

Description

An M.S. graduate assistantship is available starting immediately (preferably by 15 August 2020, though this is somewhat flexible) in the Department of Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management at Texas A&M University to study white-tailed deer/tick interactions and vaccine efficiency. The successful candidate will formally begin research/coursework at TX A&M during the Fall 2020 semester. A fundamental goal of this research is to characterize tick feeding parameters on white-tailed deer to assess anti-tick vaccine efficacy. Data on baseline tick feeding parameters under experimental conditions are underreported. This research will determine both the time needed for blacklegged and Lone Star ticks to complete feeding and the expected fecundity of these tick species after feeding on a white-tailed deer host. White-tailed deer are the major blood meal source for both blacklegged and Lone Star ticks, the two species that transmit a combined 11 of the 16 human tick-borne disease agents in the US. The number of white-tailed deer in a geographic location has been directly correlated with prevalence of human tick-borne disease infections, and conversely, successful disruption of tick infestation of white-tailed deer could significantly reduce transmission of tick-borne disease agents to the human population at a community level. This research project will have significant impact toward efforts to prevent human tick-borne disease infections. Ideally, the successful candidate will be hired by 1 August 2020 and receive his/her M.S. degrees in Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management at TX A&M May 2022. Salary for this position is \$18,500/year + tuition waiver.

Qualifications

The successful candidate should have (1) a B.S. in wildlife ecology, ecology, entomology, animal science, or a closely related field; (2) experience working with animals in research; (3) earned GPA >3.3/4.0; 4) GRE scores >1100 (old scale) or equivalent (new scale); (5) strong quantitative skills; and (6) strong organizational skills, attention to detail, and excellent oral and written communication skills. Applicant should be independently motivated to take action to meet project objectives, is a self-starter, possess a strong work ethic, and have a valid driver's license and clean driving record. Interested candidates should submit their application via email as a single PDF file to Dr. Tammi Johnson (tammi.johnson@ag.tamu.edu) with the subject line WTD Tick Vaccine Study. The application packet should include a cover letter, full transcripts (unofficial or official), CV, GRE scores, and list of 3 references submitted no later than 1 August 2020. Review of applicants will begin immediately and continue until a suitable applicant is selected. The successful applicant will be required to reside in Uvalde, TX for the first year of the study.