

Northwest Potato Research Consortium

Manager Recruitment Advertisement

The state potato commissions of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington seek applicants for Manager of the Northwest Potato Research Consortium, a cooperation in research funding by those commissions. The mission of the Consortium is to support the Northwest potato industry by funding and supporting high-quality research aimed at solving problems and advancing the potato enterprise regionally. Duties of the Manager include, 1) Organizing and facilitating the regional research review, funding process, and budgeting, 2) Information dissemination via the website (<https://www.nwpotatoresearch.com/>), 3) Facilitation and participation in large federal grant projects, and 4) Interaction with all relevant research scientists and administrations of their research institutions.

The position location is virtual, but residence in or very near the Northwest states of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington is required. The position requires travel to various industry and research meetings across North America.

An advanced degree (Master's or Ph.D.) in a scientific discipline relevant to agriculture is required, as are at least 5 years of self-directed work experience. Starting pay is in the range of \$85,000 - 120,000, commensurate with experience and qualifications. The Manager will be an employee of one of the state potato commissions and will therefore enjoy the benefits of being a state employee.

For a full job description and itemizing of required and preferred qualifications, see: <https://www.nwpotatoresearch.com/>. To apply, send a cover letter and CV, including three or more references, to ajensen@potatoes.com by April 15, 2023. For questions about the Consortium or the Manager position, contact Andy Jensen at the above email address.

Northwest Potato Research Consortium, Manager

Position Description, Responsibilities, and Duties

The Consortium is a cooperation of the Idaho, Oregon, and Washington State Potato Commissions, funded by the Northwest potato growers. The mission of the Consortium is to support the Northwest potato industry by funding and supporting high-quality research aimed at solving problems and advancing the potato enterprise regionally. The potato commissions are quasi-state agencies, each defined in state law, sharing a major mission of supporting production-related research. The commissions were created in the mid-20th century, through organization and advocacy by the growers, and are funded through assessments paid by the growers on volume of marketed crop. They are governed by boards of directors selected from potato growers and allied industry in each state. The Consortium is governed by a 9-member board, 3 persons per commission.

The Consortium manager enjoys the benefits of state employment, being an employee of one of the commissions. The position is virtual, the Manager's domicile being flexible within (or very near) the Northwest states of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. The Manager's interaction with numerous organizations, institutions, and research teams means substantial travel is required within the Northwest, with some travel across the U.S., Canada, and occasionally farther abroad.

This position is ideal for a scientist with broad interests in agriculture, plant biology, pest management, and soils. The Manager has opportunities to facilitate the creation of new teams and projects, and to participate in research and extension work relevant to their expertise. Because the commissions focus their research on real-world problems faced by growers, the Consortium Manager helps to generate information of practical importance in the daily lives of stakeholders. Working with one foot in practical agriculture, the other in research and academia, the Manager interacts with a diverse group of people in terms of culture, nationality, identity, knowledge, and expertise. Potato production systems across the Northwest are similar and different in important ways; the Manager can be a focal point of knowledge about the full breadth of agriculture in this region.

Consortium Research Review, Funding Process, and Budgeting

- Lead the Consortium board through the annual research review and funding decision-making including:
 - Board meetings.
 - Set all meeting dates, arrange meeting venues.
 - Prepare all materials for meetings, including agendas, documents to be used in the research review such as the Request for Proposals, proposal format documents, reporting requirements, etc.
 - Lead all meetings including facilitation of discussions, meeting notes, and follow-up.
 - Implement board decisions.
 - Recruit research proposals.

- Maintain distribution list of all relevant research and extension faculty and staff of universities, USDA-ARS, and private research companies.
- Disseminate requests for proposals.
- Field questions from scientists and others about possible research projects, offering feedback and guidance on draft proposals.
- Receive proposals, creating combined PDF books.
- Facilitate review process for proposals.
 - Create spreadsheets for review and scoring and any other materials to support the Board and industry reviewers.
 - Arrange a venue and event plans for the two-day Northwest research review meeting.
 - Create agenda for proposal presentation during the research review, finalize with input from presenters.
 - Study all submitted proposals, associated reports, and relevant literature as needed, providing your opinions to the Consortium board.
 - Lead the research review meeting, offering expert opinion on all proposals when requested, guiding industry reviewers, introducing speakers, facilitating discussions, compiling scores, etc.
 - Communicate directly with all proposing scientists about funding decisions, comments from reviewers, etc.
- Funding data.
 - Create and maintain master spreadsheet for each year's funding, assist individual commissions in setting up funding agreements with their respective research agencies.
 - Maintain historical funding records.
- Reporting.
 - Communicate reporting requirements to funded scientists.
 - Gather and compile reports, distribute to Consortium board.

Information Transfer

- Disseminate relevant research-related information to Northwest potato growers, shippers, processors, and allied industry via means including but not limited to websites, newsletters, trade magazines, and oral presentations.
- *Potato Progress* newsletter: solicit articles, edit issues, distribute, and archive via the website.
- Manage and implement all aspects of the structure, function, and content of the Consortium website: <https://www.nwpotatoresearch.com/>
- Act as lead or co-author on trade- or peer-reviewed publications as appropriate.
- Act as peer reviewer for technical and research publications as requested.

Project development, competitive grant coordination

- Maintain professional contact with all funded scientists, regularly visiting them in person and/or via video call.

- Maintain familiarity with potato research taking place throughout the world for its potential relevance to the Northwest.
- Seek out newly-hired research faculty to explore their expertise and potential fit in Consortium research funding, and to brainstorm research ideas with them.
- Lead the formation of multi-disciplinary research and extension teams and assist in assembling successful applications for federal competitive grants.
- Stimulate and/or lead discussion toward novel, creative, and productive research directions.
- Provide feedback on and help with grant applications submitted by Northwest scientists, including providing support letters.
- Serve on advisory boards for major federal grant-funded projects such as the Specialty Crop Research Initiative.

