



Job Advertisement Agroscope

Title

PhD position in soil management: "Horse paddock trails" at the interface between animal welfare and soil science

Introduction

Horse paddock trails are an integral part of modern horse husbandry and contribute to ensure animal welfare. To avoid excessive soil degradation, paddock trails are typically reinforced using footing grids but the effects on soil quality and soil recovery time after abandonment of reinforced trails are unknown.

In this interdisciplinary project we study how different types of trail reinforcements impact the welfare of horses as well as soil quality and the recovery rate of critical soil functions after trail abandonment. We are looking for an enthusiastic and highly motivated doctoral candidate to join our interdisciplinary team at Agroscope and ETH Zurich.

The position will be placed at the Department of Agroecology and Environment in Zurich and is cross-affiliated with the Soil Resources group at ETH Zurich. The work will be carried out in close collaboration with the "research group Equidae" at Agroscope Swiss National Stud Farm in Avenches, Switzerland. To complete the doctoral program at ETH Zurich, publication of results in peer-reviewed international scientific journals as well as presentation of results at international scientific conferences are mandatory.

Tasks

- Carrying out a field survey across Switzerland on the impact of commonly used footing grids on soil quality along paddock trails
- Conducting field experiments with horses to test the impact of variable footing grids on horse wellbeing and soil functions
- Monitoring the recovery of soil functions after trail abandonment
- Compiling and synthesizing literature data
- Statistical analysis of data
- Publication of results in international scientific journals
- Presentation of results at international scientific conferences

Requirements

- MSc (or equivalent) in Environmental Sciences, Veterinary Science, Biology, Agronomy, Earth Sciences, Environmental Engineering or similar
- Good organizational skills
- Achievement-oriented, communicative personality with a capacity for teamwork
- Excellent communication and writing skills in English are required; good knowledge of two official Swiss languages round out the requirements profile
- Experience in behavioral biology and equine husbandry and/or soil science, with a strong interest in the well-being of horses
- Experience in collecting field data and/or conducting field experiments
- Experience with statistical analysis, e.g. using the software R

Information about Agroscope

Agroscope is the Swiss federal centre of excellence for research in the agriculture and food sector. Its researchers carry out their work at a number of sites in Switzerland. Headquartered in Bern-Liebefeld, Agroscope is attached to the Swiss Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research EAER. We offer an international and interdisciplinary work environment, competent supervision and modern research infrastructure.

Start date: 1 March 2021, or as agreed. Duration: 4 years (48 months).

**Place of work**

8046 Zürich-Affoltern

Pay grade

According to standards of the Swiss National Science Foundation

Level of employment

100%

Contact

We look forward to receiving your online application including cover letter, CV, academic transcripts and the addresses of 2-3 referees in a single PDF file to: human.resources@agroscope.admin.ch (reference. 43988).

Additional information can be obtained from Dr Thomas Keller, Tel. +41 58 468 76 05, thomas.keller@agroscope.admin.ch (please do not send applications to this email address). Application deadline: December 17, 2020.