



## **Practical Farmers of Iowa Seeks Executive Director Winter 2015-16**

Practical Farmers of Iowa is looking for a full-time, collaborative, values-driven, and visionary leader who is passionate about sustainable agriculture, and skilled at managing a complex, dynamic organization. The successful candidate will have a passion for improving the sustainability, profitability and ecological health of farms and farming systems. This individual will value the history and culture of Practical Farmers of Iowa, and work to guide the organization to meet the goals, values and vision of its membership. The Executive Director works with the Board of Directors to develop and achieve long-term goals and objectives. The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors.

### **About Practical Farmers of Iowa**

Practical Farmers of Iowa (PFI) was founded in 1985 as an organization for farmers. We use farmer-led investigation and information sharing to help farmers practice an agriculture that benefits both the land and people. Founding members rallied farmers across Iowa to conduct “randomized and replicated” on-farm research to improve their profitability, efficiency and stewardship – sustainable agriculture goals that infuse our work and are at the heart of Practical Farmers’ mission. Early work was focused on field crops and livestock. While these remain popular program areas, our farmer-members are the catalysts guiding the directions we take in all of our program areas. Farmer members’ interests have expanded to include horticulture, beginning farmers, on-farm energy and local foods.

In recent years, Practical Farmers has experienced rapid growth, with membership now totaling more than 2,900 farmers and friends of farmers located across Iowa and beyond. While Practical Farmers of Iowa members can now be found in many states – and even across international borders – we have remained steadfast in our commitment to being an organization of and for farmers, and in our dedication to farmer-led investigation and information sharing. Our members have conventional and certified organic systems, employ diverse management practices, have operations of all sizes, and come from a range of backgrounds. These farmers come together because they are committed to moving their operations toward sustainability.

Practical Farmers is a leader in bringing positive change to Iowa agriculture because we realize farmers are the primary experts in the field of agriculture, and we are aware that Iowa farmers want to learn from each other. Practical Farmers has rigorous evaluation procedures in place to track the effectiveness of our programs, how those who access our information – both members and non-members – change their behavior as a result, and to ensure we never stray from our farmer-centered focus.

PFI farmers and Friends of Farmers are passionate about the networking opportunities, values and vision embodied within the organization and its membership. For more information regarding our current strategic plan, values, vision and mission statements, please refer to our website:

[www.practicalfarmers.org](http://www.practicalfarmers.org)

## **Executive Director Job Responsibilities**

### **Fundraising**

- Leads a strong fundraising effort, developing strategy, effectively communicating and ensuring implementation that continues to build financial resources from public and private funders, individual donors and members.
- Develops fundraising programs and goals annually.
- Develops options to broaden income sources for PFI, including a fee for service program area.
- Takes lead on planned giving, including managing existing planned gifts and annually obtaining additional planned gifts.

### **Strategic Planning**

- Leads the strategic planning process, keeping strategic planning in tune with the values, vision, and mission of PFI.
- Works with the staff to develop a work plan to achieve the goals defined in the strategic plan. Regularly updates the Board and membership on progress towards goals.
- Keeps the programming, communications, staff and Board of PFI in tune with the needs and goals of the membership by regularly conducting, reviewing and reporting the results of membership surveys and other feedback loops.

### **Financial Management**

- Ensures sound fiscal and administrative management of PFI, maintaining the long term financial stability of the organization.
- Works with PFI Staff and Board of Directors to:
  - develop fiscal year budgets
  - monitor compliance with fiscal year budget
  - provide regular financial reporting to the Board at each Board meeting
  - update membership on PFI's financial status.

## **External Relations and Networking**

- Builds and develops effective strategic relationships with new and existing partners to ensure achievement of PFI's mission, vision and values.
- Serves on governing Boards of organizations, where strategy aligns with PFI goals.
- Serves as the official spokesperson of the organization in the community and provides a credible presence informed by the membership.
- Along with PFI staff, regularly attends member Field Days, representing PFI to the public and obtaining member feedback on PFI priorities.

## **Board Relations**

- Is main liaison to the Board of Directors.
- Staffs the Investment and Finance Committees of the Board of Directors.
- Works with the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors to develop agenda for and facilitate Board meetings and the annual Board/Staff retreat.

## **Staff Supervision**

- Supervises, coaches and keeps direct reports on track, currently: Operations Director, and Finance and Benefits Manager.
- Works with Operations Director to set and ensure high program quality and a positive work environment.
- Promotes and maintains the culture of a farmer focused organization within the PFI staff.

## **Program and Grant Oversight**

- Leads the development of new program areas that fulfill the goals of the Strategic Plan, including writing grant proposals. Ensures new programming meets the PFI filter for taking on new work.
- Works with the Operations Director to obtain funding for key program areas as needed.
- Has ultimate responsibility for ensuring PFI programming maintains existing membership and meets membership growth goals.

## **Qualifications**

The ideal candidate will possess the following skills and experiences:

- Demonstrated experience navigating complex and often controversial issues to build and sustain effective coalitions and collaborative partnerships, especially given the "big tent" of PFI membership.
- Credibility among regional and national stakeholders and allied organizations and experience to effectively represent PFI and our diverse membership.
- Ability to attract, develop, and retain staff, while maintaining a high level of performance, and effectively utilizing their talents.
- Minimum five years of successful senior management experience, including staff management, in a non-profit organization of comparable size and scope.
- A management style that is empowering, consensus and team building, and an appreciation and respect for the value of the contribution of PFI staff.
- Effective communication skills, including public speaking, writing, meeting facilitation and consensus building.

- Proven track record in developing and sustaining individual, government, foundation and other funding support.
- Ability to conceptualize, communicate and lead the organization in our shared vision in response to changing needs and opportunities.
- Working knowledge of the issues, leaders and trends in farming systems as well as effective rural economic development practices. Good understanding of the challenges affecting agriculture.
- Financial and/or business management skills including budgeting, compliance and reporting abilities.
- Experience reporting to or serving on a non-profit board of directors.
- Agreement with and support of PFI's mission, vision and values, and a desire to work and live in Iowa.

In addition, candidates must be able to:

- Interact with both farmers and friends of farmers, from diverse economic, educational and vocational backgrounds, and build consensus towards common goals and principles.
- Effectively utilize information technology, social media, accounting and office applications, donor fund applications and the Internet, as needed for the successful performance of the duties of the Executive Director.
- Set annual work goals that support the implementation of the above outlined job responsibilities.
- Work some nights and weekends as needed to support Board and PFI community events. Attend PFI field Days and major PFI events, which may include lifting 50 lbs. and walking long distances. We offer flexibility to accommodate these obligations.
- Work primarily from the PFI office in Ames, Iowa.
- Pass a background check.
- Possess a valid driver's license.
- Travel domestically as needed.
- Show proof of legal status to work in the United States.

### **Compensation and Benefits**

Salary is commensurate with experience. Benefits include generous Paid Time Off, full health care benefits, employer contribution to 401k plan after 1 year, short-term and long-term disability, a flex plan, and life insurance. Practical Farmers of Iowa is a family-friendly employer.

### **Start Date**

March 1, 2016

### **Deadline for Applications:**

November 16, 2015

### **Confidential Application Process:**

Email (Word or PDF document) cover letter summarizing interest, qualifications and compensation requirements along with a current resume to the attention of Tim Landgraf, PFI Transition Committee Chair, to: [pfitransitiontim@gmail.com](mailto:pfitransitiontim@gmail.com)

Resumes must be accompanied by a cover letter. Inquiries may be sent to the same e-mail address. Applications received by the deadline will be acknowledged with an email reply.