

Nebraska State Fair Position Announcement – Ag Director

Title: Agriculture Director

Position Summary: The Agriculture Director is responsible for all agricultural operations including livestock, equine competitions, static competitions and agriculture education programming for the Nebraska State Fair and Aksarben Livestock Show. Further, this person will be lead representative for events on behalf of the Grand Island Livestock Complex Authority (GILCA) upon approval of the GILCA board. This position will require a particular background and skill set, utmost professionalism and demanding energy.

Information: The Nebraska State Fair is a 501 C (5) business entity. This respected institution will celebrate its 152nd year in 2021. Expanded Position Description attached or review online at www.statefair.org. This position is At Will, Full time and salaried with benefits. For questions regarding benefits package contact Tish Eckstrom at teckstrom@statefair.org or call 308-385-3952. Salary commensurate with experience. Background, Driving Record and Reference Checks may be performed.

Schedule: This Position is integral to the Nebraska State Fair Staff leadership team with a preferred start date as soon as possible due to impending opportunities. That stated, the Position will remain Open until Filled by an outstanding candidate only. First review November 19, 2020.

Application Process: Cover letter and Resume required. Email to bogg@statefair.org with copy to jparr@statefair.org or mail to: Nebraska State Fair, Ag Director Application, PO Box 1387, Grand Island, NE 68802.



NEBRASKA STATE FAIR POSITION DESCRIPTION AGRICULTURE DIRECTOR

November 6, 2020

I. OVERVIEW

The Agriculture Director is responsible for all agricultural operations including livestock, equine competitions, static competitions and agriculture education programming for the Nebraska State Fair and Aksarben Livestock Show. This position reports to and works daily with the Executive Director. Further, this person will be lead representative for events on behalf of the Grand Island Livestock Complex Authority (GILCA) upon approval of the GILCA board. The incumbent models the NSF mission and promotes the Agriculture Department as an integrated, collaborative asset for entertainment, education and tradition.

A. LIVESTOCK & EQUINE COMPETITIONS

- Oversee all livestock and equine competitions with strategic planning of show selection and cancellation, superintendent selection and renewals, and operations.
- Manage department financials including budgets, cost projections, fixed cost analysis, capital improvements, opportunities for revenue growth, and appropriate stipend increases.
- Manage weekly financial transactions and provide updates to Executive Director. Verify AP and AR entries with designated accounting staff for accuracy and timeliness.
- Promote team approach between all species including group assembly, regular e-news communication, and fair and balanced management style for all departments.
- Manage superintendent program for all species: write job descriptions, develop contracts, communicate regularly, host no less than two annual meetings and provide evaluations.
- Assist superintendents with writing show policy and procedures, abiding by the IAFE Code of Showring Ethics, and any registered association or sanctioned show rules.
- Assist superintendents with hiring of judges, including pay assignments, show schedules, any necessary judge amenities, admissions and parking, and coordination through Competitive Events Manager of all hotel arrangements.
- Assist superintendents with peripheral support hires, including announcers, showing stewards, makeup area and gate crews, awards presentations, photographers, barn and parking support staff within predetermined budget.
- Work closely with Operations for changes needed in equipment needs, layouts, staffing needs, contractor resources, weather challenges, etc.
- Develop and maintain positive relationships with Nebraska state departments including but not limited to Agriculture, Veterinary and UNL.
- Hire and schedule veterinarians and assistants necessary to complete animal health checks upon entry to fairgrounds; stay abreast of infectious disease news, inspections quarantine processes and barriers to entry.

- Coordinate check-in trailer process in most efficient and customer friendly way including considerations of traffic backlog, safety practices, ease of inspection for personnel, weather conditions (such as heat) and alternative methods, staffing, packet delivery, onsite ticket sales, and more.
- Design and implement efficient and customer friendly offloading/loading system for exhibitors; work directly with Operations for any needed infrastructure planning/improvements and thorough communication with exhibitors well in advance of their arrival.
- Coordinate stock trailer and truck parking including proactive and timely communication with parking lot landlords.
- Provide managerial support to Competitive Events Manager who orchestrates the Entry Office during Fair.
- Coordinate with superintendents for 4-H and FFA competitive exhibit programs including budget allotments, staffing approvals, coordination with open class competitions, scheduling, stalling, parking, admissions, etc.
- Work with marketing and sponsorship team for scholarship growth across all species; work with Competitive Events Manager on scholarship database and information/funds disbursement to funds management organization.
- Work cooperatively with superintendents, Competitive Events Manager and Executive Director on oversight of all awards including trophies, banners, ribbons, cash premiums, specialty awards, buckles, etc. to remain within budget and exhibitor appeal.
- Hire species photographers as appropriate; provide isolated photography space; communicate with exhibitor access to photos.
- Use innovation and technology toward modern show structure and messaging, from show streaming to social media to exhibitor day-of-show messaging.
- Consider and implement potential youth competitions and activities specific to youth exhibitors in addition to and complimentary with traditional exhibitions.
- Work with marketing team to broadcast alerts and information on website, promote shows to exhibitors and guests, and other marketing initiatives.
- Provide managerial support to Competitive Events Manager in assembly and production of Competitive Entry Books.
- Work with media as per NSF public relations plan including taking live and recorded interviews, editing news releases and prompting news stories for journalists.

