Assistant Professor of Extension in Plant Pathology

The University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR), a statewide organization with local delivery, in collaboration with the College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (CNAS), UC Riverside, invites applicants for a full-time Assistant Professor of Extension in the area of Plant Pathology for Subtropical Crops.

The position is 80% Extension and 20% Research with an academic career-track, 11-month appointment in the Department of Microbiology and Plant Pathology at UC Riverside (https://microplantpath.ucr.edu/). The position will be available after January 2022. Salary is competitive and commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Required qualification for this position at the time of application is a Ph.D. in Plant Pathology or a closely related discipline.

Preferred qualifications for this position at the time of application include: postdoctoral experience, documented experience with subtropical crops, applied management of plant diseases, and detection of plant pathogens or crop production.

Additional qualifications for this position, required at the time of employment, include:

- Demonstrated expertise or appropriate training in plant pathology and plant protection.
- Demonstrated ability or potential to develop an extension and outreach program with local and regional application, statewide impact and national recognition.
- Demonstrated ability or potential to develop an applied research program in one or more aspects of sustainable disease management of subtropical crops.
- Documented evidence of applied research activity and a record of scientific publication productivity.
- A record of acquisition of extramural funding or the potential to do so.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills and a demonstrated ability to work with others in a collegial team atmosphere.
- Evidence of or potential for leadership and initiative.
- Evidence of or potential for extending applied research and conducting outreach education for growers, nurseries, government agencies, and other stakeholders.

Subtropical crops are critical industries to Central and Southern California, and California comprises a significant percentage of production and consumption of these crops in the U.S. These commodities are currently at a crossroads. The very existence of the iconic California citrus is threatened by the Huanglongbing disease, and avocado is at risk from the invasive pathogen *Raffaelea lauricola*, the causal agent of laurel wilt. In addition, Pierce's disease continues to threaten wine and table grape production and the invasive Fusarium dieback-shot hole borer disease-pest complex is rapidly destroying trees in urban and native ecosystems in Southern California. Growers also experience losses from a range of endemic fruit, foliar, branch, and root pathogens and the problems are exacerbated by abiotic stresses related to climate change such as extreme heat, drought, and water quality and salinity.

The successful candidate will develop an innovative educational extension program with local and regional application, statewide impact, and national recognition. The incumbent will
collaborate closely with colleagues in CNAS, across UC, and within the UC ANR Cooperative Extension network who specialize on subtropical crops, IPM, and plant protection for the dissemination of science-based information and provide field and laboratory diagnostic services. The incumbent will also develop productive working relationships with commodity groups, agro-biochemical industry personnel, state and federal agricultural and regulatory agencies, and non-government organizations to advance their program.

The successful candidate will develop a creative, extramurally funded, productive applied research program. Collaboration with relevant personnel, including county-based UC ANR Advisors, Agricultural Experiment Station faculty at UC campuses, and USDA-ARS scientists is expected. Research will be focused on relevant sustainable and integrated disease management strategies for subtropical crops, such as citrus, avocado, and grapes, and related diseases that will complement the extension program and lead to scholarly contributions. Areas of research could include the etiology and epidemiology of endemic and invasive diseases, improved methods of pathogen detection, understanding the influence of microbial communities and climate change on disease outbreaks, and development of new and improved disease management practices.

Responsibilities

**Extension and Outreach:** Provide leadership for statewide extension activities on diseases and pathogens of subtropical crops through: 1) development of educational programs on how to diagnose diseases and apply appropriate disease management strategies through extension of science-based information through the network of UC ANR Advisors and Cooperative Extension personnel; 2) conducting workshops, speaking at appropriate events, and providing diagnostic and pathogen detection services; 3) interacting in a two-way manner with growers, nurseries, pest control advisors, chemical and biological plant protection industry personnel, shippers, commodity organizations, allied professionals and agricultural organizations, environmental and other state and federal agencies, and non-government organizations, and academic clientele such as UC ANR Advisors, AES faculty, and Master Gardeners, to identify and be responsive to their needs; 4) acting as a liaison between industry organizations, the public, the University of California, and state and federal agencies; 5) participating in graduate academic programs (MS, PhD) of the campus and participate in classes involving field and laboratory diagnostics, disease management, and other courses offered through the Department; and 6) development of web-based resources, training courses, and publications of lay and peer-reviewed literature.

