M.S. position in Biological control of mites in strawberry.

Please pass this along to anyone that might be interested.

The Zukoff Lab is seeking a highly motivated master’s student to join our research group in the [Cal Poly Strawberry Research Center](https://strawberry.calpoly.edu/). We study ways to increase the sustainability of the California strawberry industry through research on integrated pest management of arthropods in strawberries. The MS student will participate in a collaborative [California Strawberry Commission](https://www.calstrawberry.com/en-us/) funded project. Our goals in this study are to improve the quality and efficacy of predatory mite biocontrol in strawberries. The student will participate in assessing the quality of predatory mites being deployed in fields, quantify factors that inhibit predatory mite movement and acquisition of spider mite prey as well as work to improve mite release strategy and efficacy. This is an opportunity to help advance the efficacy of biocontrol in one of the most intensively chemically managed crops in the US. The position will be funded through a two-year research assistantship (tuition and stipend, with the potential for continued funding). Students in this position will receive MS Agriculture, Specialization in Plant Protection Science. Women and underrepresented students in the sciences are strongly encouraged to apply.

Students will be enrolled in following degree program: MS Agriculture, Specialization in Plant Protection Science emphasis in biological control.

**Requirements:** Competitive applicants will have research or job experience in agriculture or entomology, interests in integrated pest management and sustainable agriculture. Communication skills and the ability to work both independently and as a member of a collaborative team are also desirable. Applicants will need to meet the requirements for admissions into the graduate school at California State Polytechnic University (Cal Poly).

**To apply:** Please email a cover letter stating your research interests and qualifications, your CV with contact information for 3 references, and unofficial transcripts to Dr. Sarah Zukoff (szukoff@calpoly.edu). The position will start no later than August 2021, although earlier start dates (as early as June 2021) are preferred. I will begin screening applications immediately.

**Cal Poly Strawberry Center**. The only organization in the US dedicated solely to strawberry research and education. We are uniquely positioned on California's Central Coast at the geographic center for 90% of US Strawberry production. Our center is funded through a unique partnership between Cal Poly and the California Strawberry Commission. Our students have access to a broad range of faculty in all agricultural sciences. We have access to the strawberry industry as a resource for the education and training of Cal Poly students and technical expertise on strawberry production and its issues.

[**Cal Poly**](https://www.calpoly.edu/)**.** Known for its Learn by Doing pedagogy, Cal Poly is the flagship of the world-renowned California State University system. Annually recognized as one of the top public universities in the nation, Cal Poly continues to offer an academic curriculum based on learned experience gained through real-world practice. Located in San Luis Obispo, Cal Poly is nestled comfortably among the coastal foothills, minutes from the Pacific Ocean and equidistant to the Bay Area and Los Angeles.

**Diversity Statement.** At Cal Poly, we believe that cultivating an environment that embraces and promotes diversity is fundamental to the success of our students, our employees, and our community. Bringing people together from different backgrounds, experiences, and value systems fosters the innovative and creative thinking that exemplifies Cal Poly's values of free inquiry, cultural and intellectual diversity, mutual respect, civic engagement, and social and environmental responsibility.

Cal Poly's commitment to diversity informs our efforts in recruitment, hiring and retention. California Poly is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer.