



IMPROVE LIFE.



**Project:** Seasonal strawberry optimization: a hybrid approach to addressing seasonal challenges of strawberry production and food security in Canada.

The Controlled Environment Systems Research Facility is looking for a research assistant with knowledge of strawberry production and/or Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA). The technician will assist in a research project that will investigate and optimize strawberry production, both in the greenhouse and under full indoor production scenarios. As part of the Weston Foundation's Homegrown Innovation Challenge, this project will be researching strawberry plant physiological growth responses that will (i) investigate light quality and quantity and their effect on strawberry production and shelf life, (ii) test growing media alternatives that can improve production sustainability, and (iii) evaluate technologies that can improve energy efficiency in CEA systems. The desired outcomes for this program include: (i) establishment of a lighting profile that provides improved strawberry quality and shelf stability in an indoor production environment, as well as in the greenhouse in the form of supplemental lighting for improved off-season production; (ii) development of an indoor runner production strategy to free up valuable greenhouse production space; (iii) development/testing of eco-friendly growing media for strawberry production; (iv) elucidation of the engineering criteria needed to design a scale strawberry production facility which includes energy requirements and inputs to HVAC design considerations; and (v) an ongoing assessment of energy use in the systems being proposed to determine the most energy efficient approach moving forward.

Duties that the horticultural technician will be responsible for include:

- Aiding with experimental design and setup including installation of research infrastructure (LED lighting systems)
- hydroponics systems installation and maintenance
- Horticultural crop management (planting, watering, IPM)
- Sample collection and analysis
- Literature searches and report writing
- Participation in industry meetings and sponsor meetings/tours
- Travel to industry partner production facilities

Desirable qualifications include:

- Degree in horticultural science, plant physiology
- Experience in CEA either in greenhouses or indoor production systems

- Familiarity with Argus Control Systems is desirable
- Ability to manage long-term projects
- Knowledge of experimental design and implementation
- Familiarity with basic hand and power tools
- Electronic knowledge and mechanical aptitude
- Proficiency in collecting, organizing and reporting data in both written and electronic forms
- Attention to detail
- Demonstrated ability in using spreadsheets to manage large datasets
- A valid driver's licence
- Experience in strawberry production is a bonus

Some travel will be required to our partner field site in Leamington, Ontario. Some weekend and holiday availability will be required for research experiments. This is a Temporary Full-Time position until December 2024. Possibility of extension dependent on research funding.

Position Category: GTAT Band C, Salary range \$27.43-\$32.41

Submit Cover Letter and Resume to:

Theresa Rondeau Vuk, Program Manager  
[trondeau@uoguelph.ca](mailto:trondeau@uoguelph.ca)

Applications open until position filled.