**Research:** The successful candidate will develop a creative and productive applied research program on relevant sustainable and integrated disease management strategies for subtropical crops such as citrus, avocado, and grapes and related diseases affecting urban or natural ecosystems that will complement the extension program and lead to scholarly contributions. The incumbent will provide leadership in directing research projects of professional researchers and graduate students, or postdoctoral scholars, and publish results in peer-reviewed professional and scientific journals and appropriate UCCE outlets. Areas of emphasis will be based on the needs identified and feedback received from the extension and outreach program, and could include: etiology and epidemiology of endemic and emerging diseases, improved methods of pathogen detection, understanding the influence of microbial communities and climate change on pathogens and disease outbreaks, mitigation of the spread of invasive pathogens, and developing new or improved disease management practices. Research areas could also include the use of
new epidemiological tools, improved training modalities for growers and first responders that optimize pathogen and disease comprehension. Additional research areas could include the use of information technologies, big data, and forecasting for the improvement of best practices for disease outbreaks prevention and minimization of losses impacting subtropical crops of economic importance in California. Collaborations within the UC ANR network (e.g., Advisors, Specialists, AES faculty), state (CDFA) and federal partners (USDA-ARS and USDA-APHIS) and funding from extramural sources, is a fundamental and indispensable requirement of the position.

**Service:** University and public service through committee work at the department, college, campus, or system wide level and participation in professional organizations, continuing education and other appropriate means is required. Providing field and laboratory diagnostic services is expected.

**Relationships:** This position is responsible to the Department of Microbiology and Plant Pathology for program direction, job performance, administrative matters, and operational methods. The incumbent will serve as the contact person for communications with/among USDA, CDFA, and UC ANR Advisors and other personnel, industry, IPM and plant pathology experts of the state. The incumbent will act in an advisory capacity to pest control advisors, farm advisors and other specialists in plant pathology matters and for technical advice on disease prevention and management.

**Affirmative Action:** Comply with all applicable federal, state laws and regulations, University, Campus, and Division policies and procedures related to civil rights, affirmative action, and equal employment opportunity. Promote in all ways consistent with the other responsibilities of this position accomplishment of Campus and Division affirmative action and equal opportunity goals. Collaborate with County Cooperative Extension staff to meet affirmative action and equal opportunity goals.

Advancement through the Professional ranks at the University of California is through a series of structured, merit-based evaluations, occurring every 2-3 years, each of which includes substantial peer input.

**To apply:** submit the following to [https://aprecruit.ucr.edu/apply/JPF01501](https://aprecruit.ucr.edu/apply/JPF01501):

- Cover Letter – A letter of intent outlining special interest in the position, relevant qualifications and experience, and career goals.
- Curriculum Vitae – Most recently updated C.V.
- Statement of Extension and Outreach Vision.
- A Statement of Research Vision Supported by Previous Accomplishments.
- Statement of Past and/or Planned Future Contributions to Advancing Diversity and Inclusive Excellence – Applicants should summarize their past and/or potential future contributions to promoting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment, which can be reflected through research, teaching, supervision, mentoring, community engagement, service, and any of the other varied activities that are a part of an academic career.
- Letters of Recommendation: Applicants should provide a minimum of three professional letters of recommendation.
Review of applications will commence on January 26, 2022, and proceed until position is filled. For full consideration, applicants should submit their complete applications prior to the above date.

For more information about this position, please contact Dr. Georgios Vidalakis, Chair of the Search Committee, Department of Microbiology & Plant Pathology, at georgios.vidalakis@ucr.edu. For questions on application procedures and requirements, please contact Mrs. Rocio McFadden, Academic Personnel, at rocio.mcfadden@ucr.edu.

UCR is a land-grant world-class research university with an exceptionally diverse undergraduate student body while its Agricultural Experiment Station has provided over 110 years of service to California’s and U.S.A.’s agriculture. Its mission is explicitly linked to providing routes to educational success for underrepresented and first-generation college students as well as promote the wellbeing and advancement of all Californians. A commitment to this mission is a preferred qualification.

The University of California is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. All qualified candidates will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

University of California COVID-19 Vaccination Program Policy.
As a condition of employment, you will be required to comply with the University of California SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Vaccination Program Policy. All Covered Individuals under the policy must provide proof of Full Vaccination or, if applicable, submit a request for Exception (based on Medical Exemption, Disability, and/or Religious Objection) or Deferral (based on pregnancy) no later than the applicable deadline. New University of California employees must (a) provide proof of receiving at least one dose of a COVID-19 Vaccine no later than 14 calendar days after their first date of employment and provide proof of full vaccination no later than eight weeks after their first date of employment; or (b) if applicable, submit a request for Exception or Deferral no later than 14 calendar days after their first date of employment. Federal, state, or local public health directives may impose additional requirements.