



Candidate Information Booklet

Scientific Officer - Enteric Methane Emissions - Fixed Term Contract (36 months)

IRC302528

Completed Application Forms must be submitted no later than 12 noon on
Friday 24th May 2024

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Communication between HRConnect and you

HRConnect will issue competition communications electronically. Please ensure you check your email account regularly, to make sure that you don't miss any important communications.

Please update us with any changes to your email address and home address to ensure you are fully informed at all times.

Equal opportunities

Agri-Food and BioSciences Institute (AFBI) is an equal opportunities employer and has been awarded the Bronze Charter Mark in recognition for our commitment towards Gender Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace. All appointments will be made strictly on the basis of merit. If you have any queries with regard to this recruitment process or require any documentation in an alternative format, please contact HRConnect via email Recruitment@HRConnect.nigov.net or call 0800 1 300 330.

We would particularly welcome applications from females and those from a Roman Catholic background.

Feedback - AFBI is committed to providing feedback to assist the development of current and future applications.

Recruitment overview

Thank you for your interest in our organisation. At AFBI you will find a fantastic team spirit and a commitment to the development of both you and your skills so that you can choose to have a long-term career with us.

This Candidate Information Booklet offers specific information to applicants.

Please read this document carefully in advance of submitting your application and retain it for reference throughout the recruitment process.

At AFBI, we take great pride in the work we undertake. All AFBI employees are appointed on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.

We wish you every success in your application!

Important dates - It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in AFBI Hillsborough, Large Park, Hillsborough, County Down during week commencing Monday 24th June 2024.

Compulsory documentation - It is compulsory that all candidates invited to attend an assessment and/or interview, bring sufficient identification. Your attendance may not be permitted in instances where identification cannot be shown.

You want to change the world. So do we.

[Agri-Food and BioSciences Institute \(AFBI\)](#) is a leading provider of scientific research and services to government, non-governmental organisations and commercial organisations. We are sponsored by our key stakeholder, the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

Our customers include a range of local, national and international commercial companies, Northern Ireland and UK Departments, Agencies and associated bodies in the European Union.

As a leading institute of research, we tackle the complex challenges of our industry through purpose-driven science. We are a community with a common goal: to leave the world better than we found it. Are we ambitious? Definitely. Are our ambitions achievable? Absolutely. AFBI has been defying scientific boundaries to create measurable, scalable and enduring solutions to agri-food and marine science complexities in Northern Ireland - and beyond - since 2006.

We are delighted that you are considering joining us.

Of all the many factors that come together to make AFBI what it is, nothing is more important than our employees. Every area of our service delivery is underpinned by a number of dedicated teams working in synchrony to ensure the provision of scientific excellence. Across our four divisions, every team member, from those on the scientific front to those working behind the scenes in one of our offices, plays an essential role in delivering our long tradition of excellence, whilst helping to propel future discoveries. Together we are better.

Our People Vision is to:

Attract, empower and grow purpose-driven staff with the passion and capability to pursue excellence, embrace technology and cultivate innovation and change.

This is how we do great science.

Great people. Great science.

Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division

The Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division (SAFSD) employs scientific, technical and support staff across its five scientific based branches.

It is a highly multidisciplinary team with a central focus on sustainable farming. In doing so it's overarching goal is to drive innovations and science which deliver positive outcomes for livestock and plants, the environment they are grown in as well as the wider economy. This multi-disciplinary team explores all aspects of the food supply chain taking research and scientific exploration from the soil through to the plant, the animal, and the resultant food quality and nutritional value. It also works with colleagues at VSD to ensure animal health and food safety is optimised. A key element of the work also examines quantitative and qualitative socioeconomic impacts.

SAFSD utilises a highly instrumented platform across livestock and land management to service its main deliverables of research and innovation and monitoring and surveillance. SAFSD also collaborates extensively with other research organisations, industry and government departments locally, nationally and internationally. A key drive within SAFSD is to produce high quality peer reviewed publications whilst also ensuring the practical translation of science through an active dissemination programme.

SAFSD Branches

Agronomy & Plant Science Branch is concerned with optimising grass and crop production through the breeding and testing of new varieties, understanding the interaction of plants with the soil and wider environment, and the development of new plant-based agricultural and horticultural products.

Economic Research Branch undertakes quantitative and qualitative socioeconomic research to inform agri-food and rural policy development and industry decision making, regionally and nationally. Environmental economics, linked with the local, national and international economy is of increasing prominence in this branch.

