Opportunity Title: USDA-ARS Efficient Detection and Management of Phytoplasma and Spiroplasma-Induced Plant Diseases in Forestry and Agriculture
Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-ARS-NEA-2026-0132

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reference Code USDA-ARS-NEA-2026-0132

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 5/22/2026 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 Beltsville, Maryland.

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: The project centers on exploring the challenges of managing plant diseases caused by phytoplasma and spiroplasma infections, with the aim of finding effective solutions. The bacteria lack cell walls and can penetrate plant phloem sieve cells, leading to serious diseases in key crops such as citrus and corn. Early diagnosis and sensitive pathogen detection are needed for successful disease management. Under the guidance of a mentor, you will have the opportunity to conduct research that seeks to identify molecular and physiological markers that can improve early detection of phytoplasmas,

ultimately helping to reduce phytoplasma-related diseases.

Learning Objectives: Under the guidance of a mentor, you will have the opportunity to learn:

- The unique genomic and pathological features of phytoplasmas and spiroplasmas;
- Physiological signals and gene pathways that regulate phytoplasma virulence and plant defense; and
- How to select and evaluate appropriate molecular markers for detecting phytoplasmas and spiroplasmas during the early stages of the disease.

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

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: 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 $65,000 - $85,000 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.Northeast@orau.org and include the reference code for this opportunity.

Qualifications The qualified candidate should have received or be pursuing a doctoral degree in one of the relevant fields. Degree must have been received within the past five years or be currently pursuing with anticipation of completing the degree by 5/31/2026.

Stipend $65,000.00 – $85,000.00 Yearly

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Point of Contact Janeen

Eligibility Requirements

- **Citizenship:** U.S. Citizen Only
- **Degree:** Doctoral Degree received within the last 60 months or anticipated to be received by 5/31/2026 11:59:00 PM.
- **Discipline(s):**
  - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** (12 👁)
- **Veteran Status:** Veterans Preference, degree received within the last 120 month(s).