



Practical Farmers of Iowa is Hiring a Senior Research Coordinator

Practical Farmers of Iowa is seeking a diligent and respectful person to serve as a senior research coordinator for the research department. For over 30 years, Practical Farmers of Iowa has helped more than 300 farmers take a scientific approach to improving their farms through on-farm research.

This work has always been rooted in our value of welcoming everyone and creating a culture of mutual respect. We believe that a diversity of people, ideas and perspectives strengthens our ability to find creative solutions, enriches our understanding and broadens our impact.

At Practical Farmers, we celebrate this diversity and are committed to ensuring that our policies and practices create an equitable and inclusive workplace. We take equal opportunity seriously and seek to empower and support all applicants and teammates.

Position Overview

PFI's research department is primarily responsible for operating our Cooperators' Program through which farmers generate and share knowledge by conducting timely and relevant on-farm research. We believe that real-world, applied research on farms is critical for building a better agricultural system. We also help farmers inform academic agricultural research that affects their farms by connecting researchers and farmers in meaningful dialogue and promoting the exchange of ideas.

We're seeking a scientist to fill a senior research coordinator position in our research department that is poised for growth in the coming years. You will support proof-of-concept investigation, ground-truthing new ideas and practices and help a range of farmers design research that can satisfy their curiosity about their farms. You will play a pivotal role in helping us expand on-farm research opportunities in Iowa and neighboring states that explore ways to maximize the climate-smart potential of soil health-promoting practices. You will work with the senior research manager, Stefan Gailans, to fundraise for the Cooperators' Program to increase our capacity and the reach of our efforts.

As the senior research coordinator, you'll work with farmers of all types and farms of many sizes, from grain crops to vegetables, organic to no-till and including those with integrated crop-vegetable and livestock enterprises. These farmers are leaders among their farming peers whose work contributes to more profitable, diverse and environmentally sound farms. Building rapport and trust with farmers and understanding their research priorities will be instrumental for success in this position. You will play a key role in helping us imagine new, creative ways both for conducting on-farm research projects and transferring knowledge to farmers, partners and other stakeholders.

If you are interested in practicing science with and constantly learning from a community of curious and creative farmers who are transforming their farms for the better through intentional investigation, this role is for you. You'll support the research department by:

- 1) Co-designing statistically rigorous on-farm research trials with field crop and fruit and vegetable farmers. This includes helping farmers identify experimental treatments and data to collect to answer the research question, and routinely being in touch with farmers to see projects through to the end.
- 2) Analyzing, interpreting and visualizing results from on-farm research trials with farmers, and summarizing these results in research reports and other PFI publications while also maintaining farmer voices.
- 3) Leading the development of new, creative on-farm research opportunities by routinely engaging with farmers and fellow ag researchers to identify needs and helping to seek out and apply for funding to implement program ideas.
- 4) Helping plan and facilitate PFI's annual Cooperators' Meeting every December in Ames, Iowa, where farmers gather to share what they learned through on-farm research, innovate for new project ideas and build networks.
- 5) Representing PFI's on-farm research at our events and those of other organizations.

Practical Farmers offers a flexible, fast-paced work environment with opportunities for independent initiative and professional development.

Duties

- **Design and implement data collection and management tools with farmers for on-farm research projects:**
 - Co-design randomized, replicated strip or plot trials with farmers focusing on, but not limited to, cover crops, soil health, diversified cropping systems, organic cropping systems, diversified vegetable production systems, season extension vegetable production.
 - Identify relevant experimental treatments and data to collect with farmers
 - Identify methods for collecting and recording experimental data with farmers
- **Communicate and respond to inquiries about on-farm research, and expand network of participants**
 - Clearly and succinctly summarize on-farm research results for others
 - Connect inquirers with those in the PFI network who performed trials
 - Help recruit participants new to on-farm research; including farmers and academic research partners
- **Organize and record information from research projects:**
 - Maintain progress of multiple on-farm research projects through the year
 - Keep clear, detailed records of on-farm research activities through year
 - Store information and data according to standard processes

- **Conduct statistical analysis, interpretation and visualization:**
 - Use statistical software (R, JMP, SAS, etc.) and appropriate/novel statistical models to analyze on-farm research data
 - Interpret and visualize research results with farmers as the target audience
- **Write reports and articles for PFI publications on research projects:**
 - Summarize on-farm trial results into accessibly written research reports
 - Write magazine articles featuring farmers and their trials for PFI's quarterly magazine
 - Write PFI blog posts about on-farm research
 - Pursue opportunities to publish in peer-reviewed journals when appropriate
- **Plan and facilitate events with research objectives:**
 - Assist with planning and facilitating PFI's annual Cooperators' Meeting
 - Attend and help facilitate farmer-hosted field days, webinars and conference sessions
- **Develop and manage partnerships related to on-farm research that leverage both organizations' work toward PFI goals:**
 - Build and maintain relationships with academic, non-profit and industry partners that can elevate PFI's ability to conduct on-farm research
 - Bring academic researcher (professors, grad students) participation to on-farm research trials to better answer farmer questions and to facilitate knowledge exchange between farmers and researchers.
 - Work with early career scientists from the land grant and community college ag community to develop a talent pipeline that is steeped in diverse, mixed agricultural systems.
- **Write proposals for grant funding opportunities:**
 - Brainstorm grant proposal and research project ideas with teammates and farmers
 - Lead grant proposal writing
 - Help edit and proofread grant proposals
- **Manage research projects:**
 - Lead grant projects by planning and delegating work to teammates and partners
 - Hold teammates and partners accountable
- **Other duties as assigned or volunteered to support department or team projects**

Required Qualifications and Characteristics

- M.S. degree in agronomy, plant science, soil science, horticulture or related field
- Two years' experience with on-farm and field plot research
- Strong experimental design skills
- Strong statistical analysis, interpretation and visualization skills
- Strong research reporting writing skills
- Experience in publishing extension materials
- Strong communication skills
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Values science as a form of continuous learning for themselves and farmer-researchers
- Attentive to the needs of farmer-researchers
- Strong ability to troubleshoot and solve problems independently

Desired Qualifications and Characteristics

- Ph.D. in agronomy, plant science, soil science, horticulture or related field
- Understanding of the social and community dimensions of agriculture
- Organizational and time management skills
- Experience in publishing peer reviewed journal articles
- Ability to write about science in engaging and accessible ways for public audiences
- Grant-writing, editing and proofreading skills
- Ability to identify and develop funding proposals to support new and/or enhanced programming
- Event planning skills
- Public speaking and storytelling skills
- Qualitative data analysis skills
- Ability to interact and collaborate effectively with a diverse group of colleagues
- Knowledge of field crop production systems
- Knowledge of fruit and vegetable production systems

This is a full-time position based in our Ames, Iowa, office with hybrid work potential. Due to the need to engage with farmers around Iowa, this position requires some travel (mostly in Iowa) and a valid driver's license. The starting annual salary range for this position is \$54,500 to \$60,000 with the opportunity for a salary increase on an annual basis.

The position reports to Stefan Gailans, senior research manager. Practical Farmers is a family-friendly employer. The position includes full health care benefits with employer-paid premium, a flex plan, short- and long-term disability, life insurance and generous paid time off. Employer contribution to a 401k retirement plan is offered after one year of employment.

Please apply by completing an application form (including contact information, cover letter, resume or C.V., and references) on PFI's employment page at practicalfarmers.org/employment.