



The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

Putting Science to Work for Society since 1875

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POSTDOCTORAL SCIENTIST: Plant Pathology and Fungal Biology

With anticipated approval, the Valley Laboratory at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (New Haven, CT) is seeking applicants for a Postdoctoral Research Scientist position with an approximate start date of May 1, 2026, to conduct field and laboratory-based research on *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum*, the broad host-range fungal pathogen responsible for disease on a range of dicotyledonous crops. The position is for 24 months, with a salary of \$56,982/yr. Benefits include competitive medical and dental insurance.

Scope: Fungi are the most economically devastating class of plant pathogens and affect a wide range of crops critical to global food security. RNA interference (RNAi) has emerged as a promising technology to combat fungal diseases, but substantial knowledge gaps in application limit its usage. This project will address critical questions surrounding the intraspecies susceptibility of *S. sclerotiorum* to RNAi and the durability of this technology across multiple pathogen generations. Additionally, we will investigate novel uses of RNAi through molecular modifications to increase dsRNA systemic activity and control fungal diseases without the regulatory burden of traditional GMOs. In the future this work will guide the integration of RNAi into current IPM practices and lead to the development of highly systemic dsRNA technology to facilitate environmentally sustainable control of fungal diseases.

Required Qualifications: Candidates must have a Ph.D. in plant pathology, microbiology, plant science, or a related discipline. Candidates must demonstrate communication (verbal and written) and organizational skills, research productivity, and willingness to master new skills. Candidates must have experience working with plant pathogenic microbes and/or molecular biology. Candidates must be willing and capable of managing junior lab members in the generation and collection of data. Applicants must have a valid US driver's license and/or international driver permit.

Preferred Qualifications: Preferred candidates will have experience in scientific writing, with publications in peer-reviewed journals and/or papers that are in review. Preferred candidates should be capable of independently designing and running field trials and/or microbiological experiments in the laboratory.

To apply: Interested candidates must submit by email a single PDF document that includes: (1) a cover letter addressing the qualifications above, (2) a CV or resume, and (3) the names and contact information for two references (e-mail and phone numbers) to: Dr. Nathaniel Westrick (Nathaniel.Westrick@ct.gov). The review of applications will begin immediately and continue until a suitable candidate is identified.

About Us: Founded in 1875, the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) is a state-supported institution dedicated to basic and applied research that supports plant, environmental, and human health in Connecticut. Over eighty full-time researchers work at the main campus in New Haven, a 75-acre research farm in nearby Hamden, and a satellite research facility in Windsor, CT. CAES fosters a highly collaborative and collegial research environment and maintains close ties to nearby academic institutions, including Yale University and the University of Connecticut.

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).