Postdoctoral Research Fellow: Canadian Organic Vegetable Improvement Project

The Food Sovereignty Research Group at the Centre for Sustainable Food Systems (CSFS) at UBC Farm invites applications for a full time, Postdoctoral Research Fellowship with an anticipated two year term beginning August 15, 2020. The position is located in the Applied Biology program in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems (Vancouver campus) (http://foodsovereignty.landfood.ubc.ca/).

The successful candidate will conduct research and provide project leadership for the Canadian Organic Vegetable Improvement (CANOVI) project, a five-year community-based research project launched in 2018 by the UBC Centre for Sustainable Food Systems, the Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security (a program of SeedChange), and FarmFolk CityFolk. The goal of CANOVI is to contribute to the resilience and growth of Canada’s organic vegetable sector through the characterization and development of varieties that excel in Canadian organic farming systems. Working with regional farming organizations, the CANOVI team coordinates a network of on-farm variety trials in which farmers generate and share data about regional variety performance. CANOVI also supports several participatory plant breeding projects. Breeding goals include: 1) selection of a long-storing orange Nantes-type carrot with excellent flavour and early vigor; 2) continuation and expansion of farmer-initiated breeding of an early-maturing, blocky, red bell pepper; and 3) on-farm selection of squash varieties (acorn and delicata types) based on a range of farmer goals. For more information see https://ubcfarm.ubc.ca/canovi/. The CANOVI project is a part of a range of activities and programing that comprise the UBC Farm Seed Hub, and the successful candidate will contribute their knowledge and vision to this developing aspect of the CSFS https://ubcfarm.ubc.ca/csfs-research/seed-hub/.

Responsibilities include: (1) leading a participatory, organic carrot plant breeding project at the UBC Farm, (2) collaborating with a nation-wide research team of community partners to support a network of on-farm trials in organic vegetable crops, and (3) directing variety trials at the UBC Farm as part of this network, in collaboration with UBC Farm staff. The candidate will recruit and mentor undergraduate and/or graduate students to carry out variety trials and plant breeding activities. The candidate will also deliver knowledge mobilization for this project including farmer-oriented research briefs and presentations, and will develop academic papers on participatory/decentralized plant breeding in the Canadian context or other topics as appropriate to their field.

Candidates must have a PhD, preferably in plant breeding/genetics or a similar field, and preference will be given to those with experience with participatory and community-based research and organic agriculture. Candidates with demonstrated experience working with community/grassroots partners are encouraged to apply.

Interested candidates should submit one PDF including a cover letter, curriculum vitae, and the names and contact information of three references to: Dr. Hannah Wittman, Centre for Sustainable Food Systems, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, to hannah.wittman@ubc.ca.

The application deadline is July 15, 2020. Only those asked for an interview will be contacted.

Equity and diversity are essential to academic excellence. An open and diverse community fosters the inclusion of voices that have been underrepresented or discouraged. We encourage applications from members of groups that have been marginalized on any grounds enumerated under the BC Human Rights Code, including sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, racialization, disability, political belief, religion, marital or family status, age, and/or status as a First Nation, Metis, Inuit, or Indigenous person. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority.