



Jobbnorge ID: 299417

Deadline: 5/1/2026

Website: <http://www.nmbu.no>

Scope: Fulltime

Duration: Fixed Term

FitPig explores if daily physical activity and free access to hay can improve pig health and welfare

PhD scholarship within pig health and welfare

About the position

At the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU), Department of Paraclinical Sciences, The Nutrition and Health and Pharmacology research units, a PhD-position is available within the project FitPig; How physical exercise and provision of hay in the diet improves pig minds, guts, and welfare. We are now seeking an outstanding candidate with a background in veterinary medicine or other relevant biological sciences to join our team. This is a term position with a duration of 3 years.

The successful PhD candidate will work in a team with several researchers/professors including international collaborators and another PhD at the Faculty of Biosciences, Department of Animal and Aquacultural science. The main goal of the project is to identify reliable behavioral and physiological markers that signal good welfare and robust gut-brain health. The study investigates how physical activity and hay shape behavior, cognition, gut function, and neuroplasticity of the brain. Because gut health affects mood, stress, and cognition through the so-called gut-brain axis, the project combines behavioral and physiological measurements with microscopic analysis of gut tissues. This integrated approach will reveal how enrichment impacts both body and brain with great relevance also to human health. While being a basic research project, insights from the project could guide the livestock industry towards more science-based enrichment practices.

The project is divided into four main parts:

- Test how hay and physical activity affect behavior, social interactions, cognition, and welfare.
- Test how hay and physical activity influence physiological stress (via cortisol), gut inflammation, and the prevalence of stomach ulcers.
- **Test how hay and physical activity influence** brain plasticity in regions linked to emotion and memory (the frontal cortex and hippocampus).
- Integrate all data to uncover how enrichment influences the complex connections between brain, gut, and behavior.

The applicant is made aware that an application for a PhD position at NMBU is at the same time an application for admission to a PhD programme at the institution. The documentation that is necessary to ensure that the admission requirements are met must be uploaded as an attachment.

We look forward to your application. Help push the boundaries of welfare research and generate knowledge with impact far beyond the lab.

Main tasks

- Plan and conduct pig experiments, behavioural observations, behavioural tests, taking saliva and blood samples for cortisol analysis, and statistical analysis of results.
- Collaborate closely with the PhD that will be hired at the Department of Animal and Aquacultural Science on the same project and the rest of the project team.
- Process research data and publish findings as scientific publications and a PhD thesis.
- Complete mandatory courses for the PhD program.
- Present and discuss research at internal seminars, workshops, and international conferences.

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.

Competence

To be eligible for the position, the candidate must meet the requirements for admission to one of the PhD programmes at NMBU.

Admission to a PhD programme requires that the applicant has a relevant academic background; a master's degree, a cand.med.vet. degree, or equivalent qualification, in accordance with the descriptions in the national qualifications framework. The applicant must have a documented strong academic background relevant to the position and be able to demonstrate proficiency in English, both written and spoken. For more detailed information about the admission criteria, [PhD Regulations and the relevant PhD programme description](#).

Required qualifications

- Relevant academic education at a higher degree level from a university or college (a master's degree, a cand.med.vet. degree, or equivalent qualification). Relevant backgrounds include animal or veterinary science, biology, ethology, nutrition, neurophysiology or other.

- Documented strong academic results.
- Documented proficiency in English, both written and spoken

Applicants completing their degree during spring 2026 may also apply but cannot assume the position until the degree has been completed

Qualifications considered an advantage

- Documented experience of working with farm animals
- Comprehensive understanding of and interest in physiology, ethology and animal welfare
- Experience with data management and statistical analysis. Strong interest in data analysis and statistical methods will be emphasized.
- Interest in the research topics of environmental enrichment, physical activity and gut-brain axis

Personal qualities

- Strong motivation to work within this field and to complete a PhD as well as conduct the practical tasks in the project
- Ability to work independently and systematically as well as be a good team worker.
- Good communication, collaboration and social skills.
- Ability to respond positively to professional feedback and supervision.
- Structured and solution-oriented, with the ability to manage various tasks and meet deadlines.
- Critical thinking skills.
- Flexibility regarding working hours is required, particularly in connection with the practical components of the project. The candidate must be comfortable handling pigs
- Willingness to present at international conferences and publish papers.

