

## GRADUATE STUDENT ASSISTANTSHIP (M.Sc.)

### Seed Predation by Beetles in Wild Blueberry Fields

**Supervision:** Dr. Chris Cutler and Dr. Nathan Boyd, Department of Environmental Sciences

**Location:** Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Truro, NS

**Project:** The role of beetles in biological control of weeds is well recognized but has been little studied in wild blueberries. A recent study of Carabidae (ground beetles) in wild blueberry fields has shown that a significant number of seed-eating species exist in this agroecosystem. Other investigations have found that insects will remove significant amounts of grass seeds in blueberry fields. The proposed research will test hypotheses concerning the potential of naturally occurring seed eating-beetles for biological control of perennial grasses in wild blueberry fields. The work will identify potential biocontrol agents, quantify feeding rates and habits, and provide an estimate of impacts in the field. The project will also examine the susceptibility of seed-eating beetles to pesticides commonly used in wild blueberry production.

**Qualifications:** Applicants must hold a honours B.Sc. degree (or equivalent) in biology, ecology, agriculture, or related discipline, and have a first class GPA (80%, A- or 3.7) in the last two years of undergraduate study. Experience and knowledge in entomology and pest management would be a valuable assets. Strong written and oral communication skills are a must.

**Stipend:** \$17,500 per year for two years, pending funding approval. Canadian citizens and permanent residents will be encouraged apply for a NSERC-PGS scholarship valued at \$17,300 per year.

**Start Date:** May 2012

For additional information on the research project, please contact: Dr. Chris Cutler, Department of Environmental Sciences, Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Box 550, Truro, NS B2N 5E3, Canada; e-mail: [ccutler@nsac.ca](mailto:ccutler@nsac.ca); Phone: 902-896-2471

**To Apply or for Graduate Program information:** For further information on the M.Sc. Program at NSAC and to submit the application, contact Marie Law at [mlaw@nsac.ca](mailto:mlaw@nsac.ca) or visit the NSAC web site at <http://nsac.ca/research/graduatestudies/>.

**The Master of Science program with a specialization in agriculture is offered by the NSAC in conjunction with Dalhousie University.**