Plant Health & Integrated Pest Management Branch underpins DAERA's policy development on plant health and delivers scientific advances in the detection, management and control of invasive and native pests and pathogens affecting plants, agriculture and the environment.

Sustainable Livestock Systems Branch links fundamental livestock science to systems level research to deliver innovations which drive sustainability within the agri-food sector and advance scientific knowledge.

Statistical & Data Sciences Branch provides statistical analyses, consultation services and data analytics to bring forward data driven solutions for a sustainable agri-food industry and our environment. It also supports a wide range of scientific research projects and statutory work carried out by AFBI.

Researched Farmed Estate provides the essential Support Services to ensure the Science and Research objectives and requirements are met and delivered on the Farmed Platform.

About the Livestock Production Sciences Branch

Livestock Production Sciences (LPS) Branch is one of five Branches within the Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division in AFBI and aims to address the global challenges of food security and sustainable intensification. The aims of the Branch are to develop and sustain an integrated research effort with national and international recognition in sustainable livestock production and welfare systems, thereby

- developing sustainable practices within a competitive industry
- providing a scientific basis for government policy and
- enhancing the quality of the environment.

The work of the Branch links fundamental science to systems level research to deliver innovations for the agri-food sector and scientific knowledge in ways that assist policy makers and industry partners. An innovative approach is taken linking large-scale applied research studies undertaken on farms across Northern Ireland to strategic research and development at AFBI's LPS Branch and further to more fundamental research in partnership with other AFBI Branches and external research organisations.

Work within LPS Branch continues to develop to meet the requirements of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), other government departments, NGO's and industry within a policy environment of ever increasing emphasis on promoting competitiveness in the marketplace, food security, delivering an improved environment and addressing animal welfare concerns. Scientific outputs from LPS Branch underpin government policy on livestock production, welfare, environment and renewable energy issues.

LPS Branch research and development is also promoting innovation in the agri-food sector and our outputs are key drivers of strategic initiatives in the industry including technology transfer programmes led by the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise. In addition, LPS Branch provides analytical services for livestock feedstuffs, manures and agri-food products for DAERA and the agri-food sector. The research platform comprises an instrumented research farm at AFBI Hillsborough with satellite facilities at AFBI Loughgall and AFBI Stormont. Livestock enterprises include dairying, beef, pigs, poultry and sheep.

Job Information and Employee Benefits

The post is a fixed-time position for 36 months to commence from 01/07/2024 until 31/06/2027. A reserve list will exist and will be held for a period of 12 months from the date of interview, to cover any similar vacancies which may arise.

Salary

Currently the salary for the post will be within the range £30,721 - £31,352 within which pay increases will be on an incremental basis provided staff performance reports are satisfactory.

Starting salary will be at the minimum of the scale.

Working Hours

The successful candidate will normally be required to work 5 days each week, totalling 37 hours. However, candidates should be aware that experiments undertaken within the Ruminant Nutrition Research Group continue 365 days/year, and this means that working during weekends, holiday periods, early mornings and into the evenings is required to meet business needs. The successful candidate will be required to help cover these work requirements on a rota basis. Overtime is paid for time worked outside of the standard 37-hour week.

Location

The successful candidate will be based at AFBI Hillsborough, Large Park, Hillsborough, County Down BT26 6DR. They will also be expected to work at other AFBI sites, other research sites, and on commercial farms, as required.

Hybrid working can also be considered.

Travel

The post may entail travel throughout the UK, Republic of Ireland and internationally and for this reason the successful candidate will require access to a form of transport that will permit them to meet the requirements of the post in full.

Pre-employment checks

Pre-employment checks consist of a qualification check and an AccessNI check. The security check required for this post is basic level. HRConnect will provide your details to Experian who will undertake this check. This is a two-part process during which all communications will be issued to you electronically.

The successful postholder will be required to complete a medical declaration.

VISAs (if applicable)

If there is a requirement for a VISA/VISA renewal, AFBI would not be responsible for the financial cost, this would be the onus of the candidate. AFBI will however support the Certificate of Sponsorship.

Annual Leave

In addition to the usual public and privilege holidays, there is an annual leave allowance of 25 days, increasing to 30 after five year's satisfactory service.

Probationary Period

The post holder will serve 12 months' probation in the new post. This will commence from the date of appointment. At the end of the probation period a formal review will be conducted.

