PhD Research Assistantship in Poultry Welfare

**General:** As part of the *Food From Thought* research investment in sustainable food production, a graduate research assistantship is available through the University of Guelph, to study the welfare and productivity of slow growing strains of broiler chickens. This is a multi-disciplinary project, including aspects of behaviour, welfare, nutrition, food safety and carcass quality. The assistantship is for a 3 year Ph.D. in poultry welfare from the University of Guelph. Student must be eligible for graduate admission to the Departments of Animal Biosciences at the University of Guelph. The assistantship includes an annual PhD stipend for three years. Canadian citizens and permanent residents will also be encouraged to apply for an NSERC scholarship.

**Project:** As a protein source, chicken production is more sustainable than beef or pork in terms of water consumption, energy requirements, and land use, and with the burgeoning human population, chickens are predicted to dominate global meat production by 2020. Improvements in genetic selection over the past fifty years have resulted in a larger, leaner, more efficient chicken. However, this level of production comes at a cost, as modern strains of broiler chickens are unable to perform natural and motivated behaviour due to the discord between their body weight, leg strength, and cardiovascular system, and their high level of productivity often necessitates significant antibiotic use. There is growing concern that current genetic strains of broiler chickens are not suited for the environments in which they are raised. There is increasing consumer preference for poultry products from birds raised without antibiotics and fed all-vegetable diets, in conjunction with increasing attention being paid to slow-growing broiler chickens. Major food service companies, retailers and restaurants have also recently made commitments to use slow-growing genotypes. Yet, little is known about the use of these slow-growing genotypes in traditional production without outdoor access. Therefore, we propose a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to studying slow-growing broiler chickens.

**Qualifications:** Applicants must hold or expect to hold (at the time of the start of award) a Master’s degree (or equivalent) in biological sciences, preferably in animal welfare science, avian biology and/or poultry science and must be admissible to Graduate Studies, University of Guelph and the Department of Animal Biosciences. Selection will be based on academic achievement, research experience, and letters of reference. The successful applicant must be resourceful and autonomous, have strong written and oral communication skills, and have a valid driver’s license.
Start date: May or September 2017

How to apply: Please send a Cover Letter indicating your motivation and qualifications, along with a CV, a copy of your university transcripts, and a sample of your scientific writing to Dr Stephanie Torrey, storrey@uoguelph.ca

Deadline: March 17, 2017, or until filled.

Contact information: For further information and to apply for this position, contact:

Dr Stephanie Torrey
University of Guelph
Department of Animal Biosciences
Guelph, ON
Canada N1G 2W1
Email: storrey@uoguelph.ca Phone (519) 824 4120 x53660

For general information about the graduate program at the University of Guelph, contact Wendy McGrattan, Graduate Program Assistant [E-mail: wmcgratt@uoguelph.ca], or visit the department website, http://www.aps.uoguelph.ca/. For more information on the behaviour and welfare group at the University of Guelph, visit the group’s website at: http://www.uoguelph.ca/abw/. For more information on the Food From Thought, visit the website http://foodinstitute.ca/food-from-thought/