

INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE
Policy #3
BREEDING COLONIES

In concurrence with
TTUHSC El Paso Assurance #D19-01056
and Federal Regulations and Guidelines

Purpose

The purpose of a breeding colony protocol is to generate animals for use in approved experimental protocols. Principal investigators (PIs) wishing to establish a breeding colony at any TTUHSC El Paso campus facility must submit a breeding protocol application to the IACUC. Breeding colony protocols can be submitted separately from experimental protocols, or they can be included in the same protocol.

Record keeping

Once the breeding colony has been established, an animal use record must be maintained by the PI. This record will include the number, and disposition of all animals used on the protocol. The staff of the IACUC and LARC can advise investigators about the required colony records, however the ultimate responsibility for keeping these records remains with the PI.

It is recognized that animals will enter and exit the breeding program over the life of a breeding protocol. However, every animal used on the breeding protocol must be accounted for. Animal numbers in the application should reflect the total number of animals required over the three-year period for which the protocol is approved, not the number of animals in the colony at any given time.

Species-specific weaning procedures

Mice and Rats: All weaning must take place no later than day 21 unless an exception is granted by the IACUC and must be included in the protocol with the justification as to the explanation of the time extension. To clarify how to count days: the date of an animal's birth is DAY 0, therefore DAY 21 is 21 days from the date of its birth. In the case of runts that are too small to survive independently at 21 days, an extension to wean may be granted by permission of the institutional veterinarian. If such extensions are anticipated (for example, if a strain consistently produces pups that are not independently viable at 21 days), the PI must include the contingency in his/her IACUC-approved protocol.

Ferrets: Ferrets should be weaned at 6 – 8 weeks of age, unless an exception is granted by the IACUC and must be included in the protocol with the justification. .

For all the species mentioned above the weaning should abide by the social housing and space requirements for rodents and socially harmonious groups for ferrets, unless there are scientific or welfare justifications for single housing.

- No more than 5 mice and 2 rats per cage.
- This will also include no overcrowding.

During the breeding season, adult males may need to be maintained singly to avoid fighting and injury. However, males can be maintained successfully in groups at other times.

Zebrafish: Zebrafish are external fertilizers. After the fish lay and fertilize the eggs, the parents should be separated from the eggs by an insert, to prevent them from eating the eggs.

Related policies

Investigators must comply with all other institutional policies at TTUHSC El Paso and Federal Guidelines. This list includes, but is not limited to, the following:

IACUC Policy 12: Procurement, Housing and Accountability for the Use of Live Vertebrate Animals

IACUC Policy 16: Tail Snipping and Tail Biopsy of Rodents

IACUC Policy 17: Use of Fertilized and Embryonated Avian Eggs

IACUC Policy 18: Frog Oocyte Harvest

LARC Mouse Housing Density and Breeding Schemes Policy

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