B. AGRICULTURE EDUCATION

- Oversee Milking Parlor including superintendent assignment, veterinarian coordination, public communication and advocacy, interaction with guests, milking schedules, assigning barn space (working with other species) and coordinating with dairy superintendent.
- Oversee Birthing Pavilion including veterinarian staffing and housing, new interactive programming, public education, collaboration with cooperating livestock groups, technology such as audio and video including live streaming, and management of animal rights groups.
- Coordinate share programs and other cooperatives with UNL's Raising Nebraska.
- Work closely with marketing and sponsorship team on combine rides presented by ride sponsor including equipment move-in, ride schedules and program expansion opportunities.

- Operate interactive ag education program for young children (e.g. Activity Acres) providing early learning of production agriculture, interactive and fun activities, and learning support for parents.
- Manage and continually improve Nebraska's Largest Classroom, orchestrating school visits from across Nebraska; improve curriculum opportunities for teachers, provide materials (print and/or online) timely during school year, organize liaisons to assist with visits during Fair; provide continued learning experience post-Fair for participants.
- Continue sourcing creative and fresh ways to educate the public about agriculture, including onsite camps, farming demonstrations, livestock tours and hands-on activities.
- Work with sponsors to create onsite ambassador program including use of volunteers for visitor tours, demonstrations, sampling, farm family connections, or other opportunities.
- Manage Crop of The Year program, assisting Experiential Partnerships Manager with crop selection connected to sponsor(s), program activities and location.
- Consider and potentially implement rural-urban family connections with networking sessions and learning during NSF, followed by farm visits throughout the year.
- Collaborate with NSF staff on ag education schedules for publication, website and marketing initiatives.
- Work with media as per NSF public relations plan including taking live and recorded interviews, editing news releases and prompting news stories for journalists.

C. CAPITAL PLANNING

- Work with Executive Director, Operations, Facilities Committee and Fonner Park to determine Agriculture Department master plan, incorporated with overall venue master plan including timelines, capital campaign needs, infrastructure challenges, and growth capacities.
- Research and discuss capital improvement plan with Executive Director and work with Operations on immediate maintenance needs during Fair; keep log of all capital and maintenance activities, in coordination with Operations Manager.

D. SUPERVISION

- Oversee two full time employees (possibly more) and approximately 50 stipend superintendents.
- Seasonal, event and intern staff as budgeted and volunteers as recruited.

E. Office

- Maintain physical office at Nebraska State Fair recognizing frequent travel will be expected.

II. OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED

This position performs a variety of other duties as assigned by the Executive Director, in support of Nebraska State Fair, Aksarben and GILCA. All duties are essential functions.

III. EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

A minimum of 15 years of experience in livestock and/or equine exhibition and at least 5 Year experience in agriculture advocacy is required. Experience in managing teams over a wide demographic area is necessary. A bachelor’s degree in ag business, animal science, or closely related field is required.

This position requires an in-depth cross species understanding of modern show practices and ethics, and knowledge of contemporary agricultural practices including but not limited to production agriculture. The incumbent shall have a track record of strong character, leadership experience and a history of positive customer relationships. Must be proficient in Microsoft Office Suite, related software programs and technology.

This position requires a particular background and skill set, utmost professionalism personally and in all business matters, strong verbal and written communication skills, ability to maintain a positive attitude under pressure and interact with the public in challenging situations.

IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

This position is responsible for the entire Agriculture Division and its reputation. The Executive Director is available for guidance but all duties may not be covered by established guidelines requiring mature reasoning and unfailing integrity.

V. INDEPENDENCE OF ACTION

This position works within available established business management practices and Nebraska State Fair guidelines and policies. This position requires independent thinking and the ability to reliably perform quality duties without supervision.

VI. WORK ENVIRONMENT/PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The majority of work is performed in the Nebraska State Fair Offices within the Nebraska Building or on Fonner Park grounds. This position is rarely a standard work week. The incumbent will need to be willingly available evenings and weekends to complete the work. The incumbent should be prepared to effectively perform at least a 14 consecutive day work period prior to and during the annual State Fair, Aksarben and other events. The position requires walking and lifting. The position requires operation of various vehicles.