Position Title: Scientist
Reports To: Team Leader, Plant-Microbe Interactions
Direct Reports: Nil
Group: Forage Science
Key Relationships: Technicians, Research Partners, Partnerships & Programmes Office, The Research Office, Internal and External customers, and external suppliers
Location: Grasslands Campus, Palmerston North

WHO WE ARE

We are passionate innovators, dedicated to making a difference to the future of New Zealand by delivering world-leading research and through complex problem solving across diverse agricultural areas. We are respected by the scientific community for thought leadership, trusted by industry partners for the value we add to the sector, and admired by farmers and governmental stakeholders for all that we do to keep New Zealand at the forefront of global agricultural excellence.

We go beyond innovation to maintain AgResearch’s role as a leading collaborator and contributor to New Zealand’s worldwide agricultural reputation.

Our Vision is to drive economic prosperity by transforming agriculture while incorporating the fundamental concepts of sustainability, environmental responsibility and Vision Matauranga.

POSITION SCOPE & PURPOSE

This role will involve operating as part of one or more, multi-disciplinary project teams to deliver high quality science outcomes relevant to pastoral industry priorities; and in doing so will work with others to identify and convert opportunities into successful R&D proposals and outcomes. He/she will establish connections with industry stakeholders and develop a sound understanding of challenges faced.

Scientists consistently contribute to the delivery of high-quality research in Forage Science, in alignment with the AgResearch Statement of Corporate Intent.

The Science Project related to this position aims to establish a high tech, gene editing platform to custom design *Epichloë* endophytes for ryegrass. This new technology will improve resource use efficiency through reducing the impact of pests, improving animal health and reducing environmental impacts through reduced synthetic pesticide use and extending the interval between ryegrass sowings. The candidate will utilise existing *Epichloë*‘omics’ tools to identify new secondary metabolite pathways that contribute to novel bioactivity and perform chemistry analyses of engineered chemical pathways.
KEY ACCOUNTABILITY AREAS

RESEARCH STRATEGY AND DELIVERY

- Identifies new opportunities for delivering R&D solutions to the NZ Pastoral industry in collaboration with appropriate staff including Science Group Leaders, Science Team Leaders, Science Impact Leaders and other Scientists.
- Plans, conducts and coordinates detailed phases of work for major projects or complete projects of moderate size.
- Contributes to the development of successful funding proposals that attract revenue and offer solutions to existing and new customers.
- Contributes to high quality research outputs and achievement of project milestones within budgets.
- Displays a collaborative approach that optimally draws on knowledge and capability across the organisation to deliver the best possible outcome.
- Coordinates project teams and the day-to-day performance management relevant to that project.
- Engages in the development of new products and practices.

SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE

- Works pro-actively to consistently deliver high quality relevant research
- Demonstrates science credibility as the senior author in refereed journals and conference papers.
- Writes product manuals and contribute to securing patents.
- Maintains an active involvement in the wider pastoral and [insert specialist field] research communities.

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

- Actively contributes to building and maintaining a strong culture of partnership with stakeholders, focussed on creation of impact in their sectors.
- Works with Sector Managers, Account Managers, Science Group Leaders and other Scientists to maintain strategic partnerships and generate new opportunities
- Networks with and presents seminars to industry stakeholders in the wider pastoral community.

HEALTH AND SAFETY
• Maintains current knowledge of AgResearch’s Health and Safety Management policies, systems, and procedures
• Ensures awareness of own responsibilities and the procedures to follow in relation to health and safety
• Identifies and reports any hazards, near misses or incidents as per prescribed policy and procedures
• Demonstrates safe workplace behaviour by taking all practicable steps to ensure own and other’s safety in the workplace
• Attends scheduled Health and Safety training and development initiatives on a regular basis

ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES
• Applies and implements prescribed project management methodology into all project work
• Applies principles of continuous improvement by taking ownership for identification, analysis and investigation of work-related matters with the intent to improve, manage compliance and initiate best practice in our place of work
• Actively participates in and contributes to performance conversations and personal development
• Embraces the AgResearch Values framework and develops own behaviours to support these Values on a continuous basis
• Takes responsibility to understand and apply AgResearch policy, processes, systems, and procedures on a daily basis
• Commits to accurate and timely information sharing and recordkeeping as per set organisational standards
• Performs additional tasks, duties and/or responsibilities as directed by your people leader
• Assists and supports AgResearch business across different science groups and business units, as agreed with your people leader
PERSON SPECIFICATIONS

The person best suited to this position will possess the following:

EDUCATION & QUALIFICATIONS

- PhD or appropriate post graduate qualification
- Relevant practical experience.

CAPABILITIES & EXPERIENCE

- PhD degree in plant and/or fungal molecular biology, natural product chemistry or related field.
- Experience in natural product chemistry, including metabolite analysis of fungal compounds, mass spec analysis, and NMR.
- Experience in bioinformatics and fungal genetics (such as functional genomics including vector design and gene modification, fungal transformation techniques)
- Experience or ability to work with fungi and plants
- Knowledge and interest in New Zealand pastoral agriculture industries.
- Proven track-record of peer-reviewed publications.
- Follows rigorous development and documentation procedures for research protocols.
- Has a clear understanding of the principles behind intellectual property.
OUR VALUES

- Exemplifies Our Values
- Supports strategic priorities
- Assumes positive intent
- Is open to new ideas

- Acts with integrity
- Demonstrates credibility
- Appreciates diversity

- Actively seeks out relationships and partnership opportunities
- Works across boundaries
- Priorities shared goals

- Shares information and resources
- Involves others
- Supports others to be successful

- Maintains a best practice mindset
- Emphasis timely and high quality delivery
- Establishes challenging stretch goals and performance expectations

- Gathers, Compares and evaluates information
- Establishes robust decision making criteria
- Fully utilises support systems

- Prioritises time to innovate
- Takes a future and solution based approach
- Creates a positive learning environment

- Demonstrates openness to change
- Constructively challenges the status quo
- Emphasises freedom of independent thought
- Assesses risk

- Builds long term relationships with customers
- Provides clear, open and timely communication

- Identifies customer needs
- Commits to realistic delivery timeframes
- Translates initiatives into action

- Takes a long-term, strategic and future oriented perspective
- Focuses on the bigger picture
- Promotes the cross-fertilisation of ideas

- Champions transformational change
- Demonstrates decisiveness
- Commits to ongoing learning and development