



**Position Announcement for the
Executive Director of agInnovation Northeast
2026**

[agInnovation Northeast](#) represents the directors of all 15 state agricultural experiment stations across the Northeast's 13 Land-grant Universities, advancing science-based solutions to challenges in agriculture, food systems, natural resources, and nutrition. It is one of five regional associations comprising the national [agInnovation network](#).

Federal agricultural research is entering a period of significant change. Evolving federal priorities, growing expectations for accountability and impact, rapid advances in data-driven and digital agriculture, and increasing competition for research investments are reshaping the landscape in which Land-grant institutions operate. At this pivotal moment, the Northeast requires strong, trusted leadership to articulate the region's priorities, strengthen collaboration among member institutions, and ensure the region's voice is influential in national discussions. As the principal advocate for agInnovation Northeast, the Executive Director will help position the region to shape policy, secure resources, and demonstrate the enduring value of publicly funded agricultural research to Congress, USDA, and the public.

agInnovation Northeast is seeking a visionary, collaborative, and action-oriented leader to serve as its next Executive Director – someone who will build partnerships, turn ideas into action, and move regional priorities forward.

The Executive Director provides strategic leadership for one of the nation's five regional associations of agricultural experiment station directors, working with member universities to advance agricultural research through regional collaboration, national engagement, and strong partnerships. The position serves as the principal advocate for the Northeast's research and development enterprise while guiding the Northeast's Multistate Research Program by fostering initiatives that strengthen the impact of public agricultural research. The Executive Director reports to the Chair of agInnovation Northeast and serves the agricultural experiment station directors of the fifteen member institutions across the Northeast region. Examples of this service include planning and facilitating virtual and in-person meetings, delivering professional development opportunities, preparing responses to federal requests for information, and designing and leading research incubation workshops. The Executive Director will be located at one of the member universities or other Northeast regional hosts (e.g., a non-profit organization) by mutual agreement.

Primary responsibilities:

- Provide strategic leadership for agInnovation Northeast and work with its directors to identify emerging opportunities, address regional challenges, and advance shared priorities.
- Strengthen collaboration among member universities and cultivate partnerships with federal agencies, commodity organizations, industry, and other research stakeholders.
- Provide leadership and administrative oversight for the Northeast's Multistate Research Program, including proposal review, project approval, reporting, and committee coordination.
- Represent Northeast research priorities within colleges of agriculture, life sciences, and natural resources; agInnovation (nationally); Extension; the APLU Board on Agriculture Assembly; USDA, NIFA, and other federal partners; Congress; and other allied organizations.
- Develop analyses, briefing materials, and strategic communications that support informed decision-making by agricultural experiment station directors.
- Convene committees, task forces, and partner organizations to address issues of regional and national importance.
- Support leadership development and orientation of new directors while strengthening engagement across the Northeast Region.
- Manage the association's business affairs, budget, personnel, virtual and in-person meetings, and communications.
- Oversight and strong working relationship with the Regional System Administrator
- Travel extensively throughout the Northeast region and nationally.

Essential Qualifications:

- An earned doctoral degree in agriculture, natural resources, environmental sciences, agricultural economics, human sciences, nutrition and health, rural and community development, or a closely related discipline, or equivalent experience.
- Direct experience conducting research and/or engaging in research collaborative environment.
- A track record of successful, professional leadership experience.
- Proven executive administrative experience.
- The ability to build and maintain effective working relationships with a wide variety of stakeholders, agencies, and organizations.
- Strong written, verbal, and interpersonal communication skills.
- A clear understanding of the Land-grant University system, agricultural experiment stations, and federally funded agricultural research programs.
- Willingness to travel in the performance of the duties and responsibilities of the Executive Director.

Leadership Expectations:

The successful candidate must be recognized as a trusted convener, collaborative leader, and effective advocate who can build relationships across institutions, communicate a compelling vision for regional cooperation, advance regional priorities and represent the interests of Northeast agricultural research with credibility at regional and national levels.

Location:

The present office of the Executive Director is located on the campus of the University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI. The location of the next Executive Director can be at one of the regional partnering agricultural experiment stations (including the University of Rhode Island) or other Northeast regional hosts (e.g., a non-profit organization) by mutual agreement. It is highly preferred that the location of the next Executive Director be located in the Northeast region. However, agInnovation Northeast will consider Executive Director locations outside the region on a case-by-case basis.

Employment Conditions:

This position is a full-time, calendar year appointment. Salary will be commensurate with experience and qualifications; fringe rates will be consistent with salary. **The position start date is July 1, 2027.** The initial contract will be for a period of three years, subject to annual review by the Directors of the 15-member experiment stations.

Applications will be accepted through November 30, 2026. Evaluation of applicants will begin in early December 2026 and continue until a successful candidate is selected. The November 30 deadline ensures full consideration, though the search will remain open beyond that date if needed to identify the right candidate.

Application Process:

Applicants for this position should submit a current curriculum vitae, a letter of application, a statement describing their vision for agInnovation Northeast (2000 word limit), and contact information of three professional references.

Applications must be sent electronically as a PDF to:

Dr. Christine Smart, Director, Cornell AgriTech

630 West North Street

Geneva, NY 14456

Email: [cgs14@cornell.edu](mailto:cds14@cornell.edu)

The closing date for applications is November 30, 2026.

agInnovation Northeast and its member institutions are committed to the principles of affirmative action and equal opportunity employment.