

Post-doctoral Researcher

From July 1st, 2021 for a period of 2 years (80-100%) with the possibility of extension

Job Description

We are seeking a highly motivated scientist to work with team members on a project assessing individual behaviour patterns of laying hens in relation to epigenetic profiles, social associations, and health status. Generated data will include continuous monitoring of individual hen's movement profile over the entire laying period within a commercial setting. Specific tasks will include a combination of data analysis, project planning and organizing, and on-site health assessments. The work is part of a larger effort using novel behavioural assessments to improve genetic selection for cage-free systems and offers many opportunities for collaboration and developing one's own research profile and interests. The role will also include assisting team members in other projects including housing requirements for geese and other poultry and rabbit species.

Project Background

The Center for Proper Housing of Poultry and Rabbits ([ZTHZ](https://tinyurl.com/xxt83m39), <https://tinyurl.com/xxt83m39>) has been investigating the occurrence of highly individualized behaviours ([see](https://tinyurl.com/11163tg6) <https://tinyurl.com/11163tg6>) and their relationship to various aspects of Animal Welfare including: [bone fracture](https://tinyurl.com/g26h3e0t) ([<https://tinyurl.com/g26h3e0t>](https://tinyurl.com/g26h3e0t)), [neurogenesis](https://tinyurl.com/yl233udm) ([<https://tinyurl.com/yl233udm>](https://tinyurl.com/yl233udm)), and the [epigenome](https://tinyurl.com/i9poi86o) ([<https://tinyurl.com/i9poi86o>](https://tinyurl.com/i9poi86o)). The project is an extension of our continuing effort to explore the source of the observed variation across and within individuals as well as the implications for animal welfare, health, and sustainable production.

Our research group

The ZTHZ is a collaboration between the University of Bern and the Swiss Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office. We conduct studies on a wide range of topics within our focus species of poultry and rabbits ranging from fundamental research of cognitive development to more applied projects such as appropriate feeder space, causes and means to reduce keel bone fracture, and optimizing group housing conditions. Our research group has access to unique [facilities](#) that allow for highly detailed and focused scientific investigations within a commercially relevant barn that allows scientific findings to be more readily applied to actual, on-farm conditions. The group currently has five PhD students that are supported by four scientists, four technicians, and a full time dedicated animal care team.

Qualifications

Required:

- University degree and doctorate in biology or related disciplines
- Methodological knowledge and research experience in the field of behaviour
- Willingness to perform research on poultry
- Capacity to work independently and within a team

Desirable

- Experience with analysis of complex and large datasets, including programming in R, Python, etc. will be considered highly desirable
- Working with farm animals, including poultry
- Ability to cooperate with scientists from different disciplines
- Proof of successful publication activity
- German language fluency
- Drivers license

To apply

We are a modern, internationally oriented research institute where the compatibility of work and family is one of our central concerns. The group is committed to increasing the representation of women, especially in management positions. Women are therefore strongly encouraged to apply. To apply, please send the following documents as a single, combined PDF file to Ms. Lilian Smith (lilian.smith@vetsuisse.unibe.ch):

- A one-page letter of motivation describing your background and interest for the position
- A 2 page academic CV
- Three references who can be contacted whom are familiar with your work experience

For further information please contact Dr. Michael Toscano
(michael.toscano@vetsuisse.unibe.ch)

We will begin reviewing applications on April 1st, 2021, and then conduct interviews shortly thereafter with the final selection by May 1st, 2021.