

Policies Regarding Management of Mouse/Rat Breeding Colonies

Purpose:

To describe the general procedures for managing a mouse/rat breeding colony.

Procedure:

- 1) The Principal Investigator must have an IACUC approved protocol describing the breeding project and its relationship to other research projects. This protocol must detail the responsible chain of command for all activities related to the mouse/rat breeding program.
- 2) The Animal Care Facility (ACF) staff monitors animal health daily but the Principal Investigator is responsible for management of mouse/rat breeding colonies. The investigator is responsible for checking all breeding cages for pregnancy, births, pup size and quantity (recommended minimum of 3 times per week during breeding).
- 3) For breeding purposes the standard mouse/rat cage is designed to accommodate one adult female mouse/rat, one adult male mouse/rat, and their litter. Harem breeding (one male and up to three females) is permitted with careful management. The pregnant females must be separated before they have delivered their litters; any exception must be justified in the mouse/rat breeding protocol. Only one litter is allowed in a cage at one time. Exceptions must be approved by the ACF Manager.
- 4) Weaning of litters must be performed at 21 days of age. The day of birth is counted as day zero. Weaning may be delayed up to 28 days of age for strains whose pups are smaller than normal, as long as there is only one litter in the cage. When weaning, up to four adult mice/rats of the same sex may be housed in a standard mouse/rat cage. Exceptions must be approved by the ACF Manager. Any deviation from this policy must be detailed and justified in the IACUC approved protocol.
- 5) Cages that are overcrowded will be tagged by the ACF staff with a red overcrowding card. Overcrowded cages must be separated by the Principal Investigator or his/her staff within 72 hours of the date written on the card. If the Principal Investigator does not correct the situation within 72 hours, then ACF staff will separate the animals. ACF has the right to separate animals immediately if animal welfare concerns exist.