

Director of Conservation Agriculture**Hours:** Full-time, Exempt position**Date Posted:** November 4, 2020**Reports to:**

CEO

Overview:

The Director of Conservation Agriculture works with and on behalf of farmers in the development and implementation of conservation agriculture research. They support research efforts and help communicate both in-field and edge-of-field research and validation studies to our audiences. They lead demonstration of conservation agriculture practices to Illinois' 43,000 soybean farmers.

They complement and extend university and industry efforts to advance the science, raise awareness and drive adoption of best management and continuous improvement practices for conservation agriculture in Illinois.

The Director successfully creates and executes strategies and programs to address practical issues and opportunities that holistically improve farmer profitability through agronomically and environmentally sound cropping systems. Emphasis will be placed on the consideration and integration of science-based and data-driven approaches that optimize land use, input decisions, fertility management, soil conservation and health, water management and quality, and resiliency under changing climate pressures and extreme weather events, all in the interest of serving Illinois soybean farmers and their urban neighbors.

The Director of Conservation Agriculture works with a diverse group of stakeholders, including farmers, crop advisors and researchers to ensure that ISA supports sustainable production, safely, while also developing best practices and innovations. This role works with promotion and advocacy, and helps inform policy efforts through scientific measurement, demonstration and adoption of science-based systems for production agriculture that are environmentally, economically and societally robust.

The Director of Conservation Agriculture will also:

- Oversee research on environmental sustainability issues, concerns, or stakeholder interests
- Contribute to sustainable organizational strategies, policies or practices
- Supervise and support collaborators and team members performing environmentally sustainable agronomic research activities
- Direct the monitoring and assessment of current and emerging sustainability opportunities and constraints which could potentially impact Illinois soybean farming and develop appropriate plans of action
- Identify environmental and production concerns for Illinois soybean farmers, and global concerns for national suppliers, ag partners, and transportation affiliates
- Develop and leverage methodologies to assess the viability or success of conservation and sustainability initiatives
- Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of conservation and sustainability programs; evaluate program effectiveness
- Analyze data to determine project risk and feasibility
- Develop sustainable organizational policies or practices
- Direct conservation and sustainability program operations to ensure compliance with environmental or governmental regulations and inform policy decisions
- Support the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (NLRs) and work closely with NLRs cooperators
- Collaborate with the Illinois Corn Growers Association on the management, administrative, and implementation issues related to PCM objectives and maintain concise but open communication with PCM team members on all aspects of project performance and implementation
- Develop conservation and sustainability reports for ISA communications team, academia, government, and other advocacy groups
- Develop and maintain a network of communication and collaboration across academic, industry, soybean checkoff organizations, crop advisors, environmental groups and other stakeholders
- Support ongoing communication efforts and events related to conservation agriculture
- Perform other related work as requested

Required Education & Experience:

A Master's degree related to agricultural management, production agriculture, agronomy, natural resources, environmental science or ag economics is required along with:

- Certification as a Certified Crop Advisor (CCA)
- 3-5 years' experience developing, implementing and communicating on-farm programs
- Experience working with farmers and industry sustainability stakeholders, with a proven track record of verbal and written communications with producers, scientists, agronomists, industry professionals and other agricultural stakeholders
- An appreciation for Illinois agriculture, the Illinois Soybean Association, and the 43,000 soybean farmers we represent
- Ability to work individually and as a team member/leader using sound judgement, a willingness to take and follow directions, an ability to handle tasks to completion, versatility, and an ability to manage multiple projects with both short and long-term deadlines
- Skilled in supervising contractors who work to develop and execute integrated, multidisciplinary programs

Work Environment:

The position is located in Bloomington, Ill., at ISA's home office. In-state and out-of-state travel will be required. Travel could include up to 25% of your time. Some physical demands will be required and applicants should be able to lift up to 50 lbs.

Work Hours:

This is a full-time, exempt position. Traditional work hours will apply with occasional evening or weekend commitments.

Benefits:

Salary commensurate with experience. Generous vacation and holiday package. 401(k) plan and benefits offered to every employee.

How to Apply:

Email cover letter and resume to ilsoy@ilsoy.org. Deadline to apply is 12/4/2020.