



NOTICE OF VACANCY
Postdoctoral Research Associate (Social Scientist)
Department of Crop and Soil Sciences
Washington State University

Position Title: Postdoctoral Research Associate (Social Scientist)

Position Summary: Commercial specialty crop (vegetable and fruit) growers use plastic mulch to conserve water, suppress weeds, optimize soil temperature, and improve plant growth. However, polyethylene (PE) plastic mulch needs to be disposed of at the end of the growing season, resulting in significant financial and environmental costs. In contrast, biodegradable plastic mulches (BDMs) that can be tilled into the soil or composted at the end of the season could reduce such costs. However, not much is known about the individual, sociocultural, and structural influences on growers' decisions regarding plastic mulch end-of-life management. Thus, research is being conducted on plastic mulch end-of-life management decisions among strawberry growers in California in order to better understand the factors that help or hinder growers' adoption of more sustainable practices (e.g., PE mulch recycling) and technologies (e.g., BDMs) that can help address the growing problem of agricultural plastic pollution. This work is part of a large, multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary project funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI). The Postdoctoral Research Associate (Social Scientist) will work as part of the project team, specifically the Human Dimensions Working Group headed by Dr. Jessica Goldberger (Rural Sociologist) in the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences (<http://css.wsu.edu>) in the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences (<http://cahnrs.wsu.edu>). The position is a temporary, 12-month, full-time position with the ability to renew annually, pending funding and successful review and progress.

Responsibilities Include:

- Conduct in-depth qualitative data collection with strawberry growers, Extension agents, agricultural input suppliers, crop consultants, recycling facility representatives, and other stakeholders
- Develop and implement survey of strawberry growers
- Analyze quantitative and qualitative data
- Prepare project reports and manuscripts for peer-reviewed journals
- Prepare and deliver oral presentations to diverse audiences
- Help oversee the activities of the Human Dimensions Working Group
- Help supervise graduate students and undergraduates

Required Qualifications:

- Earned Ph.D. in rural sociology, sociology, anthropology, or closely related social science field within the last five years
- Experience with qualitative research methods

- Experience with survey design, management, and data analysis
- Strong analytical and statistical skills
- Willingness to travel to California, project meetings, and conferences
- Ability to work independently as well as with an interdisciplinary team of researchers, Extension specialists, and other project participants
- Interest in agriculture, diffusion of innovations, the environment, and/or sustainability
- Excellent organizational and project management skills
- Excellent written and oral communication skills

Preferred Qualifications:

- Evidence of high-quality publications and presentations
- Experience working in large, multi-disciplinary research/outreach teams
- Familiarity with specialty crop production or plasticulture

Location: The primary location of the position is the Washington State University (WSU) Pullman campus (<http://www.wsu.edu>). With a population of approximately 34,000, Pullman offers a friendly, small-town atmosphere. Located 75 miles south of metropolitan Spokane, Pullman is a short drive away from the scenic Idaho Panhandle and Wallowa Mountains of northeastern Oregon. The rolling hills of the Palouse offer a wide range of outdoor activities. The area provides ample opportunity to enjoy the cultural and academic hubs of both WSU and the University of Idaho (located nine miles away in Moscow, ID). To learn more about the Pullman community, visit: <http://www.pullmanchamber.com>.

Start Date: July 1, 2023; negotiable

Salary and Benefits: Salary commensurate with qualifications and experience. Benefits include health/dental insurance, vacation/sick leave, retirement plans, and access to all WSU facilities.

Application Procedures: Please submit a cover letter, current curriculum vitae, copies of academic transcripts (submit as one PDF document under "Other"), writing sample (e.g., journal article or dissertation chapter), and names, mailing addresses, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers for three professional references to <https://hrs.wsu.edu/jobs/> (position #R-7881). Screening of application materials will begin on January 15, 2023, and continue until a suitable candidate is identified. For more information about this position, please contact Dr. Jessica Goldberger, Professor of Rural Sociology, Department of Crop and Soil Sciences, at (509) 335-8540 or jgoldberger@wsu.edu. WSU is an EEO/AA/ADD employer.