



RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS
Agricultural Research Service
VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
Research Position

United States Department of Agriculture

Announcement Type: ALL SOURCES/ALTERNATIVE MERIT PROMOTION
Position Title: Plant Physiologist
Series/Grade: GS-0435-11/12/13
Salary: GS-11: \$48,947 - \$63,629 per annum
GS-12: \$58,665 - \$76,261 per annum
GS-13: \$69,762 - \$90,692 per annum
Type of Appointment: Permanent, Full-Time
Location of Position: USDA, ARS, SAA
Soybean and Nitrogen Fixation Research
Raleigh, North Carolina
Announcement Number: ARS-X4S-0288
Opening Date: September 20, 2004
Closing Date: November 22, 2004
Area of Consideration: All U.S. Citizens

APPLICATIONS WILL ALSO BE ACCEPTED FROM USDA SURPLUS AND FEDERAL DISPLACED EMPLOYEES IN THE COMMUTING AREA.

DUTIES:

The incumbent is responsible for identifying research problems, developing and implementing experimental approaches to solve them, preparation of manuscripts, and other forms of technology transfer. The objective of the assigned project is to identify physiological, biochemical and molecular mechanisms that control the production of assimilates in leaves and their use in developing soybean seed. The incumbent works independently and in collaboration with geneticists, chemists and physiologists in gaining a better understanding of the physiological and biochemical bases of plant productivity and seed composition. The goal of the research project includes identification and characterization of biochemical and physiological diversity that affects soybean seed composition and other traits such as abiotic stress tolerance; and the development of molecular tools to enhance superior plant germplasm.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Basic Requirements:

Applicants must possess a degree in botany or plant physiology or a related scientific discipline that included at least 10 semester hours in plant physiology. In addition to the above basic requirement, applicants must have evidence of the following:

- GS-11: Master's or equivalent graduate degree, directly related to the duties of this position
OR 1 year of specialized experience equivalent to at least the GS-9 grade level.
- GS-12: Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree directly related to the duties of this position
OR 1 year of specialized experience equivalent to at least the GS-11 grade level.
- GS-13: One (1) year of specialized experience equivalent to at least the GS-12 grade level.

Specialized experience is professional research experience that provided:

1. Knowledge of plant physiology and plant biochemistry.
2. Ability to plan, conduct, and publish results of research on the physiology of plants as related to plant productivity, seed composition, stress tolerance or other traits.
3. Knowledge of various experimental environments such as phytotron, green house, and field with the affects and/or benefits of each one.
4. Skill in molecular techniques in order to investigate physiological/biochemical processes related to yield and protein, and oil composition of soybean seed.

Applicants should submit a copy of college transcripts, or a list of college courses with: name of course; year taken; credit hours; and grade received, in order to verify possession of the basic education requirement. If this information is not provided you may lose consideration for this position.

YOUR EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE WILL BE EVALUATED AGAINST THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES (KSAs) AS OUTLINED UNDER SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE AND SELECTIVE PLACEMENT FACTOR(S). A SPECIFIC RESPONSE TO THE REQUIREMENTS OUTLINED UNDER SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE AND SELECTIVE PLACEMENT FACTOR(S) IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED TO ENSURE ADEQUATE CONSIDERATION IN THE EVALUATION PROCESS.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

HOW TO APPLY: Send a resume, Curriculum vitae, Optional Application for Federal Employment (OF-612), or SF-171, to the contact address listed below. The following information is required to evaluate applicant qualifications and to determine if applicants meet legal requirements for Federal employment:

- Announcement number, title, and grade(s) for the position
- Full name, mailing address (including zip code) and day and evening phone numbers (with area code)
- Social security number
- Identify country of citizenship (**U.S. Citizenship required**)
- Veterans' Preference (**If applicable--see "Veterans' Preference" below for required forms and documentation**)
- Highest Federal civilian grade held (if applicable)
- Current Federal employees **must** submit their most recent performance appraisal.
- Current Federal employees and reinstatement eligibles should submit an SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, to verify competitive eligibility
- Highest education level achieved. Specify:
 - Name, city, state, zip code (if known)
 - Date or expected date (month/year) of completion of degree requirements
 - Type of degree received
 - Graduates of foreign universities must include proof of foreign education equivalency to an accredited U.S. college/university
- Copy of college transcripts or list of college courses.
- Paid and non-paid work experience related to the position. For each work experience include:
 - Job title
 - Series/grade (if Federal employment)
 - Duties and accomplishments
 - Employer's name and address
 - Supervisor's name and address
 - Starting and ending dates
 - Hours per week
 - Salary
 - Indicate if we may contact current supervisor/employer
- Job-related:
 - Training courses (title and year)
 - Skills (e.g., other languages, typing speed, computer software/hardware, tools, etc.)
 - Certificates/licenses (current)
 - Honors, awards, and special accomplishments
- A one-page abstract of MS thesis and/or PhD dissertation.
- List of:

- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of persons familiar with applicants stature, contributions, and recognition;
- Honors and awards;
- 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.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- All status candidates who wish to be considered under both alternative merit promotion and non-status competitive examining must submit two (2) complete applications. When only one (1) application is received, it will be considered under the alternative merit promotion procedures if the applicant is a current or former Federal employee with reinstatement eligibility.

