

## **CONSERVATION FARMER JOB DESCRIPTION**

<b>Job title:</b>	Conservation Farmer
<b>Salary:</b>	£30,000 p/a
<b>Hours:</b>	40 across the week – Normally Monday to Friday 08.00 to 17.00 with occasional evenings / early mornings and alternate weekends
<b>Reporting to:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Responsible for:</b>	Volunteers, farm contractors
<b>Location:</b>	Time split between Colletts Farm, Dorsington, Warwickshire, CV37 8AU and Crabtree Farm, Dorsington Road, Pebworth, Warwickshire, CV38 8AP and surrounds
<b>Date:</b>	January 2020

### **JOB SUMMARY**

This role is ideal for an enthusiastic individual passionate about conservation farming, and would ideally suit someone looking for career development keen to make their mark, try out new ideas and shape the conservation farming programme within the charity.

The Conservation Farmer is responsible for the development, management and coordination of the Heart of England Forest's livestock grazing programme to ensure that animals are available for grazing on a wide range of habitats throughout the Forest. The postholder will work with Heart of England Forest staff to ensure that, within the capacity of the farm team and subject to availability of livestock, sites will be grazed to a high standard to deliver their nature conservation objectives.

The postholder will use their knowledge and expertise to advise on conservation farming and grazing, helping the charity and its wider partners to switch to less intensive, more ecologically beneficial agriculture systems, developing the charity's farm to demonstrate farming systems which significantly enhance biodiversity.

The role will predominantly focus on and perform the sheep husbandry operations within the organisation, which include ensuring excellent health and wellbeing of the sheep at all times, and contributing to and implementing the annual sheep health and performance plan. We want someone passionate about improving flock performance, with meticulous record keeping and keen on analysis. There is significant scope for autonomy, and the postholder must be comfortable working on their own.

The role is part of a small farm team, which operates as part of the wider charity team. The postholder will be comfortable undertaking all aspects of farm work as required, from animal husbandry to arable, and accurate paper and electronic record keeping to general farm maintenance. The role will be responsible for leading the organisation through its annual organic and Red Tractor accreditation and will be familiar with the standards required.

This is a unique role which will give the successful candidate an opportunity to grow and shape the agroforestry element of England's largest new native broadleaf forest, whilst gaining practical experience on the job. We are looking for an enthusiastic individual, committed to high standards of animal welfare, who is keen to continuously learn and has a "can do" attitude, and who will be a passionate ambassador for the charity.

## **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Dorsington Farms, a trading subsidiary of the Heart of England Forest, is predominantly an organic livestock farm, with some elements of arable production. The postholder will adhere to and promote high standards of farm practice at all times, working within the Red Tractor and organic accreditation standards. The farm is an important aspect of the Heart of England Forest, and the postholder is expected to promote exemplary conservation values and a proactive approach to agroforestry. Dorsington Farms has many Countryside Stewardship agreements, and the postholder is expected to farm in accordance with agreement requirements, GAEC (Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition) standards, and within the requirements of farming within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ).

### **Sheep husbandry**

The role will be responsible for the sheep husbandry operations within the organisation, which include:

- Ensuring excellent health and wellbeing of the sheep at all times.
- Writing and implementing the annual sheep health and performance plan.
- Undertaking daily feeding, watering and flock checks.
- Undertaking quarterly routine health checks, including body condition scoring.
- Maintaining accurate and up to date records and analysing to improve performance.
- Administering medication and routine supplements.
- Ensuring all animals are maintained in a clean environment, which will include regular mucking out.
- Dealing with fallen stock.
- Undertaking all aspects of lambing, which will include significant antisocial hours over the lambing period, likely to run across three weeks in April.
- Coordinating tugging, scanning, shearing, etc.
- Undertaking routine health treatments including bolusing, foot inspection and hoof trimming, foot dipping, worming, etc.
- Liaising with the wider farm team and vet.
- Maintenance of stock fencing, gates and hedges.

### **Cattle husbandry**

The role will assist with cattle husbandry operations within the organisation, which may include:

- Providing cover in the absence of the stockman, e.g. annual leave, duty weekends, etc.
- Undertaking daily feeding, watering and herd checks on duty weekends / bank holidays.
- Assisting with cattle testing during TB inspections.
- Undertaking emergency action in the absence of the stockman, for the health and wellbeing of the cattle.
- Maintaining accurate and up to date records.
- Dealing with fallen stock when necessary.
- Assisting with mucking out.

## **Conservation farming**

The postholder will play a key role in habitat maintenance and enhancement for the benefit of biodiversity across the farm, including:

- Participating in farm biodiversity surveys.
- Leading on the development of the Heart of England Forest's farming activities to demonstrate farming systems which significantly enhance biodiversity.
- Acting as adviser on agricultural issues to other Heart of England Forest staff.
- Using the farm to demonstrate wildlife-friendly farming systems and added-value of farm produce.
- Developing long term management plans for the farm in consultation with others.
- Developing and delivering annual work programmes in consultation with the CEO.
- Implementing research and monitoring projects as appropriate.
- Maximising farm income from grant opportunities such as BPS, CS and ELMS.

## **Pasture management**

- Tractor driving and use of machinery including mowing, tedding, chain harrowing.
- Taking a lead role in the monitoring and improvement of organic grazing pasture.
- Undertaking stock grazing planning, including liaison with the stockman regarding cattle grazing, and maintaining accurate records of flock grazing.

