

## MSc POSITION – January 2012

### SWINE BEHAVIOUR AND WELFARE

**Duration: 2 years, from January 2011**

**Subject: Impact of early experience with humans on human-animal relationship in piglets**

**Description:** This study is part of a research program on swine behaviour and welfare. Animal welfare is a major issue in swine production. Human-being and its relationships with animals play a major role in farm animal welfare. The animals' first experiences early in life can greatly affect their future relationship with humans. The study of the human-animal relationship in pigs mainly focussed on fattening or breeding animals but not on young piglets. Therefore, this project aims to determine the impact of early experience with humans on piglet's reactivity to humans.

The objective of the project is to study different aspects of the human-animal relationship in piglets: memory of past experiences, recognition of humans, and impact of the affective valence of the experience. The student will have to first do a literature review of the existing knowledge on the subject in pigs and other farm species and then to carry out the experimental protocol, collect and analyse behavioural data, and finally write reports and scientific articles. The student will be supervised by a research scientist (Nicolas Devillers, AAFC), a professor (Renée Bergeron, University of Guelph) and a technician in ethology. The training will be located at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Dairy and Swine R&D Centre in Sherbrooke (Quebec). The student will have to be registered in a MSc program in Animal Science at the University Laval (Québec) or the University of Guelph (Ontario). The project is done in collaboration with ethologists from research institutions and universities in France and Brazil.

**Candidate skills:**

- Bachelor degree in animal science, animal biology or veterinary science
- Motivation for the study of animal welfare and behaviour
- Knowledge of animal sciences, especially animal behaviour
- Basic knowledge of computer (Pack Office) and statistics analysis
- Good writing skills in English
- Practical experience with pigs or farm animals would be an asset
- Practical experience in ethology would be an asset
- French speaking would be an asset

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**For information, please contact Nicolas DEVILLERS.**

**For application, please send a CV, a motivation letter and contact information for two references to Nicolas Devillers before November 14<sup>th</sup>.**



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