Professional Development

We believe in our employees and understand the importance of investing in ongoing development. Support for professional development will always be considered.

Employee Benefits

AFBI offers employees an unrivalled benefits package. For further information please click [here](#).

Further Information

Further Information about the post may be obtained from SAFSDpeopleandculture@afbini.gov.uk

For information on how the recruitment process will be managed and for further recruitment and selection resources, please click [here](#).

For information on our equal opportunities, please click [here](#).

Job Background

The post holder will report directly to the Higher Scientific Officer within the Ruminant Nutrition Research Group, and a key role will be to support the research team in all aspects of their work. However, the post holder will be required to work closely with a wide range of staff, including Scientists (including visiting scientists), Technical teams, other members of the Industrial and Farm teams, and postgraduate and undergraduate students. While the main role of the post-holder will be within the Ruminant Nutrition Research Group, other duties may arise within Livestock Production Sciences Branch, and within other Branches within AFBI. The overarching role of this post is to support the scientists in effectively managing a diverse portfolio of research projects, facilities and staff within the Ruminant Nutrition Research Group: this will be achieved through the following:

Work with cattle and sheep experiments

Responsibilities includes preparation for and participation in cattle and sheep trials, operation and calibration of indirect open-circuit respiration calorimeter chambers and GreenFeed units, collection of experimental samples and data, generation of measurement results of respiration chambers and GreenFeed units (e.g., O₂, CO₂, CH₄ and H₂), and monitoring of animal welfare and health.

General management duties

The post holder will be required to provide assistance: (1) to manage students and visitors in compliance with all appropriate AFBI health and safety and staff management practices; (2) to ensure that all staff and research procedures are compliant with the Animal Scientific Procedures Act and ISO 9001 in terms of Standard Operating Procedures, health and safety, risk management, biosecurity, record management and other related issues.

Management of research resources and facilities

Responsibilities includes: (1) to maintain research standard for research resources and facilities in the Ruminant Research Unit including cattle metabolism units, ovens, fridges, cattle and sheep chambers and GreenFeed units and sheep/calf crates; and (2) to manage the procurement procedure for goods and services.

Other duties and responsibilities

The post holder will be required to fulfil any other duties and responsibilities as determined by management that fall within the ambit of the post. The job description is not intended to be rigid and inflexible but should be regarded as working guidelines within which the post will work.

This list is not exhaustive, and the successful candidate will be required to carry out other duties as allocated by management.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications provide evidence in their application form that they meet the following eligibility criteria.

- 1a. Two A' levels or equivalent (Grade A - E) one of which must be in a science discipline AND 2 years' experience working in a livestock research environment.

OR

- 1b. Five GCSE including a Science, Maths & English Language (Grades A*-C for subjects specified) or equivalent AND 3 years' experience working in a livestock research environment.

OR

- 1c. 4 years' experience working in a livestock research environment.

AND

2. A minimum of 2 years' experience of processing large volumes of analytical data within a standard operating procedure

Relevant or equivalent qualifications: Applications will also be considered from applicants with relevant formal qualifications considered by the selection panel to be of an equivalent or higher standard to those stated. If you believe your qualification is equivalent to the one required, the onus is on you to provide the panel with details of modules studied, information proving equivalency, etc. so that a well-informed decision can be made.

Person Specification

This position (Scientific Officer) is analogous to EO1 Level in the NICS.

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the Essential Criteria. In addition, they will also be required to demonstrate competency in Professional Knowledge & Skills pertaining to this post together with the skills and competencies set out in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) competency framework at Level 2 for the purpose of personal and professional development.

Selection panels will design questions to test the applicant's knowledge and experience in each of the above areas and award marks accordingly.

You should refer to the behaviours listed under level 2 of the relevant competence areas.

To view the NICS Competency Framework, please click [here](#).

Interview Criteria

In addition to satisfying the eligibility criteria and shortlisting criteria (if applicable) applicants will also be expected to display the following qualities and skills at interview-

1. Professional skills and Knowledge

Marks available: 50 Minimum Standard: 30

2. Collaborating and Partnering

Marks available: 20 Minimum Standard: 12

3. Managing a Quality Service

Marks available: 10

4. Leading & Communicating

Marks available: 10

5. Changing & Improving

Marks available: 10

Total marks available: 100

Overall pass mark: 60 (60%)