

CONTACT
INFORMATION

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EDUCATION

University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida USA

Ph.D. student, Animal Sciences, August 2026 - Present

- Advisor: Dr. Haipeng Yu

University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida USA

M.S., Animal Sciences, August 2024 - August 2026

- Thesis: "Effect of Selection on the Ability of the Linear Regression Method to Detect Model Inadequacy in Genetic Evaluation"
- Advisor: Dr. Haipeng Yu

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin USA

B.S., Zoology, December 2023

University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona USA

Non-degree seeking, Chemistry, June 2021

RESEARCH
EXPERIENCE**University of Florida**, Gainesville, Florida, USA

Research Assistant

08/2024 - 08/2026

- Investigated the performance of the linear regression (LR) method for evaluating genomic prediction models under selection and non-selection scenarios using simulated genomic data.
- Assisted in developing deep learning based computer vision algorithms to estimate dairy cattle body weight from images.

UW-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin, USA

Individual researcher

05/2023 - 08/2023

- Conducted an independent research project on deer-vehicle collisions along the I-90 corridor, analyzing contributing factors from wildlife behavior, driver response, and policy perspectives. Synthesized mitigation strategies by reviewing wildlife-vehicle collision (WVC) policies across U.S. states and proposing data-driven, locally applicable solutions.

UW-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin, USA

Individual researcher

03/2023 - 05/2023

- Designed and conducted an observational study of freshwater fish behavior in mixed-species aquarium tanks by recording and quantifying spatial activity patterns. Analyzed habitat selection and interspecific interactions using randomized sampling and spatial visualization in Excel.

UW-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin, USA

Leader of a team of four

02/2023 - 05/2023

- Led a four-member research team investigating the effects of salinity and interspecific competition on macrophyte growth using controlled laboratory experiments. Designed experimental conditions, collected longitudinal biomass data, performed statistical analyses in R, and authored a research paper presented to the class.

WORK
EXPERIENCE

Department of Animal Sciences at University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, USA

Graduate Research Assistant

08/2026 - present

Unleashed, Cottage Grove, Wisconsin, USA

Kennel Assistant

01/2024 - 05/2024

- Provided daily animal care and health monitoring, including basic physical examinations, feeding management, and exercise routines. Assisted with oral health maintenance and maintained detailed health and behavior records to support animal well-being.

Shannxi Institute of Zoology, Xi'an, Shannxi, China

Research Assistant (online)

05/2023 - 08/2023

- Analyzed satellite tracking and aerial survey data to characterize migration routes, timing, population structure, and density of Tibetan antelopes. Integrated meteorological and geographic data to investigate migration route selection and summarized conservation policies relevant to wildlife protection.

PROFESSIONAL
SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIPS

- American Dairy Science Association. 2026 - Present

PEER REVIEWED
JOURNAL ARTICLES
2026

1. Wang J., De Castro A., **Zhang Y.**, Borsatto L.B., Guo Y., Primo V.B., Bernardino A.B.M., Morota G., Chebel R.C. and Yu H. Evaluating transfer learning strategies for improving dairy cattle body weight prediction in small farms using depth-image and point-cloud data. *Journal of Dairy Science*. doi: [10.3168/jds.2026-28238](https://doi.org/10.3168/jds.2026-28238).

PREPRINTS AND
MANUSCRIPTS
UNDER REVIEW
2026

1. Tang Z., Wang J., De Castro A., **Zhang Y.**, Primo V. B., Montevicchio Bernardino A. B., Morota, G., Wang X., Chebel R.C., and Yu H. Can 3D point cloud data improve automated body condition score prediction in dairy cattle? *arXiv*. doi: [10.48550/arXiv.2601.22522](https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2601.22522) [**Under review**].

CONTRIBUTED PRESENTATIONS

- 2026
1. **Zhang Y.**, De Castro, A. Oral presentation. AI Enabled Edge Computing System for Real Time High Throughput Phenotyping in Dairy Cattle. 2026 UF IFAS Animal Sciences Graduate Symposium. IFAS Austin Cary Forest Campus, Gainesville, Florida. October 5.
 2. **Zhang Y.**, Haipeng Yu. Poster presentation. Effect of selection on the ability of the linear regression method to detect model inadequacy in genetic evaluation. 2026 UF IFAS Animal Sciences Graduate Symposium. IFAS Austin Cary Forest Campus, Gainesville, Florida. October 5.
- 2025
1. **Zhang Y.**, Wang, J., De Castro, A. Oral presentation. AI Enabled Edge Computing System for Real Time High Throughput Phenotyping in Dairy Cattle. 2025 UF IFAS Animal Sciences Graduate Symposium. IFAS Austin Cary Forest Campus, Gainesville, Florida. October 8.

INTRAMURAL SEMINARS

- 2026
- Animal Sciences Department seminar. Department of Animal Sciences, University of Florida. April 9.

HONORS/ AWARDS

- 2026
- Gator Tank Second Place (\$200), sponsored by Evonik and RP Nutrients, Department of Animal Sciences, University of Florida
 - Grinter Fellowship (\$4,000), University of Florida Graduate School, 2026.
 - Dairy Endowment Scholarship, Department of Animal Sciences, University of Florida, 2026–2030
- 2020-2021
- Academic Distinction; Dean’s List of the University of Arizona. Fall 2020.