## **Other farm duties**

- Hedgecutting
- Cultivation, drilling, and assisting with harvesting of arable crops.
- Assisting with silage making, haymaking, and bale carting and storage.
- Maintaining accurate electronic records on FarmPlan.
- Undertaking monthly stock checks.
- Undertaking pest control (primarily rats) as appropriate, within organic principles, and maintaining accurate records.
- Ensuring machinery is cleaned and maintained after use.
- Undertaking basic machinery maintenance, and liaising with suppliers to arrange servicing / repairs, etc.
- Managing agents, graziers and contractors as required, including letting contracts / licences.
- Leading on and ensuring compliance with the farm biosecurity policy.

## **People engagement**

- Supporting educational visits where required.
- Supporting other stakeholder visits.
- Assisting with the planning and delivery of Heart of England Forest events.
- Recruiting, co-ordinating and supporting volunteer stock checkers as part of a new Conservation Grazing Team.
- Planning and supervising volunteer tasks as appropriate.

## **Communications**

- Contributing stories, photos and other content for Heart of England Forest communications.

## **Finance**

- Preparing annual budgets with input from others as required.
- Monitoring and managing the agreed budget against agreed targets.
- Identifying opportunities for income generation and, where appropriate, seeking external funding in co-operation with other staff.
- Ensuring all grants and other claims are submitted to required standards and time-scales.

In addition, the post holder will:

## **General**

- Demonstrate and promote the values of the Heart of England Forest.
- Maintain a commitment to high standards of health and safety at all times. Ensure all work is undertaken within the Heart of England Forest health and safety policy and processes.
- Commit to continual professional development.
- Play an active part within the wider Heart of England Forest team.
- Make active use of information and resources gained via personal networks to inform the development of this role.
- Perform any other duties consistent with the role and / or reasonably required by the Chief Executive.

## **Hours**

Normal working hours will be 40 across the week, normally between 08.00 and 17.00, Monday to Friday, with alternative weekend (and bank holiday) duty cover which involves feeding / watering and checking on the animals. As this role involves livestock husbandry, there will be occasional early morning and evening work. It is expected that the postholder will manage their own workload and working time to average 40 hours across the week. A Time Off In Lieu (TOIL) policy exists for pre-planned events such as lambing.

## **Location**

The post will be based between Colletts Farm and Crabtree Farm in Dorsington. The post holder must have the willingness and ability to undertake travel across the Heart of England Forest on a daily basis to meet the demands of the role.

## **What do we offer?**

- The chance to join an ambitious charity and play a part in creating and conserving a huge Forest for the benefit of people, wildlife and the environment
- Competitive salary with a Living Wage Foundation accredited employer
- 28 days holiday plus bank holidays
- Contributory company pension
- Group Income Protection Scheme
- Group Life Assurance Scheme
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Death in Service benefit
- Medical cash plan

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

### **Essential**

- Experience of sheep husbandry, and a drive to ensure high standards of animal health and wellbeing, and flock performance, at all times
- A sound knowledge of farming skills and issues
- Knowledge of conservation theory and practice relating to agriculture and landscape-scale conservation, particularly in relation to conservation grazing
- Experience in the safe operation of basic farm machinery, e.g. tractor, telehandler; and in safely attaching equipment such as topper, chain harrow, etc.
- An innovative, can-do, enthusiastic work ethic
- Good IT skills
- Accurate record keeping and ability to analyse data to improve livestock and grazing performance
- Self-motivated and proven experience of ability to work on own initiative
- Effective team worker
- Strong interpersonal skills with an ability to build relationships and engage effectively with people at all levels
- Good communication skills, both oral and written
- Able to communicate Heart of England Forest values and standards to supporters and stakeholders
- Proven competence in health and safety
- Working knowledge of environmental and agricultural legislation, policy and schemes
- Committed to conservation
- Full clean driving licence
- A flexible approach to work and willingness to undertake some evening and weekend work
- Willingness and ability to work outside in all weathers
- Willingness to develop new skills and take on new areas of responsibility

### **Desirable**

- Practical farm competencies, e.g. tractor driving certificate, etc.
- Experience of using an electronic farm management system, e.g. FarmPlan
- Direct experience of playing a lead role in a productive farm enterprise, especially with a focus on nature conservation
- Direct experience of farm accreditation standards, e.g. organic standards, Red Tractor accreditation, etc.
- Experience of agroforestry
- Biodiversity survey, monitoring and research techniques
- Experience in the sale of farm produce

## **ABOUT THE HEART OF ENGLAND FOREST**

### ***Planting tomorrow's great native woodland***

The Heart of England Forest is an exciting and ambitious charity. We want to help reverse centuries of woodland decline and plant one of the largest forests in England. Our goal is to create a huge, unbroken woodland – a refuge from the modern world where people can rediscover nature and wildlife can flourish. It's an ambitious vision, which we're determined to make happen, one tree at a time.

The Heart of England Forest is not only a perfectly positioned lung for the Midlands, but a breath of fresh air for the nation. With over a million new native trees planted so far, this project is restoring our native woodland – providing a safe and permanent habitat for wildlife as well as an escape for people from the urban environments surrounding it.

The forest stretches up the Warwickshire / Worcestershire border, from the present-day borders of Shakespeare's Forest of Arden to the edge of the Vale of Evesham – the north Cotswolds to south Birmingham. It's an area dense in cities, towns and industry. Which is why we're creating a place to walk under shady canopies and through airy glades, away from the bustle of city life.

The UK has less than a third of the native tree cover of many other European countries, including France, Germany and Italy. Planting tomorrow's great native woodland has already started. With 7,000 acres of land, the forest currently consists of 600 acres of mature woodland and 4,000 acres of new planting. We have planted an incredible 1.9 million trees so far, that's over 12% of the way towards our goal of a 30,000-acre forest. But with patience and your support, who knows how far it will grow!

**More information can be found at [www.heartofenglandforest.org](http://www.heartofenglandforest.org)**