

**Position Announcement, Virginia Tech**  
**Director and Entomologist, Southern Piedmont Agricultural Research and Extension Center**  
**Blackstone, VA**

The [College of Agriculture and Life Sciences](#) (CALs) at [Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University](#) (Virginia Tech) is seeking a Director for the [Southern Piedmont Agricultural Research and Extension Center](#) (SPAREC). This is a tenure-track position at the Associate or Professor rank with tenure home in the [Department of Entomology](#). The Director is expected to maintain a highly productive research and Extension program in the area of entomology with relevance to the vision and mission of SPAREC.

SPAREC pursues a vision of excellence in the land grant mission including discovery, development, evaluation, and dissemination of technical information. Research and Extension programs that enhance economic profitability and sustainability of crop and livestock production systems and environmental stewardship in the Commonwealth of Virginia and beyond are essential. Currently, primary production systems include tobacco, forages, row crops (corn, soybean, wheat; in cooperation with campus faculty), specialty crops (e.g. strawberry, hemp), and beef cattle.

The primary responsibility of the Director, who serves as the SPAREC administrative head, is to provide unit leadership and support for regional, national and international excellence in integrated research and Extension programs appropriate for the SPAREC vision and mission. The Director has the unique opportunity to envision new directions and initiatives of relevance to the national and global funding priorities and in support of regional stakeholders and Virginia's agricultural economy. The Director will be instrumental in identifying new research and extension opportunities, expanding faculty involvement and leadership, and garnering stakeholder support and engagement in pursuit of the vision. Leadership activities include, but are not limited to, recruiting new faculty and facilitating the professional development of faculty, staff, and graduate students; developing and implementing short- and long-term strategic plans for the Center; managing the Center's human, physical, and financial resources; and facilitating intra- and inter-departmental/AREC teamwork among faculty and staff. The Director is responsible for providing or coordinating mentoring and professional development opportunities as well as providing annual evaluation of SPAREC faculty and staff members, in pursuance of enriching the SPAREC community and promoting collaboration, programmatic, and unit excellence. The Director will build SPAREC's capacity in digital and precision agriculture in support of the [VT SmartFarm Innovation Network](#)<sup>®</sup>.

The Director will maintain a liaison with agricultural leaders and producers in accordance with SPAREC's mission and goals and in support and alignment with CALs strategic plan and the mission and vision for both [Virginia Cooperative Extension](#) (VCE) and [Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station](#) (VAES). VCE operates with leadership in two land grant universities-- Virginia Tech and Virginia State University. VCE has four district directors, VCE Extension program teams, and 107 offices throughout the state. The SPAREC Director facilitates involvement in interdisciplinary and multi-institutional research and Extension programs

through the [Virginia Tech Destination Areas](#) and involvement in other initiatives and priorities, such as the CALS [Center for Advanced Innovation in Agriculture](#) (CAIA), [Commonwealth CyberInitiative](#) (CCI), [Growth Opportunities in Virginia](#) (GO Virginia) and [Vibrant Virginia](#), consistent with the SPAREC vision and mission. The Director will collaborate with appropriate academic unit (departments, schools) leaders on tenure and promotion actions for faculty positions.

The successful candidate's extension and research focus should be relevant to insect ecology as it relates to the integrated management of agronomic insect pests, especially for row crops. The diversity of natural and agricultural cropping systems in the Southern Piedmont region requires an ecological approach in managing the pests that move freely among habitats. Expectations include successful recruiting and mentoring of graduate students to degree completion, contributing to undergraduate experiential learning opportunities, working collaboratively with Virginia Cooperative Extension agents and specialists, and developing cooperative partnerships with external stakeholders. Extension programming will include delivery of research-based educational programs via contemporary training and teaching materials that will serve relevant commodity and agribusiness industries of Virginia, the region, nationally, and globally. This position will also support the mission of the land-grant university by participating in outreach and engaging local, state, and regional stakeholders. Participation in institutional and professional service activities that align with the candidate's strengths will also be expected. The successful candidate's career will contribute to the national and global recognition of SPAREC and expansion of Virginia Tech's reputation in this domain.

The Director reports administratively to the Director of VAES. Salary is commensurate with qualifications and experience.

#### Required Qualifications:

- An earned Ph.D. in entomology, agriculture or related discipline that will support a highly competitive research and Extension program in entomology;
- Demonstrated effective professional leadership, interpersonal skills, and administrative experience, including personnel and fiscal management;
- Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively (oral, written) with individuals at all levels and from diverse backgrounds within the university, industry, and public sectors;
- Familiarity with working in a farm-based research and extension facility;
- Strong commitment to applied research, Extension programming, and long-term sustainability of agriculture;
- Agricultural research and/or Extension program experience or equivalent industry experience;
- Demonstrated record of scholarly achievement in entomology, through industry and/or academic research and outreach/Extension, warranting appointment at the rank of a tenured associate professor or professor; applicants are not required to have attained full professor status prior to applying. Evidence includes, but is not limited to, scholarship, experience in obtaining extramural support from commodity

and industry groups, graduate student mentoring, governmental agencies, and/or foundations.

**Preferred Qualifications:**

- Research and Extension accomplishments and impacts in insect ecology and/or pest management experience with field crops;
- Demonstrated research and/or Extension programming that contributes to the growth of digital agriculture and the SmartFarm Innovation Network®;
- Demonstrated creativity in developing and implementing programmatic vision of relevance to research and Extension programs;
- Demonstrated leadership in the management of field research plot resources;
- Experience in developing and implementing strategic plans;
- Capacity for advancing innovation for applied agricultural research and Extension programming;
- Evidence of effective faculty, staff, and graduate student recruitment and mentoring.

