

JOB SEARCH ADVICE

from Plant Pathology alumni

Jenna Lind

I graduated in 2014 with my M.S. degree. I work at Organic Valley as a Produce Pool Coordinator. During the growing season I hop around to our produce farms and help them with production issues such as disease issues, insect issues, nutrient issues. I help them extensively with developing food safety programs on their farms. I also do variety trialing on our farmer's farms.



- 1. Where did you look for jobs?* Whether this was helpful or not, I'm still not sure but I knew where I was moving after I graduated. This was helpful in that I was able to focus my search. There are an infinite number of possible paths to take and an equal number of places to end up so in a way, it was nice to be able to narrow it down. On the other hand, someone who doesn't have a location where they want to end up has the world at their fingertips! I knew I was moving to a rural community so there weren't many options to look. I looked at county Extension and Organic Valley.
- 2. When did you start looking?* About 6-9 months before I graduated. I got a tip that the UW Extension Agriculture Agent for the county I was moving to was retiring so I jumped on starting to talk with the man who was retiring (I asked him about his job, what it was like, what his day was like, who else he thought I should talk to, etc.). I called his boss and told him I was interested in the job and asked him kind of the same questions. Through these conversations I got a name of a woman who was also on the hiring committee and I called her up and went through the same types of questions. The county Extension office had a "visioning session" with the public to talk about what type of Agent they wanted, so I went to that too. I pretty much talked to as many people as possible to get them familiar with me before hoping to apply. I think that is what jumpstarted my search.
- 3. What experiences did you have in graduate school that helped you succeed in getting a job and while on the job?* I shiver at the word but...*networking*. I volunteered for the REAP Food Group going to elementary schools and teaching them about the vegetables they were eating. That was a resume booster but

it helped that it was a topic I was interested in. I had an undergraduate help me in the lab with my research and that helped in developing skills of supervising someone. My favorite experience was taking a credit with Brian Hudelson in the Diagnostic Clinic during the summer where we got to identify the diseased samples that came into the lab. That made me discover the part of Plant Pathology that I loved. Now in my job, I was able to get a microscope and I can identify the diseases that I see in our farmer's fields. I must say, the experiences that helped me get a job reached all the way back to being an undergraduate. Since my sophomore year I had different internships every summer, I had a job in a lab on campus and I studied abroad and had an internship while being overseas. All of these experiences helped me get the job I have.

4. Why did you pick the sector you work in? I like to be boots on the ground working with the farmers and I feel that happens more in industry than academia.

5. What resources, if any, did you use on campus while you were looking and applying for jobs? The people around me!! It is because of Amanda Gevens and Erin Silva that I have the incredible job that I do. They have been resources for Organic Valley for years and they put in a good word for me.