USDA Southwest Climate Hub Agricultural Risk Associate

Overview
USDA's Climate Hubs are a unique collaboration across USDA agencies. The Climate Hubs translate climate science into action by linking USDA research and program agencies to develop and deliver timely and authoritative tools and information to agricultural producers and professionals. They are led by the Agricultural Research Service and Forest Service located 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 Southwest 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 online visualization tools. This is an annual position with an optional extension of up to three-years housed at the Southwest Climate Hub in Las Cruces, NM. 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). The position includes salary and has 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 climate research and communications from the team described above with agricultural stakeholders. The successful candidate is expected to assist with the following tasks:

- Develop innovative online tools to that can be used to improve climate-related risk information delivery and dissemination to agricultural stakeholders
- Hold focus groups with agricultural stakeholder, farmers and ranchers (Thinking - Extension, Boundary Organizations) to determine the most appropriate format for online tools and for testing alpha and beta versions of tools before release
- Review current / existing tools (and literature) and assess their use and adoption by stakeholders
- Identify key stakeholders (innovators/early adopters for sharing tool with broader audience)
- Evaluate and expand the user-friendliness, accuracy, and the capabilities of information in the AgRisk Viewer to include new crop insurance products and dimensions, where feasible.
- Assist in improving communication regarding the ability to navigate federal support programs administered by the NRCS, RMA, FSA, and other federal agencies
- Publish the process of tool development in peer-reviewed literature

Further, the successful candidate will work with a diverse team of scientists and extension specialists including Drs. Eric Belasco, Professor at Montana State University; Kate Fuller, Associate Extension Professor at Montana State University; Emile Elias, Southwest Climate Hub Director; Caiti Steele, Southwest Climate Hub Coordinator; Julian Reyes, National Climate Hubs Coordinator; and Jeff Schahczenski, agricultural and resource economist.

Application must include the following:

- A cover letter introducing yourself (e.g. experience, potential research interests, and general career goals), delineate all technical skills you have that are relevant to this position.
- Either a Curriculum Vitae or Resume are acceptable, listing all technical skills.
- Copies of transcripts (unofficial acceptable)
- A list of publications and presentations – including one first authored peer review paper as a writing example.
- Provide contact information for three references whom we can contact regarding your application.

Qualifications

- MS required (PhD preferred) in the agricultural, crop or plant sciences, crop or plant modeling, ecology/environmental science, applied mathematics or computational science or closely related field.
- Research experience and knowledge in data analysis, computing and/or code development ideally for agricultural science applications, which may include integration across climate, ecosystem, and plant science disciplines.
- Demonstrated experience with research in the field of applied ecology, including hydrology, agricultural science, GIS, and remote sensing.
- Desired: familiarity with the human dimensions of tool development and outreach with agricultural audiences, including how people make decisions and who they rely upon for information.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills and a record of scientific publications in the field of agricultural science, ecology, environmental biology, and/or risk management.
- Ability to work productively both independently and as part of an interdisciplinary team balancing divergent objectives involving research and code development.

Send your completed application package as a single PDF to emile.elias@usda.gov AND eric.belasco@montana.edu with Climate Hub AgRisk Fellowship in the subject line by November 15, 2022 by midnight mountain time to receive full consideration.