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AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH TECHNICIAN I

Pending approval, the Center for Vector Biology & Zoonotic Diseases and Department of Entomology at The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) invites applications for a Research Technician I position, with the anticipated start date of June 25, 2025.

Summary of duties: The successful candidate will assist in the identification of tick species, screening tick samples for infection with pathogens, and contributing to research, gathering and recording research data, ordering inventory, and communicating the results with clients, health departments, and other entities.

Required qualifications are a bachelor's or master's degree in life sciences or related fields; proficiency with a year or more of professional experience in molecular/cell biology techniques and biochemistry; examples include but are not limited to DNA & RNA extraction, polymerase chain reaction (PCR), real-time PCR, operation of equipment for high-throughput DNA & RNA extraction, gel electrophoresis, preparation of samples for screening and nucleic acids for sequencing, sequence analyses and alignments, preparation of reagents and solutions, and maintenance of stock solutions used in a molecular biology laboratory. A valid CT or US driver's license is also required.

Preferred qualifications include demonstrated evidence of analytical, problem-solving, and communication skills—experience in a professional lab, authorship on publications, conference presentations; the ability to answer interview questions about relevant biological concepts such as DNA & RNA detection, vector-borne disease cycles, etc.; a year or more of experience in using established protocols and procedures in a molecular biology laboratory; demonstrated competency in implementing new procedures and protocols; proficiency in Microsoft Office (Word, PowerPoint, Excel); and familiarity with graphic software (e.g., CorelDRAW and/or Adobe Photoshop).

The starting salary is \$53,277 per year and comes with a generous benefits package. There is no U.S. citizenship requirement to apply. Review of application materials will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. The primary appointment will be within the Department of Entomology at the main CAES campus in New Haven, CT.

Application instructions: Candidates should submit the following electronically in a single PDF file: 1) a cover letter summarizing qualifications and interests; 2) a resume; 3) college/graduate transcripts; and 4) contact information for three professional references. The application package should be sent to Dr. Goudarz Molaei at Goudarz.Molaei@ct.gov.

About Us: The CAES Tick Testing Laboratory (TTL) was established in 1990 following the first discovery of Lyme disease in Connecticut and several years of pioneering research. The objectives of this program are to 1) screen ticks for pathogens, 2) monitor the distribution and spread of both native and invasive ticks, 3) develop mathematical and statistical models to better predict the presence, abundance, and range expansion of ticks and their associated pathogens, and 4) investigate the effects of environmental factors such as climate change on the spatiotemporal patterns of tick species. Within the framework of the passive surveillance program, the CAES- TTL was initially mandated to screen the blacklegged tick for evidence of infection with *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the causative agent of Lyme disease. However, in 2015, the program was expanded to include testing for *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* and *Babesia microti*, the two important tick-borne pathogens responsible for human granulocytic anaplasmosis and babesiosis, respectively. In 2023, the program was further expanded to include testing for *Borrelia miyamotoi* and Powassan virus, the causative agents for *Borrelia miyamotoi* disease and Powassan virus disease, respectively. The CAES-TTL receives nearly 6,000 tick submissions each year from residents, health departments, and health care providers. Over the years, the CAES passive tick and tick-borne pathogen surveillance program has developed into one of the most important surveillance programs in the region.

Equal employment opportunity means employment of people without consideration of age, ancestry, color, criminal record (in state employment and licensing), gender identity or expression, genetic information, intellectual disability, learning disability, marital status, mental disability (past or present), national origin, physical disability (including blindness), race, religious creed, retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, sex (pregnancy or sexual harassment), sexual orientation, veteran status, and workplace hazards to reproductive systems unless the provisions of sec. 46a-80(b) or 46a-81(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes are controlling or there are bona fide occupational qualifications excluding persons in one of the above protected classes. To file a complaint of discrimination, contact Dr. Jason White, Director, The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, 123 Huntington Street, New Haven, CT 06511, (203) 974-8440 (voice), or Jason.White@ct.gov (e-mail). CAES is an affirmative action/equal opportunity provider and employer. Persons with disabilities who require alternate means of communication of program information should contact the Chief of Services, Michael Last at (203) 974-8442 (voice), (203) 974-8502 (FAX), or Michael.Last@ct.gov (e-mail).

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