



United States Department of Agriculture

RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS  
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE  
[www.ars.usda.gov](http://www.ars.usda.gov)

*"Solving Problems for the Growing World"*

**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Announcement Number:** ARS-X4S-0283  
Demo/Alternative Merit  
Promotion

**Position Title/Series/Grade:**  
Supervisory Research Plant Pathologist/Research  
Geneticist/Soil Scientist/Research Agronomist,  
GS-0434/0440/0470/0471-14/15

**Employment Type:** Full-time - Permanent

**Grade and Salary Range:**  
GS-14 \$82,438.00 - \$107,170.00 Per Year  
GS-15 \$96,970.00 - \$126,064.00 Per Year

**Location of Position:**  
Sugarcane Field Station, Canal Point, Florida

**Who Can Apply:**  
All U.S. Citizens

**Opening Date:** October 4, 2004

**Closing Date:** November 8, 2004

For copies of vacancy announcements and/or application materials, please call (301) 504-1482. For additional information regarding employment opportunities, please visit <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/jobs/apply.htm>.

**Contact Information**

**Human Resources Specialist:**  
Angela Parsons  
(301) 504-1507

**Location Contact Information:**  
Donna Young  
(561) 924-5227 ext. 11

**DC Relay Service:** (202) 855-1234 (TDD)

**Send Applications to:**  
USDA, Agricultural Research Service  
Human Resources Division  
Attn: Angela Parsons  
5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Stop 5105  
Beltsville, MD 20705-5105  
**Fax:** (301) 504-1535  
**E-mail:** [scirecruit@ars.usda.gov](mailto:scirecruit@ars.usda.gov)

Applications must be postmarked, e-mailed or faxed by the closing date of the announcement. Applications received in Government envelopes will not be considered.

Please take advantage of the Application Package Checklist at the end of this announcement to ensure your application is complete.

For information about the organization and location, visit the location's website at <http://www.canalpoint.sugarcane.usda.gov/>.

**Applications will also be accepted from USDA Surplus and Federal Displaced Employees in the commuting area.**

## **Major Duties:**

The incumbent is responsible for exercising leadership and line authority over scientists and support personnel assigned to the unit. This includes the management of human, fiscal, and physical resources assigned the unit.

The incumbent is responsible for leading a group of scientists in exploring and defining areas of research involving the development of: high-yielding, disease and stress tolerant sugarcane cultivars; and new soil, crop and water management technologies that result in improved production efficiency.

The incumbent conducts research on one or more of the following objectives: 1) development of new and improved methods of sugarcane breeding and cultivar selection, 2) development of marker-assisted selection techniques for identification of superior genotypes, 3) development of agronomic practices that sustain yields under the variable, but often wet, hydrological conditions resulting from Everglades Restoration, 4) development of improved methods and technologies to screen breeding populations for disease and environmental stress resistance, and 5) development of techniques to rapidly evaluate soil microbial populations to assess the effects of different treatments on the organisms that cause soil subsidence.

This research will result in the development of new high-yielding, disease resistant cultivars, tolerant of abiotic stress (cold, high water tables, drought) and soil-water management practices that will result in the reduced rate of soil subsidence, that in turn will make the industry more sustainable.

**Qualifications Required:** Your education and experience will be evaluated against all qualification requirements (basic and any additional requirements) listed below.

### **Basic Requirements**

Supervisory Research Plant Pathologist, GS-0434:

Degree in plant pathology OR Degree in a related scientific discipline that included 10 semester hours in plant pathology and at least 20 semester hours in either basic botany or plant science.

Supervisory Research Geneticist, GS-0440:

Degree in genetics OR Degree in one of the basic biological sciences that included at least 9 semester hours in genetics.

Supervisory Soil Scientist, GS-0470:

Degree in soil science OR Degree in a closely related discipline that included 30 semester hours or equivalent in biological, physical, or earth science with a minimum of 15 semester hours in such subjects as soil genesis, pedology, soil chemistry, soil physics, and soil fertility.

Supervisory Research Agronomist, GS-0471:

Degree in agronomy OR Degree in a related discipline of science that included at least 30 semester hours of course work in the basic plant sciences, including at least 15 semester hours in agronomic subjects, such as those dealing with plant breeding, crop production, and soil and crop management.