Project and Process Management

- Lead or co-lead industry groups or committees related to research and extension that aim to respond to new threats or plan for changes in production practices, variety development, etc.

Potato Variety Management Institute, Inc. (PVMI; www.pvmi.org), and the Variety Development Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA)

- Serve as ex-officio board member of PVMI (“Technical Advisor”), offering guidance to its board of directors and staff regarding policy, science, etc. Interact as appropriate with PVMI’s partner research institutions and its potato commission members.
- Represent the commissions in management of ownership and royalties associated with new varieties released under the CRADA.
- Represent the commissions and actively engage with all scientists and programs involved in the Tri-State variety development program, serving to maintain strong communication among Commissions and the scientific community.

Liaison to Research Institutions

- Engage with administrations of all relevant universities, USDA-ARS, and other organizations conducting or funding research or educational activities relevant to potatoes.
- Serve when requested on scientist and administrator hiring committees, long-range planning panels, research proposal review panels, etc.
- Serve as a member of advisory bodies to university ag colleges as invited or requested.

Commission Support

- Work with the leadership of each Commission in compiling research budgets each year.

- Serve as research/scientific liaison, as appropriate, between industry partners and the commissions and research institutions.
- Facilitate processes or meetings involving all three state commissions as directed by the commissions.
- Attend commission and/or research committee meetings, as requested by each commission, to plan research activities, communicate news relating to research and institutional administrations, etc.
- Monitor federal & state research appropriations related to potatoes and work with commission leadership on appropriate courses of action in securing, maintaining, and/or protecting research funding.
- Attend various in-region grower meetings, industry meetings, and field days, representing the commissions and their research programs.
- Attend various out-of-region grower, industry, and research meetings (National Potato Council, Potato Association of America, Potatoes USA, etc.) as appropriate.
- Assist with planning of the WA/OR Potato Conference and the Idaho Potato School as directed.

National Potato Organization Support

- Work with Potatoes USA research efforts on NIFA grants and other research coordination projects.
- Assist the National Potato Council with research and science-related issues as appropriate to support the Northwest industry.
- Assist Potatoes USA and the National Potato Council with trade, quarantine, and pesticide issues as appropriate to support the Northwest industry.
- Actively engage in leadership of potato-related organizations such as Potato Association of America.
- Monitor “sustainability” issues, efforts, and organizations (e.g., the Potato Sustainability Alliance) on behalf of the Northwest industry.

Operations

- Manage archiving and preserving all Consortium-related documents such that any or all can be provided to the commissions upon request.
- Manage and troubleshoot computer hardware and software.
- Arrange all work-related travel, lodging, meeting registrations, etc.
- Know and follow all policies set by the Consortium board.

Other tasks and roles as assigned by the Consortium board, such as:

- Maintain knowledge and information about potato pesticides, their uses, regulations, litigation, etc. with the aim of helping the commissions with pesticide access and regulation issues.

- Engage in seed certification issues, processes, and organizations as appropriate to support the Northwest and the commissions.

Northwest Potato Research Consortium

Manager Recruitment: Qualifications and Experience

Education: minimum of master's degree in a scientific discipline related to agriculture.

Experience: at least 5 years of self-directed professional work experience, preferably some experience in hands-on agricultural research.

Specialized knowledge: grant funding agencies and procedures; scientific methods, techniques, writing; general knowledge of all relevant disciplines, i.e., agronomy, plant physiology, entomology, plant pathology, etc. Knowledge of state and federal agricultural regulatory agencies a plus.

Skills:

1. Leadership and communication
 - a. Ability to lead and facilitate meetings of diverse sizes and compositions, aiming that all participants feel heard and that decisions are reached when necessary.
 - b. Desire to facilitate discussions among people with diverse communication styles.
 - c. Desire and ability to listen carefully, aiming to understand well enough to paraphrase the other's meaning and to later relate their meaning to others in audience-appropriate language.
 - d. Value diverse perspectives and have a commitment to continually supporting, promoting, and building an inclusive and culturally diverse environment.
 - e. Use judgement to exercise discretion, neutrality, and confidentiality with co-workers, stakeholders, colleagues, etc.
2. Organizational
 - a. Ability to track, organize, and archive emails in numerous categories and purposes while maintaining a professional response time.
 - b. Ability to maintain a complicated calendar of tasks, meetings, travel, etc., including arranging flights, cars, hotels, etc.
 - c. Strong skills in digital file management, organization, archiving, etc.
 - d. Ability/willingness to manage and troubleshoot computers, internet access, printers, scanners, projectors, etc.
 - e. Ability to prioritize tasks and organize effort to ensure all four main categories of work get done with or without externally imposed deadlines: 1) important and urgent, 2) important and nonurgent, 3) less important and urgent, and 4) less important and nonurgent.
3. Computer hardware and software

- a. Microsoft Office
 - i. Word: knowledge and comfort with both creating and editing complex files that include figures and tables.
 - ii. Excel: ability to create and edit large but conceptually and functionally simple spreadsheets that include simple formulae; also important is ability to quickly sort and rearrange data in Excel while a room full of people watch.
 - iii. PowerPoint: good skill in creating and editing presentations.
- b. Adobe Acrobat: ability to do minor editing of PDFs, to combine numerous PDFs, and work with bookmarks, internal links, etc. that make reading and navigating large files easier.
- c. Knowledge of or ability to learn website software, both front end and back end, basic knowledge of HTML a plus.
- d. Photo editing: basic knowledge of editing photos and other graphics for use on the website and in documents.