Remuneration and further information

The position is placed in [position code](#) 1017 PhD. Fellow, (NOK 550.800 - 660.000). PhD candidates are normally placed at salary level NOK 550.800. This is a temporary position with a duration of 3 years. Seniority promotion in the position.

Admission to a PhD program is a prerequisite for appointment to the PhD scholarship position.

This position is a training/educational position. Grant-funded travel abroad is not yet planned for this position but may be expected.

Employment is conducted according to national guidelines for University and Technical College PhD scholars, and in accordance with the Civil Servant Act, the Security Act, and the Export Control Act.

Interested in learning more about the position? We are happy to tell you more about life on campus. Contact associate professor and main supervisor Janicke Nordgreen, e-mail janicke.nordgreen@nmbu.no or associate professor Nicole Frost Nyquist, e-mail nicole.nyquist@nmbu.no.

[Information for PhD applicants](#) and [general information to applicants](#)

Application

Send application electronically via the link "Apply for this job" at the top of this page. 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: 01.05.2026

Your CV must be entered in Jobbnorge's CV form and not just included as an attachment. This is in order to be able to comply with the regulations to the Public Administration Act §15.

In the application, the candidate must confirm that information and documentation (in the form of attachments) submitted via the job application can also be used by NMBU in a possible admission process. Applicants invited for an interview are expected to present original diplomas and certificates.

Documents that cannot be sent electronically are sent in triplicate by ordinary mail marked still.nr. 26/03934-1 to NMBU, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, P.O. Box 5003, NO-1432 Ås, within 25.04.2026.

The following documents must be attached to the application:

- Motivation letter
- CV
- Certified copies of relevant academic diplomas and certificates. (i.e. Diploma, transcript. Diploma supplement for both bachelor and master). Diplomas, transcripts and diploma supplements that are not in Norwegian or English must be uploaded in the original language. An English translation of these documents must also be attached.
- Applicants from universities outside Norway are kindly requested to send a diploma supplement, or a similar document, which describes in detail the study program and grading system.

The Faculty of Veterinary medicine has its own webpage about requirements for applicants with foreign education: [Utenlandsk utdanning, NMBU](#)

- Documentation of proficiency in written and oral English in accordance with [Forskrift for graden philosophiae doctor \(ph.d.\) ved Norges miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet - Lovdata](#)
- Additional relevant documentation of professional knowledge (for example, list of scientific works). 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.
- Name and contact information for two references.

About the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at NMBU is the country's only veterinary professional education and provide expertise in veterinary medicine and veterinary public health. The Faculty educates veterinarians, animal nurses and doctoral students in Veterinary Science and researches in veterinary medicine and related biomedical fields. We have 500 students and 430 employees.

The faculty consists of the departments of Preclinical Sciences and Pathology, Paraclinical Sciences, Production Animal Clinical Sciences and Companion Animal Clinical Sciences. We also run the Animal Hospital, which is closely linked to our research and education, and receives patients from all over the country.

The Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)

NMBU skal bidra til å sikre fremtidens livsgrunnlag gjennom fremragende forskning, utdanning, formidling og innovasjon. Vi har landets mest fornøyde universitetsstudenter, som får forskningsbasert utdanning i et unikt studentmiljø. Våre kandidater får med seg høy kompetanse på tverrfaglig samarbeid og er populære i arbeidsmarkedet.

NMBU har internasjonalt ledende forskningsmiljøer innen flere fag. Sammen med våre partnere i samfunns- og næringslivet bidrar vi til å løse noen av de største samfunnsutfordringene i vår tid. Vi satser på innovasjon, formidling og entreprenørskap fordi vi mener disse utfordringene best løses med felles innsats.

Vi mener at et godt arbeidsmiljø preges av mangfold. Vi oppfordrer kvalifiserte kandidater til å søke uavhengig av kjønn, funksjonsevne, kulturell bakgrunn eller om du har vært utenfor arbeidslivet en periode. Vi vil legge arbeidsplassen til rette for personer med nedsatt funksjonsevne.

Nærmere opplysninger om NMBU finnes på www.nmbu.no

Additional information

Contact persons:

- Janicke Nordgreen, Associate professor and main supervisor
Phone: | E-mail: janicke.nordgreen@nmbu.no
- Nicole Frost Nyquist, Associate professor
Phone: | E-mail: nicole.nyquist@nmbu.no

Place of service:

Universitetstunet 3 1430 Ås (Ås Municipality)