Teagasc PhD Walsh Fellowship Opportunity

A Predictive Decision Support Tool to Improve Farm Financial Management
(Ref 2017006)

Background

This is a novel and innovative project which will design and develop a Farm Financial Information System (**FARMFIS**) programme as a way to make use of existing technologies to model weather and market changes on income, which research suggests will substantially increase profitability. The objective of the project is to encourage farmers to better understand and fully engage with financial tools in farm management, taking into account the complexities and variability of local weather, soil, altitude and stocking levels. The poor uptake and engagement with financial management tools by farmers (despite long-term benefits), indicates barriers reflecting perceptions that such tools are time-consuming and difficult to use. This project seeks to overcome and change perceptions and increase uptake by farmers by developing appropriate scientific tools to model the effects of multiple variables on localised conditions, enabling a more meaningful engagement with farm management decisions, technologies and practices. The predictive benchmarking system will allow better planning and control for farmers under increasingly complex and variable biophysical and market conditions and greater financial resilience, in a form that is appropriate and conducive to learning.

Requirements

Applicants should have a good primary degree (First or Second Class Honours) or M.Sc. in an appropriate discipline (Economics, Agriculture, Geography, Environmental Science, Environmental Engineering). They will need to have or be comfortable in learning econometrics or statistics for large scale databases. A knowledge of the agricultural or environmental sectors and experience of having worked with large administrative and GIS databases would be beneficial. The successful candidate should be highly self-motivated and be prepared for laboratory work and extended periods of field work with modern analytical equipment.

Award

The PhD Fellowship is a joint research project between Teagasc, Athenry and NUI Galway. The student will be based at the Teagasc campus in Athenry, Co. Galway and will be registered at NUI Galway, working under the supervision of Dr. Mary Ryan, Dr. Chaosheng Zhang and Prof. Cathal O Donoghue. The fellowship funding is €22,000 per annum which includes University fees of up to a maximum of €6,000 per annum and is tenable for 4 years. It is envisaged that this project will start in October 2017.

Benefits

The successful candidate will develop analytical and modelling skills using Farm Survey, Administrative, GIS and remote sensing datasets, in a highly relevant and innovative research area. The candidate will also avail of PhD student training and development offered by both Teagasc and NUI Galway.

Further Information/Applications
Dr Mary Ryan, Rural Economy and Development Programme, Teagasc, Athenry, Co. Galway, Republic of Ireland Phone +353872242281   email: mary.ryan@teagasc.ie
Dr Chaosheng Zhang, School of Geography and Archaeology, National University of Ireland, Galway Phone +353 91 492375   email: Chaosheng.Zhang@nuigalway.ie

Application Procedure
Submit an electronic copy of Curriculum Vitae and a letter of interest simultaneously to:
Dr Mary Ryan mary.ryan@teagasc.ie & Dr Chaosheng Zhang Chaosheng.Zhang@nuigalway.ie

Closing date: 11th August, 2017