



Environment
Centre



Adding evidence to decision making regarding cover and catch crops

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This project is part of a BBSRC-funded Collaborative Training Partnership (CTP) between the Waitrose Partnership, their international food production and supply companies, Lancaster University, the University of Reading, University of Warwick and Rothamsted Research. Between 2017 and 2023, the CTP will deliver 20 four-year studentships on the themes of sustainable crop production, sustainable soil and water and biodiversity and ecosystem services in agriculture.

Why is this project interesting?

The use of cover and catch crops is becoming more common place in UK agriculture. There are many potential benefits of such practices including prevention of soil erosion and leaching of nitrate, improvement of infiltration and adding carbon to the soil. Cover crops have the potential to promote a range of ecosystem services, however, at present there has been very little investigation of which crops do this best. Cover and catch crops must display specific traits to be of benefit to the grower in different rotational positions and thereby justify seed and planting costs; compatibility with cash crops, strong root penetration, growth in low temperature and light conditions and zero seed return. This project will work towards providing an evidence base for growers to make decisions on which cover crops to use.

What's in it for you?

The successful applicant will join an exciting industry led PhD programme gaining experience of research within industry, a research institution and a university. You will be based at Rothamsted Research and work closely with Lancaster University and Barfoots of Botley spending two cash crop growing seasons of 6 months each in West Sussex. Barfoots is one of the UK's most innovative growers of speciality vegetables; farming over 6000 acres on the South Coast and investing significantly in cover crops and other management strategies to improve soil structure and fertility.

Who should apply?

Applicants should hold a minimum of a UK Honours Degree at 2:1 level or equivalent in subjects such as Agriculture, Environmental Science, Plant Sciences, Soil Science or Ecology.

The small print

Studentship funding: Full studentships (UK/EU tuition fees and stipend (£14,553 2017/18 [tax free])) for 4 years.

To be eligible for a full award (stipend and fees): A student must have:

- Settled status in the UK, meaning they have no restrictions on how long they can stay

And

- Been 'ordinarily resident' in the UK for 3 years prior to the start of the grant. This means they must have been normally residing in the UK (apart from temporary or occasional absences)

And

- Not been residing in the UK wholly or mainly for the purpose of full-time education. (This does not apply to UK or EU nationals).

To be eligible for a fees only award:

- Students from EU countries other than the UK are generally eligible for a fees-only award. To be eligible for a fees-only award, a student must be ordinarily resident in a member state of the EU; In the same way as UK students must be ordinarily resident in the UK.

Unfortunately studentships are not available to non-UK/EU applicants.

Deadline for applications: Midnight 31st March 2017

Provisional Interview Date: TBC – Late April 2017

Start Date: October 2017

For further information or informal discussion about the position, please Dr Ian Shield, ian.shield@rothamsted.ac.uk

Application process: Please upload a completed application form (download from http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/media/lancaster-university/content-assets/documents/lec/pg/LEC_Funded_PhD_Application_Form.docx) outlining your background and suitability for this project and a CV at LEC Postgraduate Research Applications, <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/lec/graduate-school/phd/apply-online/>. Applications and CVs must be submitted as either word documents or pdf files, no other file types are accepted. Please note only applications submitted as per these instructions will be considered. Please do not email applications in as they will not be considered.

You also require two references, please send the reference form (download from http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/media/lancaster-university/content-assets/documents/lec/pg/LEC_Funded_PhD_Reference_Form.docx) to your two referees and ask them to email it to Andy Harrod (lec.pg@lancaster.ac.uk), Postgraduate Research (PGR) Co-ordinator, Lancaster Environment Centre by the deadline. References must be submitted as either word documents or pdf files, no other file types are accepted.

Due to the limited time between the closing date and the interview date, it is essential that you ensure references are submitted by the closing date or as soon as possible.