RNAissance Ag: Senior RNAi Biologist

Position Summary:

RNAissance Ag, LLC (a subsidiary of TechAccel, LLC) is an early-stage startup company developing RNAi-based biopesticides for control of important agricultural pests. We are seeking to expand our team by adding a RNAissance Senior RNAi Biologist. This is a mid-level bench science position located in the Greater St. Louis, Missouri region. The Senior RNAi Biologist reports to TechAccel’s Chief Science Officer or designee.

The Senior RNAi Biologist conducts research and development activities in laboratory, greenhouse, and field environments. This role will be integral to our RNAi-based biopesticide development pipeline and will be involved in functions ranging from biopesticide discovery through product development. RNAissance Ag is an exciting and growing early-stage company, and the Senior RNAi Biologist will occupy a position near the ‘ground floor’ of the organization with excellent opportunities for advancement potential. We are a small, highly collaborative company. Our team functions with a high level of mutual respect to inspire openness and innovation from all levels of the organization.

This is an exciting opportunity for the right individual to leverage their knowledge and creativity to make a real and tangible impact on translating innovation to commercial reality and have a significant influence on the trajectory of RNAissance Ag. RNAissance Ag’s dsRNA manufacturing platform can produce dsRNA at a dollar or less per gram – a low cost that opens up commercial opportunities for RNAi products in the agriculture, home and garden, and animal and aquaculture health industries. Our current leading products are RNAi biopesticide sprays for control of important agricultural pests. The Senior RNAi Biologist will have opportunities to contribute to the development and commercialization of products across our portfolio.

We are seeking candidates with experience in RNA interference (RNAi) biology. We are particularly interested in candidates that have studied RNAi as a means for pest control. Preferably, the candidate has direct experience studying uptake and/or processing of dsRNAs in insect pests. The candidate should have extensive experience with general molecular biology techniques. A basic understanding or competencies in the application of bioinformatics tools for analyzing genomics data is strongly preferred. Ideally, the candidate will have both academic training and industrial experience. However, we will also consider candidates that are fresh from a Ph.D. program, or a postdoctoral research fellowship.

The successful candidate will have strong, creative problem-solving skills to troubleshoot and innovate approaches that address project objectives and meet timelines. This person should have a passion for defining and meeting tangible research objectives in an efficient and rapid fashion. The candidate should be able to work both independently, and as part of a collaborative team. The successful candidate will work closely with TechAccel scientific staff, RNAissance biomanufacturing and entomology scientists, consultants, and colleagues focused on marketing & sales, finance, and operations.
Responsibilities; the Senior RNAi Biologist shall:

- Contribute scientific acumen and leadership to our growing research team. This is a hands-on position, and the successful candidate is expected to perform research activities, collaborate with other team members, and help manage and guide junior staff.
- Drive forward RNAissance’s RNAi biopesticide discovery pipeline by:
  - Validating existing RNAi targets using molecular and/or physiological methods.
  - Contributing to the identification of new RNAi targets through literature curation, collaborations, and experimentation.
  - Identifying and working with external collaborators to expand or accelerate biopesticide development.
- Work closely with RNAissance’s RNAi biomanufacturing and entomology teams, and external collaborators to:
  - Lead studies characterizing dsRNA uptake and primary degradation pathways and by-products of RNAi biopesticides.
  - Contribute to the development and testing of practical, cost-effective RNAi biopesticide formulations.
- Collaborate with the broader RNAissance and TechAccel teams to define, plan, and execute additional commercial avenues for leveraging our RNA manufacturing platform.
- Manage resources, materials, and logistics required to design and execute experiments.
- Design specific technical approaches to be implemented to successfully deliver project goals on a startup timeline and budget.
- Strive for continuous improvement in methods and procedures executed in daily work.
- Communicate and collaborate cross-functionally in clear and impactful ways to drive forward RNAi product development.
- Coach and develop junior personnel.
- Conduct research in accordance with or exceeding all relevant Health, Safety and Environmental guidelines.
- Stay up to date on developments within their field through methods such as reading academic journals, attending training programs and attending conferences within their field.

Minimum Requirements:

- Ph.D. in Entomology, Cell Biology, Molecular Biology, Biochemistry, or related field. A master’s degree in one of these areas combined with strong relevant experience will also be considered. Industrial experience is a plus, but not required.
- Strong knowledge of the biology of insect RNAi including mechanisms of dsRNA uptake and/or molecular mechanisms of small RNA processing pathways. In-depth knowledge of challenges associated with deployment of RNAi biopesticides preferred.
- Strong knowledge of insect physiology and toxicology.
- Experience developing molecular and/or physiological methods (RT-PCR, qRT-PCR, use of fluorescent dyes, or microscopy, etc.) applicable to the analyses of dsRNA fate and gene expression.
- Experience using insect bioassays to evaluate lethal and sublethal effects of insecticides.
- Willingness and ability to work in lab, greenhouse, and field environments.
- Strong knowledge of experimental design, and statistical analysis methodologies.
- Strong communication skills including the ability to synthesize research results & report to both technical & non-technical audiences.
• Demonstrated strengths in organization, planning & project management; the ability to achieve R&D objectives through specific and measurable actions, and in a fast-paced, milestone-driven company.
• Results-oriented, strong work ethic, able to follow-through, and can work under pressure with associated deadlines.
• Self-starter with high level of initiative and resourcefulness. Think creatively to develop new methods and solve complex problems.

The ideal candidate has at least some of these additional skills:
• Good experience in bioinformatics with experience writing or modifying code in a relevant programming language such as Python, R, and/or Perl
• Experience in analyzing high-throughput biological data, such as genomics, epigenomics, or transcriptomics data.
• Solid understanding of agriculture markets and trends.

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We will offer an attractive compensation and benefits package commiserate with experience to the successful candidate. This is a full-time, salaried exempt position at our St, Louis area location. Some travel might be required from time to time, but it is not expected to exceed 10-20%. Relocation assistance is available.

Important Note: Candidates for this position must be either a US citizen or have permanent resident status and a valid green card. We are unable to provide work visa sponsorship.

If you have interest in applying, please send a cover letter and your curriculum vitae, or resume via email to: jobs@techaccel.net. Or send via US Mail to:

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