

# Onion Crop Scout

## Recurring, Part-time, Seasonal (Summer)

### Oswego Co. and/or Wayne Co.

Onions are one of the most important vegetable crops grown in New York State. This crop is grown on muck soils rich in organic matter, which makes for one of the state's most exciting and intensive agricultural production systems. The Cornell Vegetable Program (CVP) collaborates with muck onion growers in all aspects of onion production to sustain the viability of this valuable crop. The Onion Scouting Program is the "beating heart" of CVP's onion research program: the effectiveness of grower spray programs are measured in real time through detailed field scouting. The scouting program ensures grower engagement, implementation of research-based recommendations, and early detection of emerging issues.

**We are looking for someone who appreciates agriculture to scout commercial onion fields in Oswego Co. and/or Wayne Co. for 13 weeks during the summer, maximum 19 hours/week, who would return to the seasonal position annually.**

**Employer:** Cornell University, Cornell Cooperative Extension - Cornell Vegetable Program

**Location:** Onion fields to be scouted are located near Oswego, Fulton and Pine Island in Oswego County and near Fairville, Sodus, Marion and Wolcott in Wayne County. Computer work will be remote (laptop provided). Data entry will be completed from home within New York State.

**Part-time & Seasonal: 1-3 days/week (maximum 19 hr/week) from first of June to end of August (13 weeks).** Note: There could be some flexibility in start and end dates, to work around when school is in session for teachers, for example.

**Recurring:** Return to the position every year.

**Pay:** \$18.50/hr. No benefits. Personal mileage will be reimbursed at the federal rate.

### Position Details:

As an Onion Scout for the Cornell Vegetable Program, you will independently scout 11 commercial onion fields in Oswego and Wayne Cos. every week from the first week of June until the end of August (13 weeks). The time it takes to scout a commercial onion field varies over the course of the season, with shorter times at the beginning of the season and longer times at peak season. Peak season is typically from early July through mid-late August.

- **Oswego Scouting Run:** 6 fields near Oswego, Fulton and Phoenix. Requires 6-7 hours at peak season to complete scouting including driving time, plus about 2 hours to complete data summary and preliminary reports.
- **Wayne Scouting Run:** 5 fields near Sodus, Fairville, Marion and Wolcott. Requires 5-6 hours at peak season to complete scouting including driving time, plus 2 hours to complete data summary and preliminary reports.

- Ideally, this position would cover both the Oswego and Wayne Co. scouting runs, but **we are open to hiring separate positions for each scouting run**. Our priority is to find someone who will return to scout onions every year.
- **Scouting an onion field includes:** Walking through 5-10 acres, documenting crop stage, species, size and density of weeds; visually assessing crop injury; checking a rain gauge; stopping at 30 randomly selected plants throughout the field to 1) count onion thrips, 2) count two types of Botrytis lesions (a leaf disease), and 3) record presence or absence of Stemphylium leaf blight (including lesion color and whether it occurs on green or necrotic leaf tissue) on each plant; and documentation of other observations such as stunted areas or other types of insect pests and diseases.
- **Scouting report:** For each field, the scouting data needs to be summarized. This entails calculating No./leaf and % incidence for pests and diseases, then entering this data into a preliminary report. The preliminary report needs to be submitted in a timely manner (ideally same day as fields are scouted) so that the report can be finalized by the CVP Extension Specialist (pesticide spray records and pesticide spray recommendations added) and sent to the growers. Growers use the scouting reports to inform their spray decisions, which enables an integrated approach to pest management.
- **Communicate with growers** via text to ensure that pesticides will not be applied in the fields that need to be scouted that day.
- **Represent Cornell University with integrity** when scouting and interacting with onion growers.
- **Training will include being accompanied by a veteran onion scout for the first season** with the intention of scouting independently in the second year, and ideally for several more years after.

## Qualifications:

- High School diploma and 6 months experience in an agriculture setting, or the equivalent combination of education and experience.
- Must be able to meet the travel requirements of the position and have reliable transportation as well as have and maintain a valid and unrestricted New York State driver's license.
- Must exercise sound and ethical judgment when acting on behalf of the University.

## Skills:

- Visual concentration and attention to detail are required to detect pests and pest damage.
- Able to work independently in collecting and summarizing data.
- Must be able to work outdoors in all types of weather.
- Proven experience in communicating effectively, both written and oral.
- **Preferred:** Experience working with plants, plant disease and other pest identification.

**For application (resume and cover letter) instructions and to apply:**

[http://tiny.cc/Onion\\_Scout\\_WDR\\_00043345](http://tiny.cc/Onion_Scout_WDR_00043345).

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