

# UA Database for Metal Contaminants in Produce - Progress Report

##### Email

ors@arizona.edu

##### Project Manager Name

Owyn Stokes

##### Requested Metrics

# of people in core project team: 4 (1 faculty, 1 staff, and 2 students)
# of hours spent on this project: ~35
# of hours spent in the field: 0
# of people engaged with: 12
# of presentations: 0
# of samples collected/processed: 0

##### Project Accomplishments

1. Two students, Madison Morse and Averi Clement, have been hired on to the Plant-Soil-Environment lab's team expressly for the purpose of completing this project. They are set to start the week following spring break.
2. We met with Nat Schwark at the UA Community Garden to establish what can and cannot be sampled as well as a rough estimate for when there will be ample material to sample from. Nat also indicated that she would be willing to reach out to other gardeners on our behalf to both increase our potential sample size and number of people engaging with our project.
3. We have been in communication with Jason Deleeuw at Biosphere 2 to establish rule for entering their hydroponics facility. He will also be our point of contact for scheduling sampling days at Biosphere 2.

##### Next Steps

1. Complete onboarding process for our new hires, including lab safety training. To be completed March 11 - March 15.
2. Begin sampling at the UA Community Garden immediately following training. The sampling here will likely be the easiest to schedule as the garden is on campus. To begin the week of March 18 - March 22 at the latest. Time to completion depends on the volume of samples we are permitted to collect; however, it is extremely unlikely that sampling here will take longer than one week.
3. Begin Sampling at Biosphere 2. This process will begin whenever possible as scheduling will be restricted by our student's schedules. This should be completed no later than the week of March 25.

##### Challenges Faced

The hiring process for our new students has taken much longer than anticipated. Flyers for the position were sent out at the end of January with the majority of the applications coming in the same week (roughly January 24 - January 31). Interviews began on February 5th, but a family emergency took me out of town for six days starting that same week. Immediately following my return, we completed our remaining interviews and initiated the hiring process (February 16th). We ran into another roadblock here in the form of a two-week lead time imposed on new hires by the ENVS business office. Our new hires became official on March 1st; however, spring break took both students out of town. To manage the severe delay that this has caused, it is necessary to shrink our timeline resulting in more hours per week dedicated to this project. This will likely come in the form of our full-time staff member performing time consuming tasks such as sampling cleaning, drying, and processing outside of student workings.

##### Project Support

With more time being spent on the core tasks of this project (e.g. sample collection and processing), things like outreach may become harder to manage independently. If CSF could coordinate outreach events for us to participate in, we could use the time that would have been spent on planning for the aforementioned tasks.

##### Photo Link

https://emailarizona.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/lababk/ors/EcB9vd1Wt4pGqUPVRoLs9fkBVkrk29YZmdqq8I0NKQB0jw?e=R71QZN

##### Media/Links