

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title: Research Manager for the Illinois Nutrient Research and Education Council (NREC or the Council).

Reports to: NREC Executive Director

Last update: December 11, 2017

Direct Reports: The position does not have any direct reports but does work closely with research grant recipients on program execution.

Overall Purpose and Main Objectives:

Provides technical agronomic expertise to the NREC Staff, contractors, Council and committees in the development and implementation of effective research projects and the dissemination of research results. Provides leadership on developing strategic research priorities that align with the overall goals of the organization and promote nutrient efficiency and stewardship.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

Research Coordination

- Provide leadership to establish a strategic platform for planning future research needs. Assists the Council with prioritization of nutrient research subject areas and helps ensure that the NREC Requests for Proposals (RFP) clearly communicate the desires of NREC to the research community.
- Provides guidance to the Council regarding timing of RFP notices, submission of proposals, review process and contract execution.
- Reviews all research proposals, and helps the Council determine the proposals that merit peer review.
- Recommends individuals in the research community that are qualified to provide peer review services to NREC based upon their experience, credentials and position in the research community.
- Establishes the criteria that the peer reviewers shall follow and share the reviews in summary form with reviewer name and personal information redacted. Work with the sub-committee of the Research Committee to review the peer review reports in full to ensure full transparency.
- Assists the Research Committee in evaluating the proposals, peer review reports, and budgets for the projects. Makes suggestions in areas where protocols, methods or equipment utilization can be improved to assure better execution of research projects.
- For NREC approved projects, serves as the Research Manager on behalf of NREC. This includes communicating with the research investigators and other project managers to ensure mutual understanding between NREC and the project investigators/project managers regarding the objectives and expectations of the project.
- As needed, visits the research sites to evaluate methods and determine acceptable progress on projects. Ensures that semi-annual and year-end project reports are submitted to NREC in a

timely manner and are meaningful in their explanation of project progress, research protocols utilized and that project progress is occurring.

- Reports to the Council on the progress of each project and recommends the continuation, modification, or discontinuation of project work based upon evaluation of the project as per the project proposal and executed NREC contracts.
- Work with the Executive Director to standardize the final and mid-year reports for each project in a manner which allows for full transparency on the status of NREC funded projects.
- Work with current Research Coordinator to ensure knowledge transfer

COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

- Works with the NREC Executive Director and communications contractors to ensure timely preparation and dissemination of research/project related reports and project updates to the Council.
- Assist preparing materials that transfer the information gained from NREC projects to Illinois producers, the public, and regulatory agencies. Seek to meet the applied use of NREC research to current and anticipated producer needs and request.
- Collaborate with funded researchers to encapsulate research results, recommendations, and best management practices for an NREC communication platform.
- Assists in the coordination of research forums with researchers and Council members.
- Interact and foster relationships with research investigators and project managers
- Interact extensively with public and private sectors concerning research opportunities, needs and direction, and their implementation and evaluation.
- Interact with customer stakeholders to disseminate research results and recommendations.

Required Qualifications and Skills

Education: Master of Science in Agronomy, Soil Science, Environmental Sciences or similar degree program

Experience:

- Master's degree and five years of general research experience; or equivalent combination of training and experience. All degrees must be received from appropriately accredited institutions.

Competencies:

- Knowledge of principles and techniques of soils, fertilizers, environmental sciences, crop production or related areas
- Knowledge of research principles and protocols.
- Field Trial Management Experience
- Ability to interpret complex written research protocols
- Ability to work independently or with minimal supervision and in a team-oriented environment.
- Ability to effectively plan, manage and review multiple and complex projects
- Demonstrated analytical and report writing skills

- Ability to communicate effectively in oral and written form
- Knowledge of developing and implementing and/or reviewing a project budget.
- Strong relationship cultivating skills to build a strong support network among the research community
- Demonstrates strong interpersonal, written and oral communication skills in dealing with the public, organizations and staff, and public news media.
- General computer and Microsoft Office skills
- Strong organizational skills

Physical Requirements:

- Work may extend beyond normal business hours as business needs dictate.
- Able to work from home and travel. Must have valid State of Illinois driver's license, and be willing to use personal vehicle for business travel (reimbursement will be at prevailing IRS mileage rate).
- Limited overnight travel in-state and out-of-state as needed.

Compensation:

- Commensurate with experience and abilities.

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by the individual assigned to this position. They are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, or skills required of the individual in this position.

Hiring is subject to review of criminal and driving records.