

JOB OFFER

Impact of improved social and physical environments on the mental states and welfare of pigs on farms

The French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment (INRAE) is a public research establishment. It is a community of 12,000 people with more than 200 research units and 42 experimental units located throughout France. The institute is among the world leaders in agricultural and food sciences, in plant and animal sciences, and is 11th in the world in ecology and environment. INRAE's main goal is to be a key player in the transitions necessary to address major global challenges. In the face of the increase in population, climate change, scarcity of resources and decline in biodiversity, the institute develops solutions for multiperformance agriculture, high quality food and sustainable management of resources and ecosystems.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND ACTIVITIES

■ **Working environment:** You will be hosted within the “Physiology, Environment and Genetics for Animals and Livestock Systems” joint research unit (UMR PEGASE) located in Saint-Gilles, near Rennes. You will be joining the Bienetre team (Welfare, health and adaptation of farm animals), but will also be working in close collaboration with scientists at the national (INRAE UMR PRC) and international (IRTA, WUR, etc.) levels as part of the European partnership on Animal Health and Welfare ([EUP AH&W](#)).

The PEGASE joint research unit (INRAE and Institut Agro Rennes-Angers) conducts research on animal biology and farming systems with the ultimate goal of improving the sustainability and competitiveness of animal production systems. Specifically, the aim is to understand how animals and farming systems adapt to current and future conditions and challenges. The research unit has facilities at three sites in or near Rennes, and comprises five research teams working with complementary disciplines, such as behaviour, physiology, genetics, nutrition and systems analysis. The research unit has access to an experimental pig farm located on the Saint-Gilles site (near Rennes) and is fully equipped to conduct behavioural studies (cameras, microphones, recorders, and behavioural analysis software such as The Observer).

■ **The research project** is part of a European partnership on Animal Health and Welfare ([EUP AH&W](#)). One of the objectives of the partnership is to identify and validate animal-based measures for assessing affective states and positive welfare in farm animals (cf. [joint internal project SOA13 - OO4 Action 1](#)). In the project, you will study the behavioural, cognitive and physiological responses of piglets reared in improved social and physical environments (e.g. social stability, access to a play room, positive contacts with humans,) which are likely to positively affect their mental state and welfare. This project will involve conducting experiments in pigs under controlled conditions, and carrying out behavioural tests and observations in the field and on video recordings. One of ultimate aims of the project will be to identify potential behavioural, physiological or cognitive indicators of positive mental states and welfare in pigs.

■ **Your missions:**

- Design and conduct experiments to evaluate the behavioural, physiological and cognitive responses of piglets to contrasting physical and social environmental conditions;
- Collect and analyse behavioural, physiological and cognitive data from field experiments, write scientific articles and present results at conferences;

- Participate in videoconference exchanges with project collaborators at national (Ludovic Calandreau and Vitor Ferreira, UMR PRC INRAE) and international (Antoni Dalmau, IRTA, Spain; Allyson Ipema, WUR, Netherlands) levels. A short stay at UMR PRC of INRAE may be considered to analyse data collected on laying hens.

▪ **Specific conditions of work activity:** Experiments will take place in the “Physiology and Phenotyping of Pigs” experimental unit (UE 3P) based on the same site as UMR PEGASE, in Saint-Gilles, near Rennes. UE 3P offers controlled animal housing conditions (temperature, luminosity, etc.) and access to behavioural testing facilities.

TRAINING AND SKILLS REQUIRED

- PhD in Animal Behavior or related field;
- Knowledge and expertise in animal ethology and cognition;
- Proven experience in designing and conducting animal experiments, preferably with farm animals (certification to conduct animal experiments required);
- Strong scientific writing and oral communication skills in English. Basic knowledge of French, or willingness to learn, is appreciated – especially to facilitate work in experimental facilities;
- Motivation, enthusiasm, patience, and ease in handling animals, along with excellent organizational skills.

INRAE'S LIFE QUALITY

By joining our team, you will benefit from (depending on the type of contract):

- Up to 30 days of annual leave, plus 15 days "Reduction of Working Time" (for full time positions);
- [Parenting support](#), including CESU childcare and leisure services;
- Opportunities for skills development systems, such as [training](#) and [career advice](#);
- [Social support](#), including counseling, social assistance, and loan options;
- [Holiday and leisure services](#), such as holiday vouchers and accommodation at preferential rates;
- Access to [sports and cultural activities](#);
- Collective catering services.

↘ Reception modalities

- **Unit:** Physiologie, Environnement et Génétique pour l'Animal et les Systèmes d'Élevage
- **Postal code + City:** 35590 Saint-Gilles
- **Type of contract:** Fixed-term contract
- **Contract duration:** 12 months, renewable
- **Starting date:** Between 01/09/2023 and 01/01/2024
- **Remuneration:** 2815€ à 3135€ gross per month, depending on experience

↘ How to apply

Please send your motivation letter and CV to :
Céline Tallet and Caroline Clouard-Mésange

- **By e-mail:** celine.tallet@inrae.fr and caroline.clouard@inrae.fr
 - **By post:** Céline Tallet
INRAE – UMR PEGASE
16 Le Clos
35590 Saint-Gilles, France
- ✘ **Deadline for applications:** 01/12/2024