



The Northern Ireland Agricultural Research & Development Council

Job Title:	Independent Trustee
Remuneration:	The role of Trustee is not accompanied by any financial remuneration, although expenses for travel may be claimed.
Time Commitment:	4-5 Trustees' meetings a year (+ possible further sub-committee meetings)
Term:	Trustees are elected for a three year term and may serve no more than three consecutive terms (four in the case of the Chair / Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees)

About the organisation

AgriSearch (The Northern Ireland Agricultural Research and Development Council) is an independent charity incorporated as a company limited by guarantee.

AgriSearch's purpose is to make the NI Ruminant Livestock Sector more competitive, profitable and sustainable.

AgriSearch is committed to being an important driver of excellence and innovation in the Northern Ireland ruminant livestock sector, and being recognised as such by government and the industry.

AgriSearch was formed in 1997 to help dairy, beef and sheep farmers become directly involved with production-oriented research. The funds contributed by farmers to AgriSearch (through a voluntary levy collected by Dairy and Red Meat Processors) are used to commission research that will improve and develop beef, sheep and dairy farming in Northern Ireland. The guiding principle behind all of AgriSearch-funded projects is to provide research that will be of practical benefit to farmers and provide them with tools to help reduce costs, increase performance, drive innovation and improve welfare.

In recent years AgriSearch's role has grown from merely being a co-funder of research to taking a much more active role in leading projects and acting as a liaison between researchers, advisors and the industry. It now has a pivotal role within the research and knowledge transfer functions for Northern Ireland's ruminant livestock sector.

AgriSearch has been going through a period of significant change and has recently developed a new strategic framework.

Job Description

The statutory duties of a trustee are:

- To ensure the organisation complies with its governing document - (memorandum and articles of association.)
- To ensure that the organisation pursues its objectives as defined in its governing document.
- To ensure the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives - the charity must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objectives, no matter how 'charitable' and 'worthwhile' those activities are.
- To contribute actively to the Board of Trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- To safeguard the good name and values of the organisation.
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation.
- To ensure the financial stability of the organisation.
- To protect and manage the property of the organisation and to ensure the proper investment of the organisation's funds.

In addition with other trustees to hold the charity “in trust” for current and future beneficiaries by:

- Ensuring that the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these.
- Being responsible for the performance of the charity and for its “corporate” behaviour; ensuring that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements.
- Acting as guardians of the charity’s assets, both tangible and intangible, taking all due care over their security, deployment and proper application.
- Ensuring that the charity’s governance is of the highest possible standard.

As well as the various statutory duties, any trustee should make full use of any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the board make good decisions.

The above list of duties is indicative only and not exhaustive. The Trustee will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role.

As only independent trustees can assume the role of Chair or Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees, if so appointed the Trustee should be willing to take such a role in the future.

Person specification

The Board of Trustees are jointly and severally responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity, its financial health, the probity of its activities and developing the organisation's aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the governing document, legal and regulatory guidelines.

All trustees, should also be aware of, and understand, their individual and collective responsibilities, and should not be overly reliant on one or more individual trustees in any particular aspect of the governance of the charity.

Essential Qualities

- As an independent Trustee the applicant must not be a levy payer or collector nor actively involved in farming.

Experience

- Knowledge of and interest in the Northern Ireland Agri-Food sector.
- Successful experience of operating within a board in a charitable, public sector or commercial organisation
- Demonstrable experience of building and sustaining relationships with colleagues and key stakeholders at every level in industry and government to achieve organisational objectives
- A proven track record of sound judgement and effective decision making
- A history of impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences

Knowledge, skills and understanding:

- Commitment to the organisation and a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to their duties as Trustee and if called upon as Chair / Vice-Chair
- Preparedness to make unpopular recommendations to the board, and a willingness to speak their mind as well as listening to the views of others
- Willingness to be available to staff for advice and enquiries on an ad hoc basis
- Good, independent judgement and strategic vision

- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- Leadership ability (as may be called on to take the role of Chair / Vice-Chair)
- Tact and diplomacy
- Good communication skills
- Ability to take decisions for the good of the organisation
- An understanding of the respective roles of the Chair, Trustees and staff

Desirable Qualities

- Experience of charitable organisations.
- Experience of making successful external funding applications and managing same.
- Experience of strategic planning and organisational development

At present we are particularly looking for Trustees with any of the following skill sets:

- Experience in the governance of charitable organisations
- Trustees with experience in human resource management
- Trustees with experience of accountancy / finance

Possible future role as Chair / Vice-Chair

As noted above only independent trustees can assume the role of Chair or Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees, if so appointed the Trustee should be willing to take such a role in the future.

Role Summary

The role of the Chair is to provide leadership and direction to the board of Trustees. The Chair's aim is to enable the board to fulfil their responsibilities for the overall governance and strategic direction of the organisation.

The Chair will ensure that the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations and to make sure that the organisation pursues its objects as defined in its governing document.

The Chair's role is also to work in partnership with the Project Manager and support the employees, helping them achieve the aims of the organisation; and to optimise the relationship between the board of Trustees and the staff.

In addition to the general responsibilities of a Trustee, the Chair has a number of tasks specific to their role.

Main Responsibilities of the Chair

- providing leadership for the board of trustees in their role of setting the strategy and policy of the organisation
- planning the annual cycle of board meetings and set the agendas
- chairing and facilitating the board meetings
- giving directions to board policy making
- monitoring that decisions taken at board meetings are implemented
- representing the organisation at appropriate events, meetings or functions
- acting as a spokesperson for the organisation where appropriate
- liaising with the Project Manager to keep an overview of the organisation's affairs and to provide support as appropriate
- reviewing and appraising the performance of the AgriSearch Secretariat
- sitting on appointment panels as required
- attending and being a member of other committees or working groups when appropriate in role as Chair

Application Procedure

Those interested in applying for this position should send a customised CV (of no more than 4 sides of A4, using a font size of not less than 11pt) showing how they meet the above mentioned criteria no later than Noon on Monday 26th October 2015.

Completed applications may be sent by any of the following methods:

Email: jason.rankin@countrysideservices.com

Fax: 028 8778 8200

Post: Jason Rankin
Company Secretary
AgriSearch
97 Moy Road
Dungannon
County Tyrone
BT71 7DX

Equality Statement

We welcome applications from all suitably qualified persons regardless of their gender; religious belief; political opinion; race; age; sexual orientation; or, whether they are married or are in a civil partnership; or, whether they are disabled; or whether they have undergone, are undergoing or intend to undergo gender reassignment.