

AGRONOMIST

CLASS CONCEPT

This is professional and technical work in the interpretation of laboratory test results and the development of site-specific management recommendations for farmers and other users of the diagnostic and advisory services provided by the Agronomic Services Division within the North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, NCDA&CS. Employees interpret chemical analyses and bioassays for a variety of samples (soil, plant tissue, water, nutrient solutions, animal waste and industrial byproducts) and assist the agricultural community and the general public in implementing recommendations on fertilizer and liming practices, water and waste utilization and the control of plant-parasitic nematodes. Employees explain and promote the services of the division, make farm visits and conduct field research, either independently or in conjunction with other professionals, in support of the division's recommendations. By providing reliable, science-based agronomic information to growers, employees help to increase agricultural productivity and efficiency and safeguard environmental quality. Work responsibility may be limited to a specific geographic region of the state. Employees work under the direction of an Agronomist II with minimal supervision.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES PERFORMED

Interpret laboratory test results, recommend corrective action, and explain management recommendations to producers through written comments, phone calls or site visits.

Provide quality assurance and quality control of laboratory data and recommendations by reviewing reports in the Laboratory Information Management System, LIMS, or with growers on the phone or in person; and ask for laboratory rechecks as necessary.

Promote the services of the Agronomic Services Division to the agriculture community (farmers, crop consultants, landscapers, agricultural product retailers, county extension agents and researchers) by personal contact, formal presentations or use of news media; and represent the Agronomic Services Division at field days, grower meetings and at industry and trade related events.

Conduct field research and demonstration trials to evaluate recommendations and explore new fertility and nutrient management issues.

Represent the Agronomic Services Division on state, regional and local agricultural committees and task forces; and work with other state agencies to resolve environmental problems and safeguard the resources of the State.

Prepare nutrient management or waste utilization plans for growers as requested.

Prepare educational materials on the diagnostic and advisory services offered by the Agronomic Services Division.

RECRUITMENT STANDARDS

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Considerable knowledge of the principles of soil chemistry, fertilizers, plant nutrition, plant pathology, and crop and soil management.

Considerable knowledge regarding the utilization of animal, municipal and industrial wastes in crop production systems.

Considerable knowledge of water quality parameters needed for various agricultural purposes.

Considerable knowledge of analytical techniques involved in soil testing, nematode assays and plant, waste and solution analyses.

Considerable knowledge of plant diseases, nematodes and insects as they relate to plant nutrition.

Considerable knowledge of crops, environmental conditions and agricultural practices in the State.

Ability to interpret and apply laboratory data as it relates to soil testing, nematode assays and plant, waste and solution analyses.

Ability to analyze, evaluate and draw valid conclusions from field observations.

Ability to prepare analytical reports and to organize and present scientific information in a clear and concise manner.

Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with farmers, homeowners and agricultural groups.

Minimum Training and Experience Requirements

Bachelor's degree in agronomy, soil science, agricultural science, horticultural science, plant nutrition, crop science or a closely related curriculum from an appropriately accredited institution and two years of experience in the advisory, experimental or educational aspects of plant nutrition or soil management; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Special Note - This is a generalized representation of positions in this class and is not intended to identify essential functions per ADA. Examples of work are primarily essential functions of the majority of positions, but may not be applicable to all positions.