



University College Dublin
An Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath



PhD opportunity

A new vision for dairy cattle lameness

Project description

This PhD position offers an exciting and novel opportunity to help to tackle dairy cattle lameness, one of the most significant welfare concerns in dairy production globally.

In recent years a growing body of research has led to the conclusion that current lameness detection methods based on human visual assessment severely lack sensitivity for even the most severe lameness lesions and suffer from poor inter and intra-scorer variability. Although many new precision livestock technologies have been applied to the detection of lameness, all are based on limited human scoring.

This project will seek to use machine vision coupled with unsupervised predictive modeling to re-imagine lameness detection and identify cows requiring treatment and to use this new technology to predict the future occurrence of lameness and associated changes in animal performance.

The successful candidate will join our excellent and dynamic research team based in UCD school of Veterinary Medicine and will collaborate closely with colleagues in the school of Mathematics and Statistics and VistaMilk more broadly.

Requirements

The successful applicant must hold a primary degree (level 8; 2H1 or higher) or Masters degree (level 9) in an appropriate discipline (Computer Science, Statistics, Veterinary Science, Agricultural Science or similar). The successful candidate should be highly motivated. The candidate must be proficient in both written and spoken English. A full EU (B) driving license is required. Previous researcher experience, proficient coding skills in Python and data management are considered highly advantageous.

Award

This prestigious four-year PhD Scholarship offers a generous annual stipend of €25,000, along with a fee contribution of €5,500 per annum. This funding is provided as part of the VistaMilk Research

Ireland research centre. The Scholarship will start on the 1st of January 2026. Applicants are asked to consult UCD's EU fee assessment eligibility:

<https://www.ucd.ie/students/fees/eufeeassessment/>

About UCD:

UCD is one of Europe's leading research-intensive universities; an environment where undergraduate education, masters and PhD training, research, innovation and community engagement form a dynamic spectrum of activity. The international standing of UCD has grown in recent years; it is currently ranked within the top 1% of higher education institutions world-wide. UCD is Ireland's most globally engaged university with over 38,000 students drawn from 152 countries, including over 5,000 students based at locations outside of Ireland. The University's main Dublin campus occupies an extensive parkland estate of 133 hectares and offers world-leading facilities, including Lyons estate research farm.

About Vistamilk:

This position is funded as part of the VistaMilk Research Ireland funded centre. As members of this centre, successful applicants will join a large group of postdoctoral researchers and PhD students tackling challenges in cattle production from the soil, pasture, animals and food in 13 different research institutes all across Ireland. More information on Vistamilk can be found at www.vistamilk.ie

Equality, diversity and inclusion:

UCD and Vistamilk embody the values of equality, diversity and inclusion and embeds these fairness principles into all aspects of operations and As such, we warmly welcome applicants from all the communities.

Further Information/Applications

For informal enquiries and further information regarding the position, please contact:

Dr Luke O'Grady, School of Veterinary Medicine, UCD

Email luke.ogrady@ucd.ie

Application Procedure

Submit an electronic copy of your current Curriculum Vitae and a brief letter of interest detailing your motivation, qualifications and experience to:

Dr Luke O'Grady (luke.ogrady@ucd.ie).

Closing date

12 pm, 17th October 2025. Interviews for selected candidates will take place shortly afterwards

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