranch operation if you are submitting an individual proposal. If you are submitting a group proposal, describe your operation and provide names, addresses and a brief description of the other farmer/rancher members of the group.**

Kelly and Phyllis Klober 573-485-7261  
136 Zumwalt Rd.  
Silex, Mo 63377

My wife Phyllis and I have a small farm of three acres on which we produce a variety of pure poultry breeds long associated with the small farms of the Midwest. We have also raised purebred hogs, rabbits, and other types of poultry. We use simple, cold-type housing, hatch our own replacements, sell chicks and started birds locally, and I have written extensively in the poultry and small farming fields.

Other Group members:

Paul and Kelly Harter 573-581-7093  
1010 S. Muldrow St.  
Mexico, Mo. 65265

Paul and Kelly operate a farm of 36 acres and maintain small flocks of several different heirloom poultry breeds kept in pasture pens. They also maintain 2 large market gardens and sell chicks, eggs, and produce locally.

Mark and Michelle Wagstaff 573-384-5859  
Silex Elevator Rd.  
Silex, Mo. 63377

Mark and Michelle run Dry Dock Farm in Silex. In additions to maintaining and breeding several types of poultry, they manage an extensive market garden and also sell chicks, started birds, eggs and produce locally.

Nathan and Sarah Price 636-579-9391  
RFD  
Foley, Mo. 63347

Nathan and Sarah operate a small hatching and brooding facility. They also keep heirloom poultry breeds for selling chicks and hatching eggs locally.

**6) List the names, addresses, and phone numbers of any cooperators. Include how they will participate or what they will contribute.**

E Kelly Klober

Signature of Applicant (must be a Farmer/Rancher)

## **FNC07-687, The River Hills Purebred Poultry Marketing Alliance Research Project**

Reviewers particularly liked the outreach plan in this proposal which includes many different ways of sharing information including a website, a print directory, talks at events, articles, and work with the state department of agriculture. Reviewers were also impressed with the expertise and collaboration efforts of the farmers who will carry out the project. The farmers participating showed that they are experienced in working with heritage breed poultry. They made it clear that they have done a good deal of on-farm research to identify the characteristics they would like to breed for in their poultry. It is important to explain your qualifications for carrying out a grant project. Tell reviewers about the experience you have or research you have done on your topic. The problem was clearly identified as well as a specific plan for solving it. Reviewers felt the budget was appropriate and just what was needed for the project.

Some reviewers felt the project could be improved by providing an explanation of how the preservation of heirloom poultry breeds is linked to sustainable agriculture. Even if a linkage like this seems obvious, it is better to explain it. Each reviewer has sustainable agriculture expertise but they may not be experienced in the specific topic a grant is addressing. It is always a good idea to have someone unfamiliar with your grant project review your proposal before turning it in. If there are questions identified in your pre-review, answer them in the proposal since the review committee members will likely have similar questions.

Another area that could be strengthened is the evaluation of impacts. Reviewers prefer specifics rather than global statements of benefits. If it is possible to measure any of the impacts you expect from your proposal, explain what you will measure and how. Provide a specific plan on how you will evaluate your project's success.

Since this project involves setting up a website, reviewers would have liked more information on how the computer expertise would be provided.