MSc student position available in beef cattle handling, behaviour, and management

An exciting new position for a MSc student is available in the department of Production Animal Health at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Calgary (UCVM).

One of the welfare challenges in livestock production is the quality of human-animal interaction, and it is a principal factor influencing farm animal welfare and productivity. Several studies in dairy, swine, and few in the poultry industry have been done to evaluate the effect of animal handling training interventions on stockpeople’s work performance. The results are promising; those training interventions, involving knowledge about animal behavior and changes in human attitudes and behavior, positively influence animals' welfare, as indicated by behavioral, physiological, and productivity results. Despite being proved in other animal production systems and frequency emphasis on the importance of stockpeople training and its benefits, there is a scarcity of scientific studies on the topic within the beef industry.

Research Area: We are seeking a motivated graduate student interested in animal welfare, behaviour, and social science. With this study, we aim to identify animal management, training strategies, and producer perspectives in order to describe current practices used in western Canada and inform future studies focusing on the improvement of beef cattle handling and welfare.

Program and place of work: Funding is available for a MSc student in Veterinary Medicine through the Department of Production Animal Health in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (http://vet.ucalgary.ca/graduate/) at the University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Qualifications: The successful candidate should have a strong academic performance (3.0 GPA or above) and interest in Animal Welfare and Behavior and/or Social Science. At least some experience with animal agriculture is desired but not required if other strengths are demonstrated. Applicants whose primary language is not English are required to provide proof of proficiency in English.

Research activities with this MSc program will include literature review, survey development and implementation, on-farm behaviour observation, data management, quantitative and qualitative analysis, and manuscript preparation. Moreover, the graduate student will be expected to collaborate with other students and engage in animal research.

Salary: The student will receive a stipend of $25,000/yr (for 2 years). For outstanding students, internal top-up award opportunities are available on a competitive basis.

Start Date: The position would start September, 2022 (internal applications are due June 1st).

Application Interest: Please title the email: MSc position interested. Candidates should send by email (mariacamila.ceballos@ucalgary.ca): 1. a current curriculum vitae, 2. a scanned copy of transcript or listing of course grades, 3. names and contact information for two references, and 4. a cover letter describing your interest in the project.

For further information about the above MSc research opportunity please contact:

Dr. Maria Camila Ceballos (mariacamila.ceballos@ucalgary.ca)

University of Calgary, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.

General information on applying to the UCVM graduate student programme:

https://vet.ucalgary.ca/future-students/graduate-students