- This position is being filled in accordance with the Alternative Merit Promotion system. All merit promotion principles remain in effect.

- Applicants will be evaluated based on the quality and extent of their experience, education, and accomplishments. This may include factors such as number of credits in directly related subjects, grade point average, relatedness of work experience, and any other evidence of ability to do the work of the position. For current and former Federal employees, the performance evaluation may also be taken into consideration. Please be sure that your application or resume contains all of the information we need to determine if you are well qualified.

- Vacant research positions may be filled at any 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 from the selectee may be required.

- **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, which may be found at <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/jobs/index.htm> and click on, "Policy on Payment of Relocation Expenses" under General Information.

- **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 knowledge, skills, and abilities or quality criteria; and is able to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position upon entry. Applicants **must** submit the following:

- a copy of their RIF Separation Notice (for displaced employees) OR Certification of Expected Separation or other documentation identifying you as surplus;
- evidence of full performance level of current position;
- a copy of their most recent performance appraisal; and
- a copy of their most recent SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, to verify reassignment eligibility.

- Promotion Potential: 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.

- 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 a Federal job.

- **If applications do not contain all of the requested information, applicants may lose consideration for the job.**

- **If applicants make a false statement in any part of their application, they may not be hired; may be fired after they begin work; or may be fined or jailed.**

- Applicants will not be notified of the status of their application until a final selection has been made.

- Applications submitted via Government envelopes will not be accepted.

- **Financial Disclosure.** Federal employees are subject to prohibitions against officially dealing with outside organizations in which they have a financial interest. The incumbent of this position:

- will be required to submit a financial disclosure report within 30 days of their effective date of appointment and annually thereafter.
- may be required to submit a financial disclosure report.

- **APPLICATIONS MUST BE**

- POSTMARKED BY THE CLOSING DATE OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT.**
- RECEIVED BY THE CLOSING DATE OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT.**

SPECIAL HIRING AUTHORITIES: If you meet the basic eligibility requirements and you are eligible for a noncompetitive appointment (a list of who may be eligible for noncompetitive appointments can be found at www.usajobs.opm.gov/a1.htm, please indicate the type of special appointment you are seeking on your application and follow all other instructions in this announcement. If you do not indicate the type of special appointment you are seeking, you will be considered under competitive procedures. If you wish to be considered under both noncompetitive and competitive procedures, please submit two (2) complete applications.

VETERANS' PREFERENCE: If applicants served on active duty in the United States military and were separated under honorable conditions, they may be eligible for veterans' preference. To claim 5-point veterans' preference, you must attach a copy of your DD-

214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, or other proof of eligibility. To claim 10-point veterans' preference, attach an SF-15, Application for 10-Point Veterans Preference, plus the documentation required by that form. For further details, call the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) at 912-757-3000. Select "Federal Employment Topics" and then "Veterans." Or, dial OPM's electronic bulletin board at 912-757-3100 or visit their VetGuide web site: www.opm.gov/employ/html/vetguide.htm.

EEO STATEMENT: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its 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 at 202-720-2600 (voice or TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202)720-5964 (voice or TDD). **USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.**

ACCOMMODATION: This agency provides reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities where appropriate. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process or have questions/concerns regarding reasonable accommodation and/or accessibility for any part of the application and hiring process, please contact Sue Dixon, ARS, Civil Rights Staff, 202-690-0372 or DC Relay Service: 202-855-1234 (TDD). The decision on granting reasonable accommodation will be on a case-by-case basis.

CONTACT:

For a copy of this vacancy announcement and/or applications forms, call 301-504-1482.

For specific questions regarding this vacancy only, call:

Location contact: Ms. Susan Davis at (919) 515-2731

Servicing Specialist: Laverne Blackwell at (301) 504-1518

Submit applications to:

USDA, Agricultural Research Service
Human Resources Division
ATTN: Laverne Blackwell
5601 Sunnyside Avenue
Beltsville, MD 20705-5105
(301) 504-1518

FAX applications to: 301-504-1535

E-MAIL applications to: scirecruit@ars.usda.gov **(If submitting applications via E-mail, be sure to mail or fax other required documentation such as college transcripts, SF-50, most recent performance appraisal, and/or DD-214/SF-15 separately and include the vacancy announcement number of the position.)**

For employment information and current job opportunities:

INTERNET ADDRESS: www.ars.usda.gov
DIAL-A-VACANCY: 301-504-1482
DC RELAY SERVICE: 202-855-1234 (TDD)