

Opportunity Title: USDA-ARS Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Food Science, Microbiology and Engineering

Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-ARS-PWA-2026-0323

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reference Code USDA-ARS-PWA-2026-0323

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 10/23/2026 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

Description *Applications are reviewed on a rolling-basis.

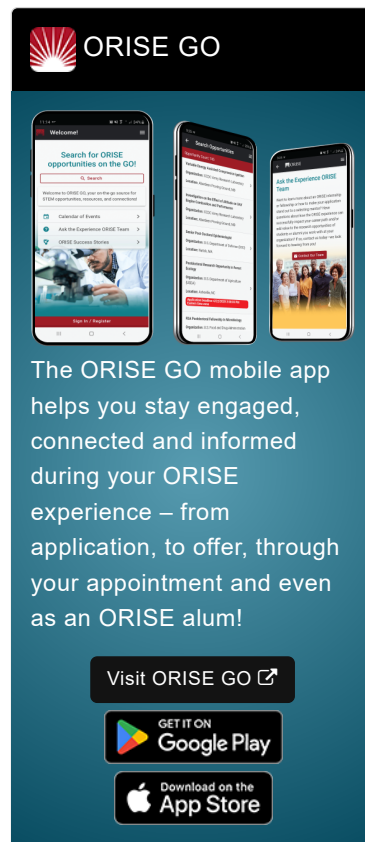
ARS Office/Lab and Location: A research opportunity is currently available with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), located in Albany, California.

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: The Healthy Processed Foods Research (HPFR) unit seeks a post-doctoral fellow in food science, microbiology, engineering or related disciplines to assist in the development of value-added ingredients from agro-industrial crops and their by-products through fermentation. The aim is to enhance functional, nutritional, and sensory properties for health-focused food products. Engaging with Food Technologists and Flavor Chemists, you will participate in the design and optimize processes to improve ingredient functionality, create distinctive flavors, and eliminate off tastes.

Learning Objectives: You will be able to learn from multi-disciplinary researchers from universities and from ARS through hands-on research projects. Your participation alongside food technologists, chemists, and agricultural engineers will help you train and grow as an expert in the field.

Under the guidance of a mentor, you will:



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- Develop expertise by assisting in designing and conducting experiments involving bioconversion of feedstock and/or agricultural waste
- Acquire skills needed to improve efficiency, yield, and performance in advanced fermentation processes
- Build proficiency in operating and utilizing processing equipment used in food production, such as in alternative protein production
- Gain scientific communication skills through publications and presentation of research findings

Mentor(s): The mentor for this opportunity is Yixiang Xu (yixiang.xu@usda.gov) and Cristina Bilbao (cristina.bilbao@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 is \$87,803 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.PacificWest@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 (Microbiology, Biological Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Food Engineering, Agricultural Engineering, Food Science, Biology, Chemistry, etc.). Degree must have been received within the past 5 years.

Preferred skills:

- Ability to publish research findings in peer-reviewed journals
- Experience in microbiology and fermentation
- Show independent initiative, effectively troubleshoot complex biological systems, and communicate ideas clearly in group settings

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Point of Contact [Janeen](#)

- Eligibility**
- Requirements**
- **Citizenship:** U.S. Citizen Only
 - **Degree:** Doctoral Degree received within the last 60 month(s).
 - **Discipline(s):**
 - **Chemistry and Materials Sciences** ([1](#)👁)
 - **Engineering** ([5](#)👁)
 - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([4](#)👁)