**If qualifying all or in part based on your education, please submit a copy of your college transcripts OR a list of college courses with credit hours, dates completed, and grades received. If this information is not provided, your education may not be appropriately evaluated and you may**

**lose consideration for this position. If your qualifications are based in any part on education and you are selected for this position, you will have to provide an official copy of your academic transcripts prior to entering on duty.**

**Specialized Experience** - experience which has equipped you with the following Knowledge, Skills and Abilities - 'KSAs' required to perform the duties of this position:

1. Knowledge of cultural, genetic, pathological, and/or soil-related factors that affect the production of agronomic and/or horticultural crops.
2. Ability to modify and extend existing plant pathology, plant genetics, agronomic, and/or soil science techniques for either increased plant resistance to biotic or abiotic stresses in crops or reduced soil subsidence.
3. Ability to plan, conduct, and publish research in the area of sustainable crop production through development of superior cultivars and/or improved cultural, disease, and/or soil management practices.

The following supervisory/managerial competencies will be used to evaluate candidates in the interview and selection process:

1. Ability to lead and accomplish work through others (i.e. team building, conflict management, cultural awareness, strategic thinking, technology management, and political savvy).
2. Ability to communicate with individuals or groups from diverse backgrounds in a variety of situations.

**Supervisory/Managerial Competencies** - the following KSAs will also be used to evaluate candidates in the interview and selection process:

1. Ability to lead and accomplish work through others (i.e. team building, conflict management, cultural awareness, strategic thinking, technology management, and political savvy.)
2. Ability to communicate with individuals or groups from diverse backgrounds in a variety of situations.

**To be considered for a research scientist position, you must submit a one-page abstract of your MS thesis and/or Ph.D. dissertation. Also submit a list of names, addresses, and phone numbers of persons familiar with your stature, contributions, recognition; any honors or awards received; memberships in professional or honor societies; invitations to make presentations at scientific/technical meetings; scientific society office and committee assignments; presentations (other than invitation); and publications.**

**Vacant research positions may be filled at one of several grade levels depending upon the scientific impact of the person selected. A peer review may be required to determine the appropriate grade level of the position and supplemental materials may be required from the selectee.**

**Research scientists have open-ended promotion potential. Research accomplishments and their impact on the duties and responsibilities of positions are evaluated periodically. The grade level is limited only by the individual's demonstrated ability to perform research of recognized importance to science and technology. \*Final grade level may be determined by a peer review panel.**

## Other Important Information

### **Benefits Package:**

A Benefits Package is authorized for this position. Additional information about Federal benefits can be obtained at [www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei61.htm](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei61.htm).

### **Veteran's Preference:**

For further details, call the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) at 478-757-3000 or TDD 478-744-2299. Select General Information on the Federal Employment Policies and Procedures, and then Veterans Preference and Special Appointing Authorities for Veterans. Visit their VetGuide website at <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>.

### **Relocation Expenses:**

Payment of relocation expenses will be determined in accordance with P&P 412.5, Recruitment and Retention Incentives and Other Special Pay, Sections 6 and 7, as amended by Bulletin 03-402, which may be found at: [http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/staffing\\_recruit/reloweb.htm](http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/staffing_recruit/reloweb.htm).

### **Financial Disclosure Requirement:**

Federal employees are subject to prohibitions against officially dealing with outside organizations in which they have a financial interest. If hired for this position, you will be required to submit a financial disclosure report within 30 days of the effective date of your appointment and annually thereafter.

### **False statements:**

If you make a false statement in any part of your application, you may not be hired; may be fired after beginning work; or may be fined or jailed.

### **Optional Form 306, (Declaration for Federal Employment):**

If you are selected for this position, you will be required to complete this form before an offer may be made.

### **USDA Surplus/Federal Displaced Employees:**

USDA Surplus/Federal displaced employees must submit documentary evidence of eligibility. Well qualified surplus and displaced employees within the local commuting area will receive selection priority as provided by OPM regulations. Well-qualified means the applicant meets the basic qualification and eligibility requirements and all selective placement factors; is rated above minimally qualified against the KSAs or quality criteria; and is able to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position upon entry. Applicants must submit the following:

- 1) a copy of your RIF Separation Notice or Certification of Expected Separation or other documentation indicating that you are a surplus employee;
- 2) evidence of full performance level of current position;
- 3) a copy of your most recent performance appraisal; and
- 4) a copy of your most recent SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, to verify reassignment eligibility.

