

Assignment specification

Head of BBRO

Prepared for



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Contents



Company information

Position description

- Reason for the role & position summary
- Key responsibilities
- Your credentials

Additional information

- Useful links

Company Information

British Beet Research Organisation

The British Beet Research Organisation (BBRO) is an independent, not-for-profit, scientific research organisation established and equally funded by the NFU and British Sugar. It aims to identify and deliver research programmes which will ultimately lead to increased competitiveness and profitability of growers and processors in the UK sugar beet sector. Areas of focus include impartial training for beet farmers, research development to increase crop yield and identifying and combatting potential industry threats (such as the potential ban on neonicotinoids).

The organisation is constructed of world-leading scientists in the field and is guided by an Executive Board (comprised of stakeholders from the NFU and British Sugar) and an Stakeholder and independent Technical Board.

There continues to be significant challenges facing the UK sugar beet industry including unpredictable climate, regulations and controls over pesticide/herbicide use and strong competition from external markets. As a result, the BBRO will play a significant part in ensuring the continued security and progression of this important industry.

Why Join BBRO?

The BBRO operates in a very unique area within the industry and has so far had large impact on British agriculture and specifically the competitiveness of the beet farming communities. The BBRO has played a significant role in increasing crop yields over the past ten years, contributing to the continued livelihood of beet farming communities and a major segment of British agriculture.

This position takes on a well-managed, well-funded, stable organisation which is facing some significant external market challenges over the course of the next few years ranging from the de-quotation of the sugar market to the likely impact of legislative changes around pesticide and herbicide usage. This is an exciting platform for an experienced general manager to make significant external impact in an organisation committed to a better future for British farming.

Position Description

Position title: Head of BBRO

Reports to: BBRO Executive Board

Location: Innovation Centre, Norwich Research Park, Norwich

Reason for role and position summary

The BBRO has been led since 2011 by Colin MacEwan who has been integral in creating and implementing a new business model to put BBRO on a strong stable footing and focus on independent, fact-based science programmes with a strong leaning to practical implications on the farm. Having completed this significant transformation, Colin, with the BBRO's blessing, has decided to make a career transition and thus we are now in a position of seeking a replacement. The view is this position will look at the continuation of the exceptional work the BBRO has completed in relation to extended crop yields amongst a number of other areas.

Reporting to the BBRO Executive Board (senior NFU Sugar and British Sugar representatives) and working closely with the BBRO Stakeholder Board and Technical Board, the Head of BBRO is responsible for leading this agriculturally-based applied research organisation; developing a clear strategy and overseeing the successful, cost-effective and efficient delivery of a multi-stranded programme of applied science and communication to growers, their advisors and others via knowledge exchange.

The Head is responsible for a team of 14 and a multi-million pound budget supplied by levy payers, and will be required to manage peer-reviewed tender processes for external bodies bidding for BBRO-funded projects as well as originating new in-house research plans in response to grower and industry requests. All the research work has to be matched to changing and challenging growing conditions. The Head of BBRO needs to identify and nurture talent in existing and new personnel to develop a robust, high-performing team with a sustainable skills and succession plan.

Key responsibilities

- Management of team of scientists, research specialists and back-office staff.
- Control of overall organisation budget and spend.
- Managing a complex and varied research programme setting objectives and agendas, ensuring a science focussed, independent approach.
- Engagement with numerous stakeholder groups both internally and externally.

Your credentials

- Educated to degree level or equivalent.
- Currently operating at senior general management level.
- Experience of managing six figure plus budgets.
- Ability to manage a diverse and talented team.
- Proven experience and ability to manage programmes/multiple projects to successful delivery.
- It would be highly desirable to have an understanding of the British agricultural landscape and some of the major issues facing the UK sugar beet sector. In addition, experience within agriculture research would also be useful.
- Strategic thinking where you are able to challenge the status quo. Ability to effectively prioritise and recommend the future direction of the work programme, to the Executive Board.
- Demonstrate effective communication across the industry, able to demonstrate openness to new ideas and perspectives, able to influence people at all levels and promote appropriate solutions in the face of opposing objectives and views.
- Ability to maintain focus on goals and objectives at the same time as addressing complex problems and issues.

Useful Links

- www.bbro.co.uk