

USDA Northern Plains Climate Hub Agricultural Risk Associate

Overview

The USDA Climate Hubs are a unique collaboration across USDA agencies. The Climate Hubs translate climate science into action by linking USDA research and program agencies, as well as connecting agricultural producers and professionals with timely and authoritative tools and information. They are led by the Agricultural Research Service and Forest Service at ten regional locations, with contributions from many others including the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, and the Risk Management Agency. This position is funded through the USDA NIFA Extension, Education & USDA Climate Hubs Partnership program.

Position Summary

The USDA Northern Plains Climate Hub, in partnership with Montana State University, UC Davis, and the National Center for Appropriate Technology, has an opening for an agricultural risk associate that will focus on improving climate, weather, and risk communication with key stakeholders through the development of outreach materials and events, such as online visualization tools and in-person communication. This is an annual position with an optional extension of up to three-years housed in the Northern Plains region and is anticipated to be mostly based in eastern Montana. The successful candidate will work with a diverse team of researchers at USDA Climate Hubs, Montana State University, UC Davis, and the National Center for Appropriate Technology.

Salary/Benefits - Annual salary is competitive and commensurate with qualifications for 12 months at 100% time with the possibility of additional 12-month extensions (3 years in total). This position includes salary and the option to receive employment benefits through the Montana University System Group Benefits Plan.

The Challenge

This Climate Hub Associate will play a critical role in linking agricultural and climate information and communications from the team described above with stakeholders throughout the northern plains region with primary emphasis on eastern Montana. Example tasks that the successful candidate may be expected to lead or assist with include:

- Communicating climate-informed practices, tools, or technologies to farmers and ranchers within eastern Montana using a variety of modes and outlets.
- Building communication networks with historically underserved farmers and ranchers within eastern Montana through cooperation with Fort Peck Community College and other tribal networks and colleges.
- Improving communications about how to navigate federal support programs administered by the NRCS, RMA, FSA, and other federal agencies.
- Organizing hands-on or peer-to-peer learning opportunities for farmers and ranchers within eastern Montana about extreme weather, climate-related challenges, science-based practices to increase climate resilience, etc.
- Participating in project team meetings as well as the Northern Plains Climate Hub's team meetings and other relevant activities, to help ensure effective communication and coordination between MSU and the Climate Hub.

The successful candidate will work with a diverse team of scientists and outreach specialists including Drs. Eric Belasco, Professor at Montana State University; Kate Fuller, Associate Extension Professor at Montana State University; Dannele Peck and Windy Kelley at the USDA Northern Plains Climate Hub; and Jeff Schahczenski, agricultural and resource economist at National Center for Appropriate Technologies.

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree required, Master's degree preferred in agricultural, rangeland, crop or plant sciences, ecology/environmental science, agricultural business, agricultural communications, or closely related field.
- Excellent oral communication and interpersonal skills with the public, especially farmers and ranchers. Clear written communication for stakeholder audiences and project reporting.
- Ability to work productively both independently and as part of an interdisciplinary team that includes researchers and outreach professionals, balancing tasks for multiple objectives.
- Willingness to travel (overnight occasionally) to attend events and meet with stakeholders.
- Ability to use, or willingness to learn how to use, virtual meeting platforms for interacting with project teams, partners, and stakeholders.

Application must include the following:

- A cover letter introducing yourself, such as what interests you about this opportunity, how it fits within your career goals, relevant experience or other evidence of the skills needed for success in this position. The cover letter will be used to assess your ability to write clearly.
- Either a Resume or Curriculum Vitae are acceptable, listing all relevant skills, experiences, and/or outputs (such as presentations, events organized, written products, etc.)
- Copies of transcripts (unofficial acceptable) showing earned degree(s)
- Contact information for three references we can speak with about your application.

Send your completed application package (preferably as a single PDF or other single file) to dannele.peck@usda.gov AND eric.belasco@montana.edu with the subject line "Climate Hub Associate position" by November 15, 2022 to receive full consideration.