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**Teagasc PhD Walsh Scholarship Opportunity**

**“Precision Apple Crop load MANagement to improve fruit quality and to prevent alternate bearing in Irish orchards”**

Walsh Scholarships Ref Number 2025047

**Background**

Ireland’s apple industry faces significant challenges, including a cold spring, shorter growing seasons, and limited use of precision techniques such as thinning. These conditions contribute to inconsistent yields and lower fruit quality, impacting both profitability and sustainability. The Irish Precision Apple Crop Load Management project addresses these issues by focusing on innovative thinning methods and crop load management strategies tailored to Irish orchards.

This research aims to compare hand, mechanical, and chemical thinning methods and validate their effectiveness in improving fruit size, quality, and yield. It will also test the suitability of an early fruit set prediction model for Irish conditions, enabling proactive management decisions. These advancements will help mitigate alternate bearing and promote more sustainable apple production practices in Ireland.

**Requirements**

Applicants should have a strong academic background with a first- or upper-second-class honours degree or Master’s degree in Horticulture, Plant Science, or related disciplines. Experience in orchard management, plant physiology, or crop modelling is desirable. Candidates must demonstrate self-motivation, excellent organizational skills, and an eagerness to develop advanced technical expertise.

If English is not the applicant’s first language, evidence of English language proficiency is required to secure admission to UCD. Please refer to the web link to view the minimum English language requirement: [Minimum English Language Requirements - UCD Registry](https://www.ucd.ie/registry/prospectivestudents/admissions/policiesandgeneralregulations/generalrequirements/minimumenglishlanguagerequirements/).

**Further Information**

Are you enthusiastic about advancing scientific knowledge in apple production? Join us on an exciting journey with the PhD Walsh Scholarship, a collaborative venture between Teagasc and University College Dublin (UCD). As a PhD student, you will embark on a four-year structured programme at UCD, delving into cutting-edge research in Carlow, hosted by Teagasc Oak Park.

Under the expert guidance of Dr. Alberto Ramos Luz (Teagasc) and Dr. Syed Bilal Hussain (UCD), you will contribute to ground-breaking research in apple production. This is your chance to be part of a vibrant team of researchers dedicated to shaping the future of agriculture in Ireland.

However, that is not all! As a member of our interdisciplinary team, you will have access to a wealth of professional development opportunities, both at Teagasc and UCD. Do not miss out on this chance to grow your skills and make a real impact in the field of agricultural research. Apply now and be part of something extraordinary!

**Benefits:**

* The student will receive a stipend of €25,000 per annum.
* Contribution to fees up to a maximum of €6,000 per annum. Any fees in excess of this amount will be addressed by the university.

**Applicants should submit:**

To apply, please combine the following documents in a single PDF file and submit via email to Dr. Alberto Ramos Luz (alberto.ramosluz@teagasc.ie) and cc’ing Dr. Syed Bilal Hussain (syedbilal.hussain@ucd.ie).

1. A cover letter
2. A curriculum detailing relevant qualifications and experience
3. Contact details for at least two academic referees
4. A copy of the official transcript of university results for undergraduate and/or postgraduate degrees

Please use the subject line “Irish PACMAN ref 2025047” in your email.

**The application closing date** is Monday 31st, March 2025 (11:59 am Irish time).

Shortlisted candidates will be called to interview. For further information on the project, please contact Dr. Alberto Ramos Luz (alberto.ramosluz@teagasc.ie) and cc’ing Dr. Syed Bilal Hussain (syedbilal.hussain@ucd.ie).

**Project start date:** January 2026.

**Data Protection Statement**

Teagasc takes its legal obligations very seriously, as set out in the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR) and the Irish Data Protection Act 2018, to safeguard and protect your personal information in our possession. The personal information, which you disclose to us in this process, will only be used to assess your suitability; administer and register you for this scholarship. We will not keep your personal information for any longer than is necessary for those stated purposes.