

**Opportunity Title:** USDA-ARS Postdoctoral Fellow in Fish Disease Research

**Opportunity Reference Code:** USDA-ARS-SEA-2026-0232

**Organization** U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

**Reference Code** USDA-ARS-SEA-2026-0232

**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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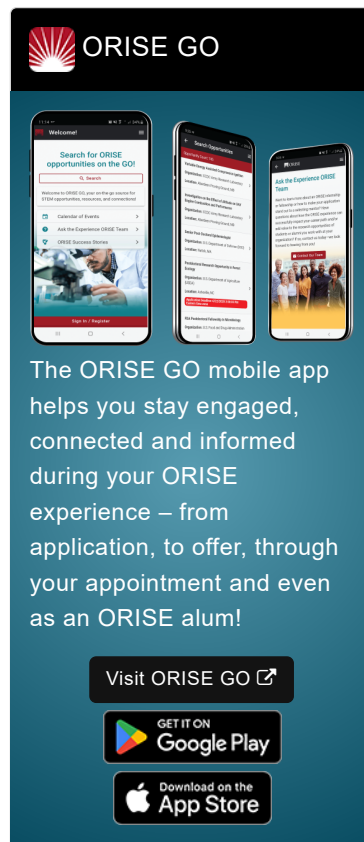
**Application Deadline** 7/31/2026 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

**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), at the Aquatic Animal Health Research Unit in Auburn, Alabama.


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.


To meet the needs for continued growth and sustainability of the aquaculture industry and to increase its profitability, prevention strategies are being developed that will reduce large economic losses caused by diseases and parasites. The specific research objectives of the Aquatic Animal Health Research Unit are development of vaccines, rapid detection tests and fish diets that will enhance disease resistance to infectious bacteria and parasites. The Unit's research also determines pathogen and host factors that influence virulence and immune responses.


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**Research Project:** Disease is one of the largest contributors to production losses for fish farmers. Through this opportunity, you will have the opportunity to utilize state-of-the-art genomic editing and bioinformatic approaches to identify and discern genetic diversity in important aquaculture bacterial pathogens. Under the guidance of a mentor, you will combine *in vitro* molecular biology with animal model research to determine the functional significance of the discovered diversity. Data generated will contribute to the development of tools for molecular typing of bacterial pathogens and new methods of disease prevention.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Acquire practical experience and develop skills in microbiology, molecular biology, and bioinformatics.
- Enhance proficiency in computational skills through sequence analysis and primer design.
- Develop proficiency in techniques such as PCR, real-time or droplet digital PCR, DNA sequencing and analysis, and genetic manipulation of bacteria.
- Learn and develop skills in conducting disease research on important aquaculture raised fish species.
- Enhance both oral and written communication skills, with a focus on effectively conveying scientific concepts and findings.

**Mentor(s):** The mentor for this opportunity is Benjamin LaFrentz ([benjamin.lafrentz@usda.gov](mailto:benjamin.lafrentz@usda.gov)). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentor(s).

**Anticipated Appointment Start Date: August 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 \$60,000 - \$78,000 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

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additional questions about the application process, please email [ORISE.ARS.Southeast@orau.org](mailto:ORISE.ARS.Southeast@orau.org) and include the reference code for this opportunity.

**Qualifications** The qualified candidate should have received or be currently pursuing a doctoral degree in one of the relevant fields (Microbiology, Molecular Biology, Bioinformatics, or a related field in Biological Sciences).

**Preferred skills:**

- Knowledge and background in microbiology, molecular biology, and bioinformatics.
- Functional knowledge of molecular techniques such as PCR, PCR primer/probe design, real-time or droplet digital PCR, DNA sequencing and analysis, genetic manipulation of bacteria.
- Experience with experimental design as well as performing experiments and interpreting results.
- Excellent organizational skills, ability to multitask, collaborate and be in a team.
- Proficiency in technical writing, oral communication, interpersonal and organizational skills.
- Demonstrated flexibility and self-motivation.

**Stipend** \$60,000.00 – \$78,000.00 Yearly

**Point of Contact** [Sara Beth](#)

**Eligibility** • **Citizenship:** U.S. Citizen Only

**Requirements** • **Degree:** Doctoral Degree.

- **Discipline(s):**
  - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** ([1](#))
  - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([8](#))