

Research Assistant

Investigating the impacts of bokashi composting and biochar filters for the recycling of nutrients in dairy farming

The Role

Job title:	Research Assistant
Department:	Agricultural Science & Practice
Responsible to:	Senior Lecturer in Agricultural Science & Practice
Location:	Royal Agricultural University Campus, Cirencester
Grade 4	£24,215 - £27,319 fte
Term:	Fixed term, 21 months, 10.5 hours per week (0.3fte)
Relationships with:	Internal - Senior academics in Agricultural Science and Practice school at the RAU and the RAU laboratory team. External - University of Reading Professor of Soil Biogeochemistry and University laboratory team Three local dairy farmers and three farming industry partners

We have a number of different ways to work flexibly, so at your interview feel free to talk about what flexibility means to you. Due to the part-time nature of the role, the majority of hours worked will need to be Mon-Fri in working hours.

The Purpose

The purpose of this role is to manage the collection and analysis of biological and environmental samples from field trials as part of a DEFRA/Innovate UK funded 'Bokashi, Biochar and Beyond' project until its completion on 31st Oct 2027.

The successful candidate will be working within the research team at the RAU and specifically in the Agricultural Science and Practice department, which conducts high impact, applied research that is relevant to UK agriculture and helps support a transition to regenerative practices. The 'Bokashi, Biochar and Beyond' project aims to investigate the impact of spreading bokashi compost made using dairy farm waste on nutrient bioavailability, soil health and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as

developing and testing an on-farm wastewater filtration system to capture nutrients like Nitrogen and Phosphorus.

Key Responsibilities

1. Take part in monthly project meetings and planning sessions with project partners as required (these will be a mixture of online and in person meetings located on campus or on project partner farms).
2. Engage and effectively communicate with the project team, trial farms and laboratory staff in a professional and collegiate manner.
3. Engage and communicate with the trial farms to help organize field experiments and sample collection.
4. Act as a point of contact to respond to queries from the trial farms and report any issues to the project coordinator as needed.
5. Follow the project's field trial sampling schedule to collect biological and environmental samples and observational data from farm trial sites (n=3 farms located in the Southwest of England and an additional trial site on the RAU campus), which may necessitate lone working on farms and competency in farm health & safety.
6. Safely transport samples to the RAU and Reading University laboratories for analysis following prescribed SOPs.
7. Manage the preparation, analysis and safe storage of collected samples in the laboratories according to prescribed SOPs and with support from the laboratory staff.
8. Manage the compilation and organisation of trial data and results using appropriate software.
9. Contribute to the statistical analysis of results with support and guidance from academic partners.
10. Present findings from the analysis to the project partners with support and guidance from academic partners.
11. Opportunity to present results from project at meetings, conferences and dissemination events and support academic partners with writing up results for publication.
12. Contribute to the creation of material and resources for dissemination events (e.g., in collaboration with knowledge exchange partners).
13. Support the project coordinator in the delivery of other related tasks, including reporting to funders.

General responsibilities:

- The University is committed to equality of opportunity. All staff are required to comply with current legislation, University policies and good practice guidance.
- All staff are required to act in a way that safeguards the health and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults at all times. The post holder must be familiar with and adhere to appropriate safeguarding policies and guidance and participate in related mandatory/statutory training. Managers have a responsibility to ensure their team members understand their individual responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
- All staff are required to participate in the University appraisal process and should ensure they are familiar with the process and plan time to prepare for their appraisal. Following the

appraisal, staff are expected to undertake in any necessary learning and development and work towards the objectives that have been set.

- The University expects staff to attend any training designated as mandatory and to undertake learning and development activities to support their role. Managers must facilitate learning and development within their teams.
- It is a condition of employment that staff will not disclose any information obtained in the course of their duties other than to those entitled to receive it. The post holder must ensure that the confidentiality of personal data remains secure and that restricted information or highly restricted information to which they have access remains confidential during and after their employment at Royal Agricultural University. All staff must undergo appropriate data protection training as required.
- All absence from work must be reported in accordance with the University's absence procedures and recorded on iTrent.
- The University acknowledges its responsibility to provide a safe, smoke free environment, to its employees, service users and visitors. It is the policy of the University not to allow smoking on University premises other than in specifically designated areas.

University Values

As a University we have chosen five values to underpin our learning community. These are the values which we will all work by and for which we want the RAU to be known. We are:

- Collaborative - we believe in the power of working together. We are stronger as a community of practice - inspiring each other, identifying shared goals, and providing reciprocal support leads to greater success.
- Open-Minded - we are receptive to new ideas and we value the diversity of experiences and skills. We are committed to listening to everyone across the RAU community.
- Resourceful - we adopt creative approaches to achieve our goals while setting higher standards, promoting professionalism and sustainability.
- Responsible - individually and collectively we take accountability for our actions working with integrity to achieve the highest ethical standards.
- Inclusive - we acknowledge the fundamental value and dignity of all individuals and are committed to maintaining an environment that seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination and respects diverse traditions, heritages, and experiences.

Person Specification

Requirements	Essential or Desirable	Measured By
The post holder must be able to demonstrate:		A) Application Form B) Interview C) Presentation
Qualifications:		

Requirements The post holder must be able to demonstrate:	Essential or Desirable	Measured By A) Application Form B) Interview C) Presentation
BSc or equivalent qualification in biology, plant, soil, water or agricultural sciences, or related subject	Desirable	Application form, Presentation
Post graduate qualification in scientifically relevant subject	Desirable	Application form
Knowledge, Experience and Skills:		
Excellent communication skills with a track record of working with a range of industry stakeholders	Essential	Application form, Interview, Presentation
Ability to drive/access to a car to travel to-from trial farms in the South West of England	Essential	Application form and Interview
Advanced digital skills for organising and processing data	Essential	Application form and Interview
Track record working in a safe and flexible manner in challenging environments	Desirable	Application form and Interview
Knowledge of basic soil and composting biology	Desirable	Application form and Interview
Experience working in a laboratory setting	Desirable	Application form, Interview, Presentation
Experience conducting field trials	Desirable	Application form, Interview, Presentation
Experience using statistical analysis software packages	Desirable	Application form and Interview
Experience working on farms	Desirable	Application form and Interview

Application Procedure

If you are interested in applying for this role, please send:

- University [Application Form](#) together with the [Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form](#) available on the University website www.rau.ac.uk) – you may attach your up to date CV if you wish to add additional information.
- Details of two referees who must be people who can comment authoritatively on you as a person and as an employee in relation to the level of the post, and must include your current or most recent employer or their representative.

- Please forward to the HR Team, Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 6JS or via email to jobs@rau.ac.uk stating where you saw the advert for the role
- Informal enquiries can be made to Dr Lisa Morgans, Senior lecturer in Farm Animal Health & Welfare, lisa.morgans@rau.ac.uk
- **Closing date:** 9 December 2025 with **Interviews on:** 15, 16 and 18 December 2025.
- We acknowledge receipt of all applications within two working days. If you do not receive an email from us after submitting your application, please let us know by sending a new email **without any attachments** to Human.Resources@rau.ac.uk so we can check if your application has reached us.
- Should you be selected for interview please be aware that we are unable to reimburse interview expenses.

The RAU is an equal opportunities employer and we particularly welcome applications from black and minority ethnic candidates as they are under-represented within the RAU at this level