

Opportunity Title: USDA-ARS Perennial Grass Breeding and Genetics Fellowship

Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-ARS-MWA-2025-0142

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reference Code USDA-ARS-MWA-2025-0142

How to Apply *To submit your application, scroll to the bottom of this opportunity and click APPLY.*

A complete application consists of:

- An application
- Transcript(s) – For this opportunity, an unofficial transcript or copy of the student academic records printed by the applicant or by academic advisors from internal institution systems may be submitted. Click [here](#) for detailed information about acceptable transcripts.
- A current resume/CV, including academic history, employment history, relevant experiences, and publication list
- Two educational or professional recommendations

All documents must be in English or include an official English translation.

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Application Deadline 1/16/2026 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

Description *Applications are reviewed on a rolling-basis.

ARS Office/Lab and Location: A research opportunity is currently available with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), located in Madison, Wisconsin.

The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's chief scientific in-house research agency with a mission to find solutions to agricultural problems that affect Americans every day from field to table. ARS will deliver cutting-edge, scientific tools and innovative solutions for American farmers, producers, industry, and communities to support the nourishment and well-being of all people; sustain our nation's agroecosystems and natural resources; and ensure the economic competitiveness and excellence of our agriculture. The vision of the agency is to provide global leadership in agricultural discoveries through scientific excellence.

The U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center (USDFRC) is an ARS research institution whose mission is providing dairy industry solutions for food security, environmental sustainability, and economic viability. USDFRC scientists build uniquely valuable, science-based research initiatives focused on improving dairy production systems, soil ecology, forage production, forage quality, nutrient management, and ecosystem services.

Research Project: The perennial grass breeding program at the USDFRC develops cool and warm season perennial grass varieties with improved



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forage yield and nutrition efficiency. The research project which the fellow will participate will primarily evaluate diverse germplasm in the field for several traits of interest and identify and select promising individuals. As part of the project, large grass populations will genetically be characterized using modern, high-throughput genotyping methods and platforms. This mentorship opportunity thus offers research training in applied plant breeding techniques as well as genetic and statistical analysis of collected data.

Learning Objectives: As an ORISE fellow at our Center, the candidate will primarily learn the principles of classical plant breeding with a strong lean on applied genetics/genomics. Through collaborations with research scientists and technicians, the fellow will also learn methods of experimental design, field trials, trait assessment, and data collection. Opportunity to analyze and summarize data will be provided to the fellow, and attending mentor approved meetings, workshops, and conferences will be encouraged. The mentor will collaborate with the fellow to develop field and analytical skills sought after by public/private plant breeding institutions.

Mentor(s): The mentor for this opportunity is Prabin Bajgain (prabin.bajgain@usda.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentor(s).

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: March 2026. Start date is flexible and will depend on a variety of factors.

Appointment Length: The appointment will initially be for one year but may be renewed upon recommendation of ARS and is contingent on the availability of funds.

Level of Participation: The appointment is full time.

Participant Stipend: The participant will receive a monthly stipend commensurate with educational level and experience. **The anticipated stipend range is \$3,500 - \$4,500 monthly.**

Citizenship Requirements: This opportunity is available to U.S. citizens only.

ORISE Information: This program, administered by ORAU through its contract with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to manage the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE), was established through an interagency agreement between DOE and ARS. Participants do not become employees of USDA, ARS, DOE or the program administrator, and there are no employment-related benefits. Proof of health insurance is required for participation in this program. Health insurance can be obtained through ORISE.

Questions: Please visit our [Program Website](#). After reading, if you have additional questions about the application process, please email ORISE.ARS.Midwest@orau.org and include the reference code for

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this opportunity.

Qualifications The qualified candidate should be currently pursuing or have received a bachelor's or master's degree in the one of the relevant fields. Degree must have been received within the past five years or anticipated to be received near start of appointment.

Preferred Skills:

- Experience in outdoor research in fields such as plant breeding, agronomy, ecology, soil science, or related areas.
- Experience in collecting field data carefully and consistently, and using quality control best practices for acquiring, entering, and managing data.
- Interest in plant breeding, quantitative genetics, and statistical analysis.

Stipend \$3,500.00 – \$4,500.00 Monthly

Point of Contact [Janeen](#)

- Eligibility Requirements**
- **Citizenship:** U.S. Citizen Only
 - **Degree:** Bachelor's Degree or Master's Degree.
 - **Discipline(s):**
 - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** ([2](#))
 - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([8](#))
 - **Veteran Status:** Veterans Preference, degree received within the last 120 month(s).