

Job Title: Land Resource Specialist Assistant

Employer: Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Closing Date: Friday, September 11, 2015.

Job Term: until mid-December

This position is targeted for co-op students and recent graduates.

1. Purpose of Position:

- The work location for much of the term will be focused within the rural landscape of the City of Ottawa
- To assist and support the development, coordination and implementation of projects and programs related to soil science, soil health and pedology.
- To assist and support coordination of projects designed to assess the applicability of new or existing soil investigation practices/
- Technology / research / programs for Ontario conditions, which will ensure a competitive and environmentally responsible agri-food sector.

2. Duties and Responsibility

Under the general supervision of a manager and senior staff of the Environmental Management Branch the incumbent will;

- Assist in providing knowledge and expertise on soil and land resource data to ministry soil projects and agriculture and rural sectors.
- Assist senior land resource specialist staff in interpreting soil and landscape physical, chemical and ecological variables and parameters as they relate to soil management and crop production.
- Assist and support land resource specialist staff with liaison between the research community and industry to determine the applicability of new soil related technologies to Ontario conditions and assist in the establishment of research priorities or activities.
- Provide expertise and support to land resource specialist staff and manager related to soil science and pedology.
- Assist land resource specialist staff and manager in developing responses and approaches to client queries and issues related to soil management and crop production.
- Provide support to land resource specialist staff and manager in the identification, development and application of new soil investigation technologies / methodologies and communication to clients.
- Assist in the identification of provincial expertise to respond to needs of ministry staff, consultants and the agricultural and rural community through involvement in the development of projects and programs, information and educational materials, seminars and courses, electronic and print information packages and support land resource specialist staff and manager in designing and implementing demonstrations of new techniques/products.
- Support land resource specialist staff and manager to identify concerns, issues, trends and new developments which may relate to and impact on Ministry soil related projects and provincial programs and on information services and education/training needs of clients.
- Support the coordination and implementation of the continuous improvement and on-going maintenance of the ministry's land resources information through the use of computer technologies (GIS, GPS, image analysis, etc.).
- Assist land resource specialist staff and manager to monitor, evaluate and report on the delivery and implementation of information and education/training services and other programs, using performance measures to ensure that client needs are addressed efficiently and effectively.
- Maintain regular contact with clients and partners to facilitate delivery of project and program information services and education/training.
- Provide analytical and technology transfer support to support ministry staff, private sector practitioners and industry organization staff in finding solutions to problems, and opportunities in soil management and crop production.
- Maintain a general level of knowledge related to soil and pedology on current economic development issues, research accomplishments, environmental impacts and issues, production practices, marketing trends and theories as well as programs and services provided provincially and nationally by governments, universities and private institutions, to ensure that our client base has access to state of the art information.
- Represent Unit or Branch interests on working groups to develop projects and initiatives related to agricultural land resources science.

3. Staff & Licensing

- Valid Driver's license. Ability to travel throughout the province.

4. Knowledge Requirements

- General knowledge and understanding of scientific theories, principles and practices of soil science, soil health and pedology and understanding of related disciplines in the agricultural industry to review new and existing methods/techniques/programs and investigate/identify their suitability for Ontario conditions.
- General knowledge of agricultural production practices and economics within soil science, soil health and pedology context to develop information and educational materials that will assist clients with improving their competitive position.
- General knowledge of Ontario's agricultural industry, its economic significance, social importance and the roles/mandates of farm/commodity organizations in the rural community to support assessment activities related to the relevance and impact of new projects, program initiatives and practices.
- General knowledge of acts and regulations that impact on land resource science in order to provide information on standards for production of commodities and compliance of production practices/techniques with legislation/regulations.
- General knowledge of research methods and practices, in order to support investigation, viability and applicability of new methods, techniques and technology; analyze findings; and prepare reports/make recommendations on their suitability and applicability for Ontario conditions.
- General knowledge of computer technologies for acquiring, managing, maintaining and analyzing land resource information such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and image analysis software and global positioning systems (GPS) (e.g. ESRI Suite of software)

5. Skills Required

- Ability to use computer applications including the use of the Internet, statistical analysis and data base management software, GIS, GPS and image analysis software and technologies.
- Analytical and problem solving skills to assess information, education and training needs of agriculture and rural clients and to provide information, services and strategies/solutions in response to client requirements.
- Analytical and evaluative skills to investigate issues, new trends and developments related to agricultural production, management and marketing of land resource science and environmental sustainability.
- Knowledge of techniques and methods of education and training to develop materials for clients and colleagues and support training on products/techniques.
- Understanding of consultation and needs assessment methods to consult with clients on information needs and to evaluate if educational/training services and programs are meeting client needs and project/program objectives.
- Tact and diplomacy skills to establish and enhance partnerships, coalitions and networks to facilitate program delivery, sharing of information, education and training.
- Capacity to communicate concisely, professionally and effectively in writing through the compilation and preparation of technical reports, briefing notes, articles and electronic media, and orally through group presentations and one on one dialogue.
- Interpersonal skills to develop and maintain effective unit, Branch, Ministry and provincial working relationships and demonstrated ability to develop partnerships with clients.
- Verbal communication skills to discuss and present information, outlining options and recommendations on how technologies and projects can be applied to facilitate understanding and promote acceptance by others.
- Planning and coordination of own time on concurrent projects and activities to ensure ministry resources are effective and efficiently used in meeting the ministry objectives and addressing agricultural issues.
- Demonstrated project management skills to plan and coordinate activities in consultation with senior staff and management to identify time and resource requirements and to develop project options for ministry and clients to address agriculture and rural issues.
- Support in administering contracts of service providers and forecasting and monitoring project budgets.
- Encouraging and motivating agricultural and rural organizations to develop and support projects and programs that encourage the adoption and maintenance of sustainable practices in the agricultural community.

Contact Information:

If interested, please forward resume and cover letter to Therese Festin (therese.festin@ontario.ca).