

Opportunity Title: USDA- ARS Postdoctoral Fellowship in Crop Microbiome Research

Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-ARS-HQ-2026-0019

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reference Code USDA-ARS-HQ-2026-0019

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
- A copy of an abstract or reprint of an article

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

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Application Deadline 3/27/2026 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 Albany, California.

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.

Research Project: This project is focused on understanding microbial determinants of crop fitness outcomes and interactions between microbes and their hosts in the context of the crop microbiome. The key crops in question are sorghum and grape, two important crops for US agriculture that are often grown in very different climates. The goal of the project is to learn about types of microbes that benefit crop yield or crop quality in the context of field agriculture, and to understand the molecular mechanisms through which these microbes act to improve agricultural outcomes.



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Through a variety of techniques including microbiome profiling, host RNA sequencing, plant phenotyping, and microbial genomics, this project aims to develop tools for farmers that enable improved crop health.

Learning Objectives: Through this project, the participant will have the opportunity to:

- Participate in sample collection from plants grown in the lab, greenhouse and field,
- To process samples for DNA extraction and microbial 16S rRNA sequencing library preparation,
- To learn about standard molecular biology practices in rhizosphere and phyllosphere biology,
- Collaborate on analysis of sequencing data generated from microbiome samples,
- Practice culturing and phenotyping plant-associated bacteria and fungi in a laboratory setting.

Mentor(s): The mentor for this opportunity is Devin Coleman-Derr (devin.coleman-derr@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 be for two years.

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 \$65,000 - \$100,000 annually.**

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.HQPostdoc@ornl.gov and include the reference code for this opportunity.

Qualifications The qualified candidate should have received a doctoral degree in one of the relevant fields (plant biology, microbial biology, or a closely related

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field). Degree must have been received within the past four years.

Preferred skills:

- Experience with crops and their associated microbiomes.
- Skill with bacterial culturing, 16S rRNA and ITS microbiome profiling, bacterial genomics and genetics, plant phenotyping and data analysis using tools such as R or Python.

Stipend \$65,000.00 – \$100,000.00 Yearly

Point of Contact [Janeen](#)

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