

PhD student position available in pig behaviour, welfare, and immunocastration research

An exciting new position for a PhD student is available in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Calgary (UCVM).

Research Area: We are seeking a motivated graduate student interested in swine behaviour, welfare, and production. This project focuses on understanding the effects of immunocastration (IC) in commercial pigs raised to increasingly heavy slaughter weights. Although IC provides well-documented production benefits, the effects of IC on heavyweight pigs reared under commercial conditions remain insufficiently explored. Optimizing the timing of the second IC dose is essential for maximizing welfare, growth, and carcass quality, while preventing potential negative consequences.

This PhD project will evaluate behavioural responses, welfare indicators, performance measures, and carcass outcomes in heavyweight IC pigs. The goal is to provide evidence-based recommendations to improve the management and welfare of pigs raised for the Canadian pork industry.

Program and place of work: Funding is available for a PhD student through the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (<http://vet.ucalgary.ca/graduate/>) at the University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Qualifications: The successful candidate should have a MSc degree in animal science, agriculture, or biology, with experience/interest in Animal Welfare and Behaviour. 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 (see the admissions requirements, including minimum GPA and proficiency in English, at this link: <https://vet.ucalgary.ca/future-students/graduate-students/admission-requirements>).

The successful candidate needs a strong aptitude for teamwork and has demonstrated good academic performance in their past programs. A driver's licence is necessary for data collection in the field.

Salary: The student will receive a stipend of \$36,000/yr, and it is expected that they will apply for external funding. For outstanding students, internal top-up award opportunities are available on a competitive basis.

Start Date: The position would start in May 2026 (internal applications are due March 1st).

Application Interest: Please title the email: PhD position interested. Candidates should send by email (mariacamila.ceballos@ucalgary.ca): **1.** a current *curriculum vitae*, **2.** a scanned copy of MSc transcript or listing of course grades, **3.** If English is not primary language, proof of proficiency in English (TOEFL, IELTS, MELAB) **4.** names and contact information of three references, and **5.** a cover letter describing your interest in the project. Applications are due February 1st.

For further information about the above opportunity, please contact:

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

University of Calgary, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.

Dr. Manuel Juárez (manuel.juarez@AGR.GC.CA)

Livestock Phenomics Scientist, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

General information on applying to the UCVM graduate student programme is on the following website.

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