**Physical and Environmental Demands and Conditional Terms**

- Working or traversing uneven terrain
- Hand/finger dexterity
- The successful candidate will be required to have a criminal conviction check
- Must have a driver's license check
- Must have an acceptable and safe driving record

**Application Instructions**

Individuals wishing to apply should go online to [jobs.vt.edu](http://jobs.vt.edu) and search for Job#

Review of applications will begin on January 24, 2022 and continue until a suitable candidate is selected.

Applications should include:

- The completed on-line application;
- A formal, concise cover letter summarizing the applicant's qualifications fitting the position;
- A statement of vision (3-pages max) for the Director role of a nationally/internationally recognized off-campus Agricultural Research and Extension Center, including leadership style and values;
- A 2-3 page statement of future (by 2030) research plans and Extension philosophy and programming interests, including how the applicant will complement existing Virginia Tech research and Extension programs;
- A current curriculum vitae which includes a biographical sketch, service, administrative/management experience, and a complete list of research and

- Extension publications, students mentored, and grants; and
- Three (3) names and contact information of references who can assess the candidate's qualifications for this position.

For Questions Regarding the Search, Contact:

Susan E. Duncan, Ph.D., R.D., Co-Chair  
Associate Director, Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station  
Professor, Food Science and Technology  
Director, Center for Advanced Innovation in Agriculture  
Virginia Tech  
[duncans@vt.edu](mailto:duncans@vt.edu)

Contact Information:

Mark S. Reiter, Ph.D., Co-Chair  
Director, Eastern Shore Agricultural Research and Extension Center  
Professor, School of Plant and Environmental Sciences  
Virginia Tech  
[mreiter@vt.edu](mailto:mreiter@vt.edu)

The Director of SPAREC is responsible for ensuring that livestock, crops, and facilities are cared for and maintained outside of normal work hours by appropriate scheduling of responsible staff. Some seasons require longer times in the field and some travel and coordination of programming and field days will be required. Travel to other meetings (Blacksburg (campus), other ARECs, professional meetings) is a part of this role.

The SPAREC is located in a rural setting near the town of Blackstone, Virginia in Nottaway County, Virginia. SPAREC is within commuting distance (40-60 minutes) from the metropolitan region of Petersburg and Richmond, the capital of Virginia, with a combined population of about 260,000 people and about 100 miles from Raleigh, NC. Conveniently located near major north/south interstate highways of I-95, I-85, and the east-west U.S. Route 460 corridor across southern Virginia, SPAREC has the opportunity to influence Virginia's agricultural and food economy and agricultural tourism through creative visioning and strategic implementation.

In addition to the Director, SPAREC has 1 tenure-track faculty position (tobacco, hemp, strawberry), 3 research and Extension non-tenure track faculty positions (tobacco agronomist, applied forage systems specialist, analytical chemist/biologist), and 10 hard-funded staff positions plus additional soft-funded staff. In addition to the position of Director/Entomologist, another active tenure track search is ongoing for a plant pathologist at the assistant professor level. The Center includes 1180-acre farm with 130 acres of crop research plots, 120 acres of research grazing, and a 40 acre silvopasture area, lab facilities and farm buildings, specialized tobacco curing facilities, greenhouse facilities, and an office complex to support research and Extension. SPAREC faculty actively engage in the CALS Center for Advanced Innovation in

Agriculture, in which the Virginia Tech [SmartFarm Innovation Network](#)<sup>®</sup> is a principal research platform.

Founded in 1872 as a land- grant college, Virginia Tech (<http://www.vt.edu/>) is the most comprehensive university in the Commonwealth of Virginia and is among the top research universities in the nation. Today, Virginia Tech's ten colleges are dedicated to quality, innovation, and results through teaching, research, and outreach activities. At its 2,600- acre main campus located in Blacksburg and other campus centers in Northern Virginia, Southwest Virginia, Hampton Roads, Richmond, Southside, and Roanoke, Virginia Tech enrolls more than 28,000 undergraduate and graduate students from all 50 states and more than 100 countries in 180 academic degree programs. Through its mission of research, teaching, and extension, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences ([www.cals.vt.edu](http://www.cals.vt.edu)) has been instrumental in helping agriculture and other life science industries make significant strides in improving people's lives. Today's College is adapting to society's expectations and needs by focusing its resources and efforts on improving human health and nutrition, sustaining agriculture and the environment, reducing the reliance on fossil fuels, and developing cures for devastating and debilitating diseases. Nearly 3,000 students are pursuing degrees in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. CALS is administered by the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the Associate Dean and Director of the Virginia Cooperative Extension, the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies and Director of the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, the Associate Dean and Director of CALS Global Programs, and the Associate Dean of Academic Programs. The College has 9 academic units, 11 Agricultural Research and Extension Centers (ARECs) and a presence in every county in the Commonwealth through [Virginia Cooperative Extension](#). Today, in addition to two- year associate degrees, the college grants bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. Virginia Tech also engages in cooperative work with Virginia State University in Petersburg. Virginia Tech has a strong commitment to the principles of diversity, and in that spirit seeks a broad spectrum of candidates including women, people of color, and people with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities desiring accommodations in the application process should notify us by the review date.

Virginia Tech does not discriminate against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law.

This position is 50% research and 50% Extension.

**JOB DUTIES% of time; Duties / Responsibilities; Essential /Marginal**

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