

## PhD assessing risk factors and likely causes of toe pecking in commercial laying hens

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Applicants are sought for a PhD candidate as part of a funded three-year research program to investigate toe pecking within Switzerland. Toe pecking is a welfare problem that appears to be intensifying and represents a major problem for hens within cage-free housing where up to 50% of the flock may be affected. Despite the extent of the problem, most information collected to date is anecdotal making the development of interventions difficult. The project will serve to identify potential risk factors as well as whether toe pecking results from self- or allo-pecking, or a combination of both. The candidate will be involved in all aspects of the project including: experimental design, project coordination, data analysis, and presentations at conferences and peer-reviewed journal articles. The project will be based at the Center for Proper Housing of Poultry and Rabbits within the Division of Animal Welfare at the University of Bern [http://www.tierschutz.vetsuisse.unibe.ch/content/index\\_eng.html](http://www.tierschutz.vetsuisse.unibe.ch/content/index_eng.html) with collaborators from the Netherlands and Germany and the facilities of the Aviforum (<https://www.aviforum.ch/Forschung/Versuchsstaelle/legehennenstall-1.aspx>). The salary will be based on regulations of the Swiss National Science Foundation.

### **Characteristics that will be considered when reviewing applications include:**

#### **Required**

- MSc degree (or equivalent) in relevant discipline (e.g., biology, animal science, veterinary science, or psychology)
- Demonstrated experience in research
- Driving License (B Führerausweis) (university cars are provided for the project)
- Good knowledge of spoken and written German and English

#### **Highly valued**

- Experience and interest in ethology, behavioural ecology, animal welfare (or project related experience)
- Knowledge of statistics including those appropriate for epidemiology
- Experience in R programming for statistics
- Active member of relevant societies, attendance of relevant conferences, letters of support
- Good knowledge of spoken French

To apply, please send a single PDF containing the following:

- 1-2 page cover letter describing your background (particularly highlighting the characteristics above) and interest in the position
- CV detailing your education and research experience without a photo
- contact information for at least two references.

Applications will be accepted until January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023, and interviews will be conducted in February 2023 either via teleconference or in person if possible. We hope for the student to formally begin the position in March 2023.

Questions about the position should be directed to Dr. Michael Toscano ([Michael.toscano@unibe.ch](mailto:Michael.toscano@unibe.ch)) while application materials should be sent to Ms. Masha Marincek ([masha.marincek@unibe.ch](mailto:masha.marincek@unibe.ch)).