

Opportunity Title: USDA-ARS Research Fellowship in Prion Disease Research

Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-ARS-MWA-2026-0339

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reference Code USDA-ARS-MWA-2026-0339

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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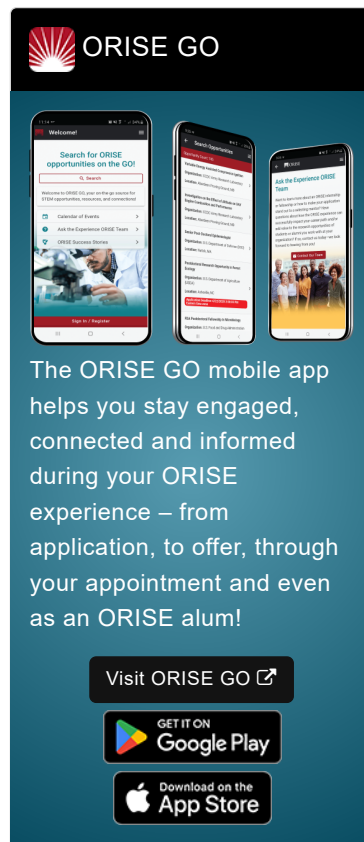
Application Deadline 10/16/2026 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

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), National Animal Disease Center (NADC), located in Ames, Iowa.

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 USDA-ARS's National Animal Disease Center (NADC) conducts basic and applied research on economically important diseases affecting U.S. livestock and poultry to generate knowledge and technology that reduces economic losses, prevents foodborne illnesses, and decreases animal suffering and death. Our prion research program at Virus and Prion Research Unit investigates prion diseases across multiple species, including Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), Scrapie, and emerging camel prion diseases. You will receive hands-on training and mentorship while contributing to high-impact studies that combine cell-based systems, transgenic/gene-targeted mouse models, and natural hosts (e.g., cattle, deer, and sheep). Note: Research will be carried out in BSL-2+ or BSL-3 laboratories. The fellowship activities involve utilizing molecular biological,



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biomedical and histological methodologies, alongside routine animal sampling and performing necropsies on mice, sheep, cattle, and cervids. You will participate with our dedicated prion disease research program. This fellowship offers an excellent opportunity for recent graduates holding degrees in Biology, Biochemistry, Cellular and Molecular Biology, Neuroscience, or Veterinary Science, especially those planning to pursue a future PhD, DVM, or MD.

Learning Objectives: Under the guidance of a mentor and in close collaboration with senior laboratory personnel, you will have the opportunity to learn to:

- Perform animal studies: mouse and large animal inoculation, tissue sampling, necropsy techniques
- Conduct molecular biology: genomic DNA extraction, PCR, gene cloning, CRISPR/Cas genome editing
- Conduct cell biology & protein biochemistry: mammalian cell culture, Western blot, ELISA, ELISPOT.
- Understand pathology: H&E and IHC
- Use prion biology methods: in vitro protein seeding assays (RT-QuIC and PMCA), protein conformational stability assays, and prion strain characterization.
- Present research findings at local group meetings, center-wide seminars, and potentially at national or international conferences as approval permits.

Mentor: The mentor for this opportunity is Jifeng Bian (jifeng.bian@usda.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentor.

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: As soon as is feasible after selection of a candidate. 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 relevant experience. **Anticipated stipend range is from \$41,066 – \$75,284 yearly.**

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 this opportunity.

Qualifications The qualified candidate should be pursuing or have received a bachelor's degree or

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PhD in one of the relevant fields (Biology, Biochemistry, Cellular and Molecular Biology, Neuroscience, Veterinary Science, or related field). Degree must have been received within the past five years or anticipated to be complete prior to start of appointment.

Preferred Skills:

- Interested in prion diseases, hard-working, and self-motivated.
- Biomedical laboratory or animal-handling experience
- Oral and written communication skills
- Evidence of keeping accurate details

Stipend \$41,066.00 – \$75,284.00 Yearly

Point of Contact [Sara Beth](#)

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|---------------------|---|
| Eligibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Citizenship: U.S. Citizen Only |
| Requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Degree: Bachelor's Degree or Doctoral Degree received within the last 60 months or currently pursuing.• Discipline(s):<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Chemistry and Materials Sciences (2 👁)◦ Engineering (3 👁)◦ Life Health and Medical Sciences (17 👁)◦ Science & Engineering-related (1 👁)• Veteran Status: Veterans Preference, degree received within the last 120 month(s). |