



Post-doctoral Fellowship: Biological Control of *Prosopis* species

THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

We seek to hire a postdoctoral research fellow to conduct research focused on the identification and evaluation of potential biological control agents that will damage vegetative parts of *Prosopis* species. This position is part of a larger project to manage *Prosopis* invasion in South Africa. The Natural Resource Management Programme of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment is the sponsor of this project through the Centre for Biological Control, Rhodes University. New Mexico State University is the base for this project.

The successful candidate will conduct research with a primary focus on the exploration, evaluation and potential implementation of biological control agents of *Prosopis*. The ideal candidate will have a background in one or more of the following: plant-insect interactions, entomology or biological control. Experience in insect rearing will be an advantage. The project will combine extensive fieldwork and laboratory experiments. The ideal candidate will be able to work independently with technical support and collaborate with a larger team.

REQUIREMENTS & QUALIFICATIONS:

PhD degree in entomology, integrated pest management, ecology or similar; demonstrated analytical/statistical ability; good writing and communication skills; ability to work independently; publication record; driver's license and at least one year's driving experience; willingness to travel (domestic and international) following university and state guidelines (including COVID-19 restrictions); ability to undertake extended periods of physical field work in harsh environmental circumstances. Candidates with post PhD research experience are preferred.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

The research fellow will be responsible for the following:

1. Conduct a literature review of current insect fauna associated with *Prosopis*.
2. Identify potential insect agents on which to focus further studies, initial candidates include:
 - Twig girdlers, *Oncideres* spp. (Cerambycidae),
 - Node borer species *Amphicerus* spp. (Bostrichidae),
 - Root feeders in the family Curculionidae., and
 - The scale insect, *Toumeyella mirabilis* (Coccidae).
 - Root feeding species within the family Curculionidae
3. Assessment of the biology, field host specificity and likely damage to *Prosopis* species by potential agents.
4. Supervision of undergraduate and graduate students.
5. Thorough analysis of research and publication of results.
6. Presentation of findings at conferences and stakeholder meetings.

CONTRACT INFORMATION:

This position offers a competitive package with remuneration between USD\$50,000 and \$60,000 + benefits per annum dependent on qualifications of accepted candidate.

Duration: Two years, full-time with possible extension dependent on funding and progress.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

Please email Professor David Thompson (dathomps@nmsu.edu) the following documents:

1. A cover letter summarizing qualifications and outlining research interests.
2. A comprehensive *Curriculum Vitae* including a full publication list.
3. Copies of Doctoral degree certificate and other relevant degrees and transcripts.
4. Contact information for THREE references.

Review of applicants will begin on **1 September 2020** and will continue until a suitable candidate is identified. Preferred start date will be as soon as possible, pending COVID-19 travel and translocation restrictions.