

POSITION(S)

Pale Cyst Nematode - Plant Protection Aid - GS 3

Letters of Authority (Limited Appointment/ Temporary positions)— Intermittent Schedule as workload and weather permit

LOCATION(s)

Positions are available in the following Idaho locality:

- Idaho Falls - Multiple Positions

SALARY

Determined based on education, locality, and experience.

- Idaho Falls: Hourly pay minimum \$15.00 / Hour)

WHO MAY APPLY

This announcement is open to all United States citizens.

TYPE OF APPOINTMENT

This is a Letter of Authority Appointment (AKA: Limited Appointment) lasting up to 180 days per service year (12 months). Positions can be extended for additional years, but no more than 180 days may be worked per service year.

OVERVIEW

APHIS is a multi-faceted Agency with a broad mission area that includes protecting and promoting U.S. agricultural health, regulating genetically engineered organisms, administering the Animal Welfare Act and carrying out wildlife damage management activities. These efforts support the overall mission of USDA, which is to protect and promote food, agriculture, natural resources and related issues. Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) is a program within APHIS which safeguards U.S. agriculture and natural resources against the entry, establishment, and spread of economically and environmentally significant pests, and facilitates the safe trade of agricultural products. Join our team and gain valuable experience working in the field to stop this invasive species from harming our nation's agriculture.

The US Department of Agriculture's Pale Cyst Nematode (PCN) Program, located in Idaho Falls, ID, is looking to fill several seasonal employee vacancies in our field operations positions supporting soil survey and equipment sanitation efforts. The PCN Program offers interesting, fast-paced work in the great outdoors and directly supports the health and vitality of the local potato industry.

During peak field operations periods of March-May and July-October, seasonal employees are needed 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, with evening and Saturday overtime work offered. The work schedule is on an intermittent basis, as workload and weather permit.

Soil survey: Teams of six to eight employees travel throughout southeastern Idaho collecting soil samples from agricultural fields. The work consists of walking in agricultural fields with repetitive arm movements scooping soil, in a variety of weather extremes, often away from shelter and conveniences. Employees can expect to walk 7-10 miles per day on rough, loose, uneven, or hilly terrain. The ability to occasionally lift 30-50 pounds is also required.

Equipment sanitation: Teams of two to four employees provide sanitation services to crop producers working in fields that are regulated for PCN. The work consists of traveling throughout Bingham and Bonneville Counties with a mobile pressure-washing unit and sanitizing farming equipment to help prevent the spread PCN between agricultural fields. The upper body strength and balance to operate a high-pressure wash wand is required, as well as the agility to occasionally climb on or under farming equipment.

Prior field experience helpful but not necessary to qualify for employment. The PCN program offers thorough training and oversight by experienced employees is provided at all times. Employee safety is a priority. PCN is a major pest of potato plants but is not harmful to humans or other animals.

Learn more about our programs: Pale Cyst Nematode Program

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/plant-pest-and-disease-programs/pests-and-diseases/nematode/pcn/pcn-home>

DUTIES

Incumbent will be progressively trained in the use of various devices, tools and related equipment utilized in potato cyst nematode control operations.

Assists in the collection of soil samples. Keeps routine and basic records of daily activities, observations, field conditions or contacts made for purposes of exchanging factual information.

Secures predetermined soil and crop samples and packs, labels, and ships samples.

May assist in implementing quarantine areas as instructed by technicians or supervisor to prevent the spread of cysts and nematodes from infested to clean areas.

Weighs, measures, and mixes various chemicals and applies chemicals to prescribed plot areas.

Assists with the maintenance, cleaning, repair, and safekeeping of tools, supplies and equipment. Measures, collects, records, and compiles data. Keeps routine records of experiments, and tabulates results. Prepares simple charts and graphs and summarizes data using simple detailed procedures.

Scouts areas for potential study plots and establishes study plots and sampling arrays. May assist technicians as requested in conducting the examination of nematodes by operating laboratory equipment such as balances, microscopes, blenders, volumetric glassware, etc.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

Males born after 12/31/59 must be registered with the selective service.
Must have a valid driver's license.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

GS-3: Six months of general experience, **OR** 1 year post HS education (*including 4 credits in biology, plant pathology, entomology, zoology, botany, forestry, chemistry, agriculture, or physics*), **OR** a combination that includes the 4 credits

General Experience: (1) Any type of work that demonstrates the applicant's ability to perform the work of the position, or (2) experience that provided a familiarity with the subject matter or processes of the broad subject area of the occupation.

HOW TO APPLY & REQUIRED DOCUMENTS FOR APPLICATION:

Please mail or email all required documents to the address provided below.

Required documents:

- [Application Cover Sheet](#)
- Current Resume:
 - For each position you've held, provide name of Position, Title, Company Name, Dates (mo/yr), number of hours worked per week, salary/hourly rate, summary of duties and responsibilities
 - And, provide at least three references.
- Official or unofficial college transcripts (if applicable)
- Completed and signed Declaration for Federal Employment ([Form OF 306](#))

Mailing Address:

USDA, APHIS, PPQ
Attn. Peggy Weines
281 West Heyrend Way
Idaho Falls, ID 83402

Email: Peggy.L.Heines@usda.gov

VETERAN PREFERENCE

When applying for federal jobs, eligible Veterans should claim preference for 5pt (TP), 10pt (CP/CPS/XP), or for Sole Survivor Preference (SSP) in the questionnaire. You must:

- Provide a legible copy of your DD-214(s) which shows dates and character of service (honorable, general, etc.).
- If you are currently serving on active duty and expect to be released or discharged within 120 days you must submit documentation related to your active duty service which reflects the dates of service, character of service (honorable, general, etc.), and dates of impending separation.
- Additionally, disabled veterans and others eligible for 10-point preference (such as widows or mothers of eligible Veterans) must also submit a SF-15 "Application for 10 Point Veteran Preference" with required proof as stated on the form.
- Documentation is required to award preference.

For more information on Veterans' Preference, please visit: <https://www.fedshirevets.gov/job-seekers/veterans/veterans-preference/>

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLICY

The United States Government does not discriminate in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, genetic information, age, membership in an employee organization, retaliation, parental status, military service, or other non-merit factor.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION POLICY

Federal agencies must provide reasonable accommodation to applicants with disabilities where appropriate. Applicants requiring reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process should contact the hiring agency directly. Determinations on requests for reasonable accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis.

A reasonable accommodation is any change to a job, the work environment, or the way things are usually done that enables an individual with a disability to apply for a job, perform job duties or receive equal access to job benefits.

Under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, federal agencies must provide reasonable accommodations when:

- An applicant with a disability needs an accommodation to have an equal opportunity to apply for a job.
- An employee with a disability needs an accommodation to perform the essential job duties or to gain access to the workplace.
- An employee with a disability needs an accommodation to receive equal access to benefits, such as details, training, and office-sponsored events.

COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement

To ensure compliance with an applicable nationwide preliminary injunction, which may be supplemented, modified, or vacated, depending on the course of ongoing litigation, the Federal Government will take no action to implement or enforce the COVID-19 vaccination requirement pursuant to Executive Order 14043 on Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees. Therefore, to the extent a Federal job announcement includes the requirement that applicants must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 pursuant to Executive Order 14043, that requirement does not currently apply. Federal agencies may request information regarding the vaccination status of selected applicants for the purposes of implementing other workplace safety protocols, such as protocols related to masking, physical distancing, testing, travel, and quarantine.