Assistant/Associate Specialist, Agronomy, Organic Cropping Systems (Yuma, AZ)

Status: Continuing Status eligible Unit: School of Plant Sciences/ Located at Yuma Agricultural Center, Yuma, AZ FTE Split: 60% Extension/30% Research/10% Service

This Extension Specialist will focus on supporting emerging and established crop production systems in organic production. As water scarcity continues to challenge Arizona agriculture, growers look to high-value crop production, such as organic systems. The successful candidate will plan, coordinate, manage, implement, and evaluate state-wide Extension programs targeting the production of organic crops in Arizona. This Extension Specialist will also plan, implement and evaluate field and orchard research, conduct systematic analysis of state-wide data and other resources, including clientele and stakeholder input, and historical information to identify community assets, program needs, and outreach education opportunities. Needs and opportunities may include assessing soil fertility, reducing inputs such as pesticides, fertilizers and irrigation water while maintaining profitability and sustainability in both the short and long-term organic crop production systems in the desert Southwest, especially against the backdrop of a variable and changing climate, and conservation of our natural resources. There are also documented needs for urban, small-scale and beginning farmers in the area of organic, and organic transition production. The successful candidate will develop an effective applied research and Extension program for organic crop production in an arid environment based upon a thorough understanding of state-wide conditions, resources, issues, and industry needs. The incumbent may work on a variety of crops as determined by stakeholder needs, including but not limited to vegetables, citrus, dates, olives, berries, nuts, and other food, feed, and fiber crops. The incumbent must view success as developing a program that meets the needs of clientele and stakeholders to effectively address relevant issues. The focus of this position will be to identify and solve organic crop production problems in the unique cropping systems of the arid and semiarid southwest.

The successful candidate is expected to write grants and obtain extramural funding to support program activities from federal, state, local sources, commodity associations, and industry. Excellence will be demonstrated by measuring and documenting outcomes and impacts of the Extension program and by contributions to the discipline of organic cropping systems. Overall, the candidate is expected to provide leadership and national recognition for independent and collaborative scholarly activity and excellence in Cooperative Extension in the field of organic crop production systems. The candidate is expected to collaborate with scientists from other disciplines, as well as those in the region working with similar cropping systems, the grower community, crop consultants, and other stakeholders to solve important integrated organic crop production problems. Scholarly and creative outputs, including impactful intellectual works that are communicated to appropriate audiences, are expected from the faculty in this position; examples include but are not limited to, peer-reviewed journal and Extension publications, workshops, field days, and media.

Minimum qualifications: Ph.D. in Crop Production, Horticulture, Agronomy or related field at time of hire. A valid U.S. driver's license is required upon employment to accommodate statewide travel for Extension program delivery or research activities. Experience in field and specialty cropping systems. Demonstrated Extension, teaching, applied research and organizational skills. Demonstrated written and oral communication skills including the effective use of media. Demonstrated ability to work as a team member with other professionals. Demonstrated ability to lead groups and to plan, organize, evaluate, manage, and delegate details associated with program management. Ability to work independently with evidence of good time management skills. Understand the need for and knowledge of how to secure external funding support for research and Extension. **Preferred qualifications:** One or more years' experience with Extension or other informal education delivery methods. Demonstrated ability to secure external funding support for applied research and Extension programs. Demonstrated skills in diagnosing problems in organic cropping systems. demonstrated understanding of, and commitment to the basic philosophy of Extension and the Land Grant University system. Demonstrated experience using multiple forms of electronic communication, including media and ability to adapt to the changing technological environment. Demonstrated understanding of needs and impact assessment techniques and their application to Extension programs.

Application:

Apply online at <u>https://arizona.csod.com/ux/ats/careersite/4/home/requisition/17002?c=arizona</u>. The application, a single pdf file, should include the following: a) a letter of application, b) curriculum vita, c) Research and Extension Interest Statement for the position, and d) contact information of three references. Review of applications will begin on 9/25/2023 and will continue until the position is filled.

Questions?

Address inquiries to Search Committee Chairs: Drs. Ursula Schuch (<u>uschuch@arizona.edu</u>) or Glenn Wright (<u>gwright@arizona.edu</u>)

Location:

The Yuma Agricultural Center is a facility to conduct applied research that is communicated to the communities and industries of this region through trusted and effective Cooperative Extension programs. The center includes two separate research facilities, the Yuma Valley and Yuma Mesa research facilities. The Yuma Valley facility includes 274 acres of farmland located in the former flood plain of the Colorado River and primarily consists of fine textured soils. The Yuma Mesa farm includes 240 acres primarily consisting of coarse textured soils. Both farms have greenhouse facilities, offices and laboratories are located at the Yuma Valley facility. The Yuma Agricultural Center is staffed with nine faculty from four academic units including Plant Sciences, Entomology, and Biosystems Engineering. Research and Extension programs at the Center include plant physiology, crop production, insect biology and control, integrated pest management, disease biology and control, weed ecology, soil and water management, fate and transport of environmental contaminants, food safety, and agricultural mechanization. The faculty at this center are supported by a staff of research specialists and post-doctoral research associates, farm support, and clerical support for a total support staff of approximately 40 individuals. Many of our programs support the high-value vegetable and citrus industries in the lower Colorado River region.

Additional information about the University of Arizona School of Plant Sciences, Research Center, and Cooperative Extension is available at:

- School of Plant Sciences: <u>https://cals.arizona.edu/spls/home</u>
- University of Arizona Cooperative Extension: <u>https://extension.arizona.edu/</u>
- Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences, and Cooperative Extension: <u>https://www.alvsce.arizona.edu/</u>
- Arizona Experiment Station: <u>https://experimentstation.arizona.edu/</u>
- Yuma Agricultural Center: https://extension.arizona.edu/yuma-agricultural-center