

**Post-Doctoral Position in Animal Welfare & Precision Livestock Farming
Pathology and Population Science
Nr Potters Bar, Hertfordshire
Competitive Salary
Duration: 15 months**

We invite applications for a full time Post-Doctoral researcher in Animal Welfare and Precision Livestock Farming within the Animal Welfare Science and Ethics (AWSE) team based at the Hawkshead Campus of the Royal Veterinary College.

Poultry meat birds (aka broilers) are bred for high muscle yields but require very careful husbandry. Current poultry monitoring technologies operate at flock level and do not provide high resolution data collection and analytics required by modern efficient poultry producers to make significant performance gains. RoboChick proposes a multi-functional robotic system, autonomously collecting data within a poultry shed, to target point-of-need/point-of-care management without compromise to bird welfare. This feasibility project is multi-disciplinary, bringing together the livestock-oriented engineering expertise of Harper Adams University (HAU), the innovative robotic engineering skills of Ross Robotics (RRL), the commercial poultry management skills of Applied Poultry Ltd (APL), and the animal welfare science and ethology skills of the Royal Veterinary College (RVC). The project will integrate these skills to investigate the feasibility and specify a highly functional robotic system for poultry production monitoring and management.

You will design, perform and analyse and write up experiments associated with the development of an autonomous robotic sensor platform, performing tasks in poultry houses. The main elements of research will be (1) understanding robot-bird interaction; (2) characterising impacts on animal welfare and (3) achieving the integration of sensor technology with the platform. You will be expected to engage actively with the industrial partners e.g. in engineering and livestock farming, as well as contribute to the AWSE research activities. You will be seconded to Harper Adams University for up to 3 months and work on commercial poultry farms.

We seek an enthusiastic and dedicated candidate with a PhD and preferably a period of postdoctoral training in animal welfare, ethology and / or livestock engineering science, with an interest and affinity in all areas. You will have some familiarity with or understanding of sensor technology and a willingness to engage with this. You will hold excellent organisational and communication skills, thrive in a collaborative team environment, work supportively in teams and hold an ability to disseminate results to stakeholders. You will work within in a vibrant, enthusiastic and inclusive academic group, playing an essential role in delivery of outstanding research and engagement activities. You will demonstrate excellence in research and a collegiate approach to working. You will hold a valid driving license to enable travel to and from the commercial farms.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact Dr Theo Demmers (Project Leader; tdemmers@rvc.ac.uk; 01707 666945) and/or Dr Siobhan Abeyesinghe (Head of Group; sabeyesinghe@rvc.ac.uk), both in the RVC Animal Welfare Science and Ethics team.

For further information and to apply on-line please visit our website: www.rvc.ac.uk

Job reference XXXXX

Interview date to be confirmed

We promote equality of opportunity and diversity within the workplace and welcome applications from all sections of the community.