

# VERMONT FARM SHOW

January 23, 2023

## **Request for Proposals**

Farm Show Manager and Event Coordinator

### About us/our goals

The Vermont Farm Show, Inc., is a not-for-profit 501(c)(5) agricultural organization incorporated in the state of Vermont. Since its inception, the organization has conducted the Vermont Farm Show, which provides agricultural organizations and agriculturalists of all kinds the opportunity to gather, conduct meetings, visit vendors, and promote the agricultural interests of the state. A Vermont Farm Show has been held annually beginning in 1935, with the exceptions of 1943, 1944, 2021, 2022, and 2023. More on the history of the Vermont Farm Show is posted [online](#).

The Vermont Farm Show, Inc., is pursuing a re-visioning process to ensure that its headline event continues to meet the needs of Vermont agriculture in a sustainable way for decades to come. In the meantime, before the re-visioning is finalized, the Board of Trustees believes it is prudent to proceed with planning a 2024 Vermont Farm Show.

### Role of the Farm Show Manager

The Farm Show Manager (henceforth referred to as “The Manager”) is responsible for the overall planning, production, and closeout of the Vermont Farm Show (“The Show”). The Manager can be either an individual, a group of individuals under a sole proprietor, or a company. The Manager is responsible for developing a Show that meets the expectations of the Vermont Farm Show Board of Trustees. The Manager will gain a complete understanding of the requirements of the Show and supervise the development of the program with the approval of the Board of Trustees. The Manager coordinates the needs of participating organizations to develop the overall program of events and oversees the sales and allotment of commercial and educational exhibit space. The Manager communicates with exhibitors all requirements of exhibiting at the Show and provides details on applicable registration fees and deposits. The Manager will work closely with floor managers/assistants and venue staff during the event. Venue staff are generally responsible for the logistics of setting up meeting space, providing electrical support for booths, and ticketing. In conducting the Show, the Manager shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws.

### Event parameters

Historically, this has been a three-day mid-week event in late January, most recently held in the Miller Buildings and Blue Ribbon Pavilion of the Champlain Valley Exposition (CVE). The 2024 event will likely be smaller than previous Shows.

## Expectations

It is the expectation of the Vermont Farm Show Board of Trustees that the Farm Show Manager will create a successful event in January 2024 that is well-attended and is financially responsible. The Manager is empowered with finalizing details of the contract with the event space management and food vendors not tied to specific association events. The Manager must maintain a copy of the electronic spreadsheets of exhibitor contact information, payments and insurance documentation if applicable, booth space and number, and other information such that it can be reconciled before, during, and after The Show in cooperation with the bookkeeper. The Manager shall interact with ticketing and marketing for a smooth, integrated and successful program. Event marketing and publications (i.e., brochures, posters, or programs) are not direct responsibilities of the Farm Show Manager. At CVE, Expo staff will provide all ticket sales and entrance verification.

The duties set out in the bylaws are listed below (with clarifications in square brackets). The Trustees are aware that we are working in a changing, more digitally tech savvy environment and are open to working with The Manager where the duties as proscribed may seem too restrictive. The Farm Show Manager is accountable to the entire Board of Trustees but will have the most interaction with the Executive Committee, i.e. the officers of the Board.

It shall be the duty of the Show Manager:

- (a) to gain a complete understanding of the requirements of the Vermont Farm Show;
- (b) to supervise the development of the program in cooperation with participating organizations/Vt Farm Show Board;
- (c) to have charge of the sales and allotment of the commercial and educational exhibit space;
- (d) to publish the printed programs and coordinate event marketing as needed; [note this duty is one of oversight, not necessarily of doing these tasks; electronic programs may be preferable to print]
- (e) to collect and receive all monies due the corporation and deposit same in a Vermont bank approved by the Board of Trustees [note this duty is one of oversight in coordination with the bookkeeper of the Vermont Farm Show, Inc.];
- (f) to provide all bills for payment to the association bookkeeper supported by documentation; [good communication with the bookkeeper is essential];
- (g) to assist the auditor and bookkeeper to finalize Show financial accounts; and
- (h) to be custodian of all physical assets.

## Skills and qualifications

- Proven experience in event planning and coordination
- Track record of creative and successful events
- Past experience working with colleagues or vendors in sales, marketing, and communications
- Excellent organizational, communication, negotiation, and multi-tasking skills
- Use of standard electronic word processing and spreadsheet programs

Ability to remain calm under pressure without losing a customer-service oriented attitude

Preferred qualifications

Above average understanding of and experience working with Vermont agriculture  
Competence with email marketing services (e.g., MailChimp or Constant Contact) for vendor/exhibitor communications  
Experience with integrating electronic records system  
Ability to work with Quickbooks printouts and basic understanding of financials

Salary

This position is compensated through a fixed price contract (to be negotiated) to complete the duties described above. Separate budget allocations support floor managers and other personnel and operations.

Objective measures of success

- Utilization of floor space and meeting rooms to achieve multiple objectives while balancing expenses with income
- Attendance numbers (those collected in 2024 will be used as a baseline for judging the attractiveness of future shows)
- Maintenance of existing and exiting vendor/exhibitor relationships and ability to gain new vendors/exhibitors

Timeline of RFP process

RFP release	January 23
Confirmation of intent to propose	February 3
Question period	February 6 – 28
RFP responses due	March 1
Estimated selection	April 14

Please direct questions and confirmation (or declines) to propose via email to Julie Smith, [julie.m.smith@uvm.edu](mailto:julie.m.smith@uvm.edu)

Please send a pdf version of your complete RFP response via email by 5 pm March 1 to Julie Smith, Secretary, Vermont Farm Show, [julie.m.smith@uvm.edu](mailto:julie.m.smith@uvm.edu)

The expected contents of RFP responses are detailed on the next page.

## **Contents of Response to RFP**

Your response should include a proposed project schedule, including milestones, and answers to the following questions.

1. Please provide your (company) background and description (e.g., history, number of employees, staff available and their functions). Limit to one page.
2. Please provide an overview of your approach and scope of services to plan and produce the Vermont Farm Show. Be sure to include answers to items 3-7. Limit to five pages maximum.
3. How do your skills and expertise align with (or exceed) the qualifications of the position?
4. Describe your project management methodology, communication, and tools used during developing an event, including how you handle staying on time and within budget. Being on time for registration deadlines, advertising, and other items are essential for quality shows.
5. Please describe any contact management/marketing tools you propose to use (such as MailChimp or Constant Contact) and how the information collected will be provided to the Vermont Farm Show, Inc.
6. How will you integrate findings from the re-visioning process into the event you are developing? Based on the information provided in the RFP and in response to your questions, what other observations and creative suggestions can you provide about the Vermont Farm Show?
7. Provide three examples of events you have conducted. Will the clients act as references? (If so, please provide their contact information.)