Do you want to work with behavior and welfare of pigs?

PhD scholarship within ethology and animal welfare

About the position
The Department of Animal and Aquacultural sciences, Faculty of Biosciences at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) has a vacant 3-year PhD-position related to pig behaviour and welfare. At present we know little about what the optimal density and group size in fattening pigs in terms of achieving high productivity, good welfare standards and efficient management routines. There is currently a great need to evaluate both housings systems, feeding systems, welfare status on individual level and herd management, and how all these factors influence meat quality in the end of the production chain. The IPN project “Griseløftet” in close collaboration with Nortura, and the part of the project for the PhD, will be an important step towards the goal of getting more knowledge, which is also highly relevant for future regulations. In addition to group size and animal density, we also know that environmental enrichment has substantial effects on farm animal welfare, fear towards humans and cognitive abilities.

Our present project is unique, as it combines a large survey in commercial herds with experimental work containing all these factors of the environment: housing, management, individual welfare indicators and meat quality in the end of the production. The survey will give an overview of the most important factors for welfare and productivity in fattening pigs and create new hypothesis for experimental work that will be the main focus for the PhD candidate.

The PhD candidate will work in a team with other researchers, master students, and consultants from Nortura.

The PhD project will be conducted in close collaboration with Nortura SA, and the position will be included in Nortura’s ongoing research activities on pig welfare.

Main tasks
1. Field survey in 80 commercial fattening pig units: A recording scheme for farm visits is already made in the project “Griseløftet” to address welfare, productivity, management and meat quality in Norwegian pig units. One of the topics raised by the new PhD candidate from this data set, will be the effects of animal density, group size and environmental enrichment on behavioral and physical welfare indicators, weight development and meat quality parameters, group size and use of environmental enrichment.

2. Experiments will be conducted in selected farms to study the specific effects of animal densities combined with large vs. small group size on behavior and welfare. Small vs. large animal density will in the next step be combines with different sources of environmental enrichment to study the interactive effects of space and access to rooting stimuli on behavior and welfare until slaughter.

The successful candidate is expected to enter a plan for the progress of the work towards a PhD degree during the first months of the appointment, with a view to completing a doctorate within the PhD scholarship period.

Qualification requirements, desired experiences, knowledge and personal qualities
The successful applicant must meet the conditions defined for admission to a PhD programme at NMBU. The applicant must have an academically relevant education corresponding to a five-year Norwegian degree programme, where 120 credits are at master's degree level. The applicant must have a documented strong academic background from previous studies and be able to document proficiency in both written and oral English. For more detailed information on the admission criteria please see the PhD Regulations and the relevant PhD programme description.

The applicant must document expertise and interest in the research subject.

Required Academic qualifications
- Master degree in ethology
- Some knowledge about farm animals

The following experiences and skills will be emphasized:
- Have an understanding of experimental set-up and statistics

You need to:
- Be proficient in English, both written and spoken
- Have good communication skills, be goal directed and have a high motivation to work
- Handle experimental work as well as data collection from farms
- Be a team-worker
- Be able to collaborate with the pig industry

Remuneration and information
The position is placed in government pay scale position code 1017 PhD. Fellow. PhD. Fellows are normally placed in pay grade 54 (NOK 479,600,-) on the Norwegian Government salary scale upon employment and follow ordinary merit regulations.

Employment is conducted according to national guidelines for University and Technical College PhD scholars.

For further information, please contact professor Inger Lise Andersen

E-mail: inger-lise.andersen@nmbu.no; phone +47 90083226

Information for PhD applicants and general Information to applicants

Application
To apply online for this vacancy, please click on the 'Apply for this job' button above. This will route you to the University's Web Recruitment System, where you will need to register an account (if you have not already) and log in before completing the online application form.

Application deadline: 22nd March 2020.

Applications should include (electronically) a letter of intent, curriculum vitae, full publication list, copies of degree certificates and transcripts of academic records (all certified), and a list of two persons who may act as references (with phone numbers and e-mail addresses). Publications should be included electronically within the application deadline. The relevant NMBU Department may require further documentation, e.g. proof of English proficiency.

Printed material which cannot be sent electronically should be sent by surface mail to the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Faculty of Biosciences P.O. Box 5003, NO-1432 Ås, within 22nd March 2020. Please quote reference number 20/00962.

If it is difficult to judge the applicant's contribution for publications with multiple authors, a short description of the applicant’s contribution must be included.

About BIOVIT
The Faculty of Biosciences is organized into two departments: Department of Animal and Aquacultural Sciences and Department of Plant Sciences.

The main objective of the Faculty of Biosciences is to contribute to the development of sustainable agriculture and food production systems through basic and applied research on plants and animals including fish (aquaculture). The faculty houses Centre for Integrative Genetics (CIGENE) and the research center for Research-based Innovation (SFI) - Foods of Norway.

The faculty is responsible for bachelor- and master programmes in Biology, Animal Science and Plant Science, and international master programmes in Genome Science, Agroecology, Plant Science, Aquaculture, Animal Breeding Genetics and Feed Manufacturing Technology. PhD programmes include Animal Science and Aquaculture, and Plant Sciences. There are currently 480 bachelor and master students, and 90 PhD students, enrolled in these programmes. The faculty has approximately 220 permanent and temporary scientific employees, including technicians, and 18 administrative positions.

NMBU has a special responsibility for research and education that ensures the basis of life for future generations.

Sustainability is rooted in everything we do and we provide knowledge for life.

NMBU has 1700 employees and 5200 students and is organized in seven faculties. NMBU has a campus in Ås and in Oslo. In the autumn of 2020 we are co-located on Ås. Further information on NMBU is available at www.nmbu.no

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