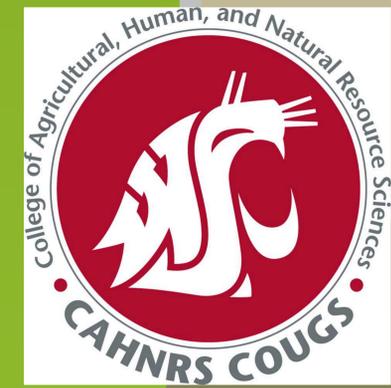


# Conservation Farming and Agroecology Lab Internship

Pullman, WA

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*World Class. Face to Face.*

## Introduction

The Conservation Farming and Agroecology Lab has become home to a plethora of soil scientists, entomologists and lab techs like myself. Many of the studies performed focus on soil science.

## Responsibilities

As a lab tech, I performed a variety of tasks:

- sieving soil, drying soil
- processing for %C and %N analysis
- training others how to perform protocols
- Aiding in scientific discussion.



Fig 3. the folded, 20 mg soil tins within their tray.



Fig 1. The microbalance used to weigh the 20 mg soil samples.



Fig 2. Stock, dried soil samples.

## Take-Aways and Personal growth:

- I refined a number of skills:
- communication through learning and teaching protocol.
- My focus and discipline was refined, as I worked without supervision at my own pace.
- My general knowledge and understanding of soil exploded. Though it is all around us, and so easy to take for granted, I learned it is one of the most complex, dynamic media on the face of the earth.

Most of all, I encountered a paradigm shift about science

The science I encountered through my lab work wasn't the science I had heard of back in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade—when I decided to become a scientist. It wasn't the kind of science I experienced in high-school, as we crafted hypothesis after hypothesis, learned how to write a proper conclusion and manage data in excel.

Altogether my work experience disillusioned me from the more glorified science I had understood as a child, while heightening my respect for what science is: a lot of hard work.

Every data point has hours of planning, working and revising. Fig 2 denotes a tote filled with processed soil samples and Fig 1 shows folded soil tins—20mg sub samples.

From the field to analysis, so many hours were put into each individual sample, that tote may as well be filled with gold.

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