

Graduate Research Assistantship Opportunity (Fall 2026)

The School of Animal Sciences at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) is pleased to announce a Graduate Research Assistantship opportunity beginning in Fall 2026. We invite qualified candidates to apply for this position in the field of precision livestock farming.

Position Description

The successful candidate will undertake doctoral research aimed at developing real-time, multi-modal data fusion systems for managing pasture-based livestock. This research program will involve designing, implementing, and evaluating integrated sensing and analytics platforms that combine various data sources to enhance animal well-being and improve production efficiency in grazing systems.

Financial Support

This assistantship offers a standard stipend and full tuition coverage for a period of three years of PhD training at Virginia Tech. Candidates without prior graduate experience may receive support for four to five years, contingent upon satisfactory academic progress.

Minimum Qualifications

Applicants must have a Bachelor's degree in a STEM field (Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics).

Preferred Qualifications

Preference will be given to candidates demonstrating one or more of the following:

- Two or more years of hands-on experience in pasture-based livestock management.
- Software development capabilities through the maintenance of open-source projects.

Application

All applicants must submit the following materials:

Required:

1. Statement of research interests (limit to one page).
2. Curriculum vitae.

Encouraged:

3. One-page description of relevant pasture management experience.
4. Web link(s) to GitHub or other open-source project repositories.

Interested candidates should submit all application materials electronically to Dr. James Chen at niche@vt.edu. Please use the subject line "SAS PhD Application – Fall 2026." Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis, and the position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found.