

Alberta Cooperative Agricultural Extension System - Executive Director Position

If you are a dynamic, talented, forward-looking individual who is ready for key leadership role in agricultural extension, we'd like to chat with you!

About Us

The Alberta Cooperative Extension System (ACcESs) is a consortium of agricultural organizations with an interest in strengthening agricultural extension in Alberta.

Comprised of producer boards and commissions, applied research and forage associations, agricultural service boards, allied industry, federal research centres, colleges and universities, RDAR, and Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation, the consortium has identified several key gaps in the extension system. These gaps include a reduced number of knowledge specialists available to extension agents and producers, the need for extension methodology training, and an opportunity for improved integration and coordination of the delivery system.

Funded by Sustainable-CAP, a federal-provincial-territorial program delivered through the provincial department of agriculture, the network has undertaken an extensive visioning and industry engagement exercise. Through several stages, the new organization will move from a pilot phase with a volunteer board to an incorporated not-for-profit with an elected board, focused on service to the industry.

Your Role

In addition to working with the board to stand up the new organization, as Executive Director you will play a key role in recruiting, empowering, and supporting specialist staff, articulating a compelling vision to industry organizations, and generally building extension capacity in Alberta. We're looking for someone who has the vision and skills of a "builder".

Your Responsibilities

- Lead within a board governed environment, translating the strategic directions of an oversight board into actions and decisions as you engage with industry, stand up a new organization, and support your team.
- Recruit a team of experienced, industry-focused knowledge specialists who can translate and integrate research findings within an Alberta context, provide technical advice and mentoring to extension agents in the field, and speak at seminars, short courses, and field days across Alberta.
- Recruit an extension methodology specialist to lead communities of extension, provide methodology training and mentoring to agents in the field, and work with colleges and universities to develop micro-credit and full-credit courses on knowledge transfer methodology.

- Engage with the agricultural industry as an avid listener to accurately understand their extension needs and articulate the value proposition of the cooperative extension network.
- Engage with decision makers and funders to grow the organization in concert with the needs of the industry.
- Ensure annual impact measurement and reporting back to industry.

What Qualities Are We Looking For?

Humility and Flexibility

The specialists you recruit will be highly experienced professionals with a strong reputation for excellence in their chosen field. This will require you to lead through humility and influence, rather than command.

The organization is new, lean, and small (4 FTEs initially but with room to grow as value is demonstrated). You will find yourself having to deploy skills that range from senior executive to admin support. If you've come from a larger organization with layers of management, you may be used to frequent direction from your boss. The board will provide strategic direction to you, and coaching support as needed, but for the most part you will have to demonstrate the flexibility to "figure it out" yourself. We're also looking for someone who thrives in a virtual environment, willing to work remotely and able to travel.

Leadership

We're looking for proven leadership success at the intermediate to senior level. This includes indicators such as employee satisfaction, staff retention, strategic focus, supportive working environment, and ability to motivate and inspire through articulating a compelling and shared vision.

Management

You have the capacity to set priorities in a fast-paced environment, manage the complexities of policy/program, speak in a boardroom setting, engage senior officials, represent the extension network to industry organizations and media, strategically plan and develop program/policy options for the Board, recruit and appraise staff, and ensure top quality service to the agricultural sector in Alberta.

Agricultural Extension Experience

You will possess a broad understanding and experience of agriculture in Western Canada, or similar jurisdiction. You will also have hands on experience in delivering agricultural extension programs and measuring their impact on producers. A minimum BSc Agriculture is preferred but similar designations and/or experience may be considered.

Salary

The compensation package, including salary and benefits will be commensurate with experience and skills, with a range of \$115,000 – \$130,000. We're open to alternate working arrangements and willing to consider a secondment.

How to Apply

Applicants should forward their resume electronically to johnknappyve@gmail.com. The resume should be accompanied by a cover letter not exceeding 200 words, and by five credible references. Application deadline is 4:30 pm May 3, 2024. Interviews will be conducted with applicants who appear to be best qualified with the skills and attributes outlined above. We are an equal opportunity employer. We thank all applicants for their interest. However, we will be contacting only those applicants who are considered for an interview.

Questions?

For more detailed questions on the position and its responsibilities please contact John Knapp at johnknappyve@gmail.com.

We're Looking Forward to Hearing from You!

We're on a forward-looking journey that hopes to make a real difference in rural Alberta. Come join us on that exciting journey!