

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position: Assistant Professor, Field Ecology and Pest Management Entomology (12-month, 75% Research and 25% Extension), Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center at Weslaco, Texas

Location: Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Weslaco, Texas

Overview: Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center, Weslaco (<https://weslaco.tamu.edu/>) is seeking a motivated and visionary Entomologist to work in Field Ecology and Pest Management at the Assistant Professor level. Appointment is 75% effort with AgriLife Research and 25% with AgriLife Extension and is a 12-month, base-funded position. The successful candidate will establish and lead a national and international Research and Extension program focusing on integrated pest management (IPM) of arthropods in diverse cropping systems (including field crops, vegetables, and specialty crops) in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) region of Texas. The candidate will address knowledge gaps and needs of the agricultural industry to provide economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable production solutions. The incumbent will be expected to attract extramural funding, establish a strong research publication record, mentor undergraduate and graduate students.

The goal of this position is to provide significant contributions in both Research and Extension that will enhance the economic sustainability of healthy food production while minimizing detrimental environmental impact through the development of safe and effective arthropod pest management practices. Effective delivery of programmatic results to clientele is essential and must be research driven.

Participation in professional development efforts at an appropriate level of service to the center, agency, institution, and/or professional societies is expected. This position will also provide Research and Extension leadership in cropping system pest management and assist in training Regional County Extension Agents and in county educational programming.

This position complements the Centers' strengths in fastidious plant pathogens and diseases, and interfaces with the existing pest management, genomic, plant breeding, plant physiology and cropping systems programs within Texas A&M AgriLife Research, the Departments of Entomology, Plant Pathology and Microbiology, Horticultural Sciences, and Soil and Crop Sciences at Texas A&M University (College Station), Texas A&M Kingsville-Citrus Center (Weslaco), and local USDA Centers focusing on invasive and exotic pests. The candidate will be encouraged to collaborate with other AgriLife Research Scientists and Extension Specialists at other Centers around the State and to interact with academic departments on the various Texas A&M University System campuses.

Primary Responsibilities:

- Conduct basic and applied research to better understand arthropod pest dynamics in diverse cropping systems of the RGV.
- Develop sustainable and innovative IPM strategies to address arthropod pest management issues relevant to cropping systems of the RGV.
- Provide leadership and team building with multi-disciplinary Research Scientists, Extension Specialists, and IPM Agents to address key agricultural issues affecting crop production in the RGV.
- Develop and/or lead research teams to respond to internal and external research grant opportunities with the involvement of research faculty from AgriLife Research and AgriLife Extension, as well as other research institutions.
- Develop IPM tactics and education to the public, enabling safe, sustainable, affordable, nutritious, and high-quality crops for the citizens of Texas.
- Cooperate/complement programs that involve Center faculty and other District based County Extension Agents, Regional Program Leaders, and other Specialists, to develop and deliver regionally and nationally recognized programs for Research and Extension faculty for the vegetable and field crops industry.
- Provide effective and diverse research-driven outreach. Provide leadership and team building focused on IPM for the RGV in cooperation with District 12 Extension agents.
- Secure funding to support research efforts and publish results in peer-refereed journals.
- Develop research-driven Extension programming targeting clientele in the RGV and District 12.
- Provide entomologically related IPM training and technical assistance to County Extension Agents regarding crop protection in the RGV and District 12.

Required Qualifications:

- Education - Ph.D. or equivalent terminal degree in entomology or a closely related discipline (to be completed by December 31, 2024).
- Experience – Extensive knowledge of arthropod biology, plant-insect interactions, insect feeding behavior, and pest management issues. Experience in field ecology and pest management.
- Evidence of peer-refereed publication history.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Demonstration of an interest in engaging clientele groups, identifying critical issues, and acting on those needs through research activities that bring resolution to problems.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Postdoctoral experience.
- Extensive experience of insect biology, ecology, and pest management in diverse cropping systems.
- Expertise in integrated management of arthropod pests.
- Demonstrated success or potential in grant writing for support of their research.
- Participation in professional societies.

Texas A&M AgriLife: With oversight by the Office of the Vice Chancellor, [Texas A&M AgriLife](#), a member of the Texas A&M University System, includes: [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service](#), [Texas A&M AgriLife Research](#), [College of Agriculture & Life Sciences](#) at Texas A&M University, [Texas A&M Forest Service](#), and [Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory](#).

[Texas A&M AgriLife Research](#) is the leading research and technology development agency in Texas for agriculture, natural resources, and the life sciences. Our discoveries yield economic, environmental, and health benefits that are key to our state's success and vital to the lives of its citizens. With 13 Research and Extension Centers throughout the state, AgriLife Research is dedicated to research that improves the Texas economy and lives of local and state-wide stakeholders through research encompassing the Agriculture and Food Value Chain.

[Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service](#), working with County Extension Agents, IPM Extension Agents, and specialists, provides programs, tools and resources on a local and statewide level that teach people improved agriculture and food production, advanced health practices, environmental protection, economic and youth programs.

Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Weslaco (<https://weslaco.tamu.edu/>): The Weslaco Center is located in the Lower RGV in south Texas, with headquarters at 2415 E. Hwy 83, Weslaco, TX 78596. This region is semi-tropical and represents Texas' largest region for vegetable production, and has large acreages of cotton, sorghum, corn, and various specialty crops. The center currently has 7 faculty and 91 research and extension staff and provides excellent research facilities including greenhouses, laboratory and office space, classrooms, conference rooms, and over 300 acres of irrigated land for field research. The RGV is also home to Texas A&M Kingsville Citrus Center (<https://www.tamuk.edu/agriculture/institutes-and-other-units/citr/index.html>), several USDA Centers, and The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) which may provide excellent opportunities for broad-based interdisciplinary collaborations and student mentoring.

Administrative Relationships: The incumbent will be a faculty member at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center in Weslaco and with the Department of Entomology at Texas A&M University (<https://entomology.tamu.edu/>). They will be supervised jointly by the Director of the AgriLife Research & Extension Center at Weslaco, the Department Head and Associate Department Head for Extension in the Department of Entomology.

Closing Date for Applications. Review of applications will begin November 20, 2024, and continue until the position is filled.

Application Instructions:

- External candidates should apply through the [Texas A&M AgriLife Research External Applicants](#) web portal for position R-078577.
- Internal candidates should apply through WorkDay for position R-078577.

Application should contain:

- A cover letter,

- A statement of research interests for the position that includes a statement of interest in leading extension activities for the RGV Region (3-page limit),
- A current resume or curriculum vitae, and
- Contact information for three professional references.

Review of applications will begin November 20, 2024, but the position will remain open until filled.

Address inquiries to the Search Committee Chair: Dr. John Jifon, at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center, Weslaco TX. Email: john.jifon@agnet.tamu.edu. Phone: (956) 969-5643.

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action/Veterans/Disability Employer