### **Selective Service System:**

Males over age 18 who were born after December 31, 1959, must have registered with the Selective Service System (or have an exemption) to be eligible for Federal employment.

**Reasonable Accommodation:**

Reasonable accommodation is provided to applicants with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, or have questions regarding reasonable accommodation and/or accessibility for any part of the application and hiring process, please contact the Disability Program Manager on 202-720-6161 or through the DC Relay Service on 202-855-1234 (TDD). The decision to grant reasonable accommodation is made on a case-by-case basis.

**Civil Rights Policy Statement:**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity employer and provider. Discrimination is prohibited in all USDA programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's Target Center on 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

**To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice and TDD).**

## Application Package Checklist

**If application packages do not contain all of the requested information, you may lose consideration for the job. To help you ensure your application fully outlines your qualifications and eligibility for this position, please submit the following documentation.**

- Optional Form 612 (Optional Application for Federal Employment), SF-171 (Application for Federal Employment), Resume, Curriculum Vitae, or other document outlining your qualifications (Go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to obtain the OF-612).

**The following information is required of all applicants:**

- Announcement number, title, and grade(s) of the position
- Full name, mailing address (including zip code) and day and evening phone numbers (with area code)
- Social security number
- Statement that you are a U.S. citizen (if not using the OF-612 or SF-171)
- Copy of DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) (if claiming veterans preference) (Visit <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp> for additional information).
- SF-15 (Application for 10-point Veteran's Preference) plus the support documentation required by this form (if claiming 10-point veterans preference) (Go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/sf.asp> to obtain form.)
- Paid and non-paid work experience related to the position. For each period of work experience include:
  - \_\_\_ Job title
  - \_\_\_ Series/grade (if Federal employment)
  - \_\_\_ Duties and accomplishments
  - \_\_\_ Employer's name and address
  - \_\_\_ Supervisor's name and contact information
  - \_\_\_ Starting and ending dates of employment (at least month & year)
  - \_\_\_ Number of hours worked per week
  - \_\_\_ Salary
  - \_\_\_ Indicate if we may contact current supervisor/employer
- Other job related information, such as training courses (title & year); skills (e.g., other languages, computer software/hardware, tools, etc.)
  - \_\_\_ Certificates/licenses (current)
  - \_\_\_ Honors, awards, and special accomplishments
  - \_\_\_ Supplemental questionnaire if applicable (usually for Federal Wage System positions - WG, WL, WS)
- Copy of college transcripts (if qualifying all or in part on the basis of education for this position) (If you have non-conventional education, e.g., foreign study, continuing education units, life experience, etc., go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/SEC-II/s2-e4.htm#e4a> and look under the heading "Other Education" for information governing acceptability of this type of education.)

- Copy of SF-50 (Notification of Personnel Action) to verify possession of competitive civil service status (if you are a current or previous federal employee)
- Copy of most recent performance appraisal (if you are a current federal employee)
- Second copy of application package (if the position is open to candidates outside the federal government AND if you are a current federal employee or a candidate with reinstatement eligibility and wish to be considered under both merit promotion and competitive examining procedures).
- Support documentation for eligibility for special hiring authorities, such as disability, Peace Corps service, etc. (If you have questions about whether you are eligible for a particular hiring authority, please call the servicing HR specialist or visit the web site at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/a2.htm> and scroll down to the subject heading, "Category".)
- Support documentation if you are a USDA surplus or federal displaced employee (See pertinent section under "Other Important Information" below.)
- Self-certification of typing speed (if required as a basic qualification for the position)
- While not required, a separate response to the required knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs listed under Specialized Experience) and Selective Placement Factor(s), if present, for this position may better highlight your specific qualifications for this position. (For an explanation of KSAs, go to the web site at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/careers/whatksa.html> ).

**As an Applicant for a Research Scientist Position, you must also submit the following:**

A one-page abstract of MS thesis and/or Ph.D. dissertation

A resume of any honors or awards received; memberships in professional or honor societies; invitations to make presentations at scientific/technical meetings; scientific society office and committee assignments; presentations (other than invitations); and publications.

A list of names, addresses, and phone numbers of persons familiar with your stature, contributions, and recognition.

**If this is your first time applying for a federal job, or if you wish to view more detailed information about various aspects of applying for federal jobs, go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to access the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Optional Form 510.**