



TITLE: Veterinary Observations and Animal Notification Cards

SOP Category: Veterinary

RUAC SOP #: 7.01

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Effective Date: 4/22/2025

Approval: *Jeetendra Eswaraka*

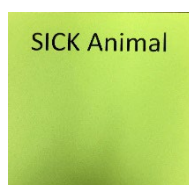
Revised: 6/26/18, 8/30/21, 5/12/22

SCOPE: This SOP applies to all Animal Care Staff (ACS), ACS Supervisors (ACSS), Veterinarian Staff (VS) and Research Staff members (RS) at all Rutgers University facilities.

OBJECTIVE: Veterinary care is an essential part of any animal care program. Visual observation is necessary to assess the animal's physical condition and behavior. The purpose of this SOP is to describe the procedures for health monitoring laboratory animals.

DEFINITIONS:

Sick Animal Card: Used to ID any animals that appear to be in distress or pain for any reason, be it experimental (complications, approaching / exceeded endpoints) or clinical/non-experimental (e.g., skin ulcers, dystocia, fighting, etc.)



Health Alert Card: Used to document prescribed treatment given by VS and/or RS.

CMR Health Alert		CMR Health Alert																																																																														
Investigator	_____	Monitor	Treat Euthanasia																																																																													
Sick #	_____	Daily	Mon/Wed/Fri																																																																													
Cage ID	_____	Treatment(s)	Twice/week																																																																													
Start Date	_____																																																																															
Condition(s)	_____																																																																															
Vet Staff Observations		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>S</th> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>T</th> <th>F</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>		S	M	T	W	T	F	S																																																																						
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		Euthanized by: Mfr, Date & Intake																																																																														

Tumor Tracking Card: Used to record when animals are implanted or injected with tumor cells, and to track tumor size and other tumor related observations.

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Overcrowded Card: Used to mark cages that have exceeded the IACUC Overcrowding and Single Housing for Rodents Policy guidelines. Includes deviations such as more than 1 litter in a cage, more than 5 adult mice per cage (obese mice may need more space), improper breeding schemes, and litters over weaning age (unless IACUC or veterinary approval for delayed weaning).

Overcrowded

[illegible]

Dead Animal Card: Used for reporting animals found dead (FD) in cages (typically by ACS).

Dead Notification 20820

PI: _____ Room #: _____

Found dead animals should be entered into ACFC and be reported to the ACSS or VS if warranted (e.g., Higher mortality than normal for that rack/room).

- Follow investigator instructions for animals found dead

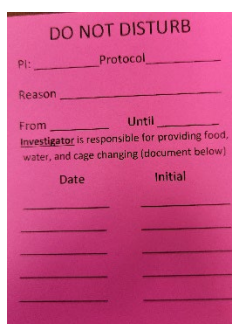
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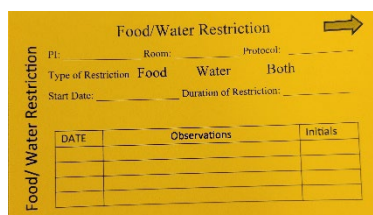
- In the absence of specific instructions, animals should be bagged, labeled with the information on the cage card, the investigator's name and date, and placed in the carcass refrigerator
- For biohazard animals, follow the associated protocol (e.g., Either place in a biohazard bag or follow investigator instructions).
- All carcass bags placed in the refrigerator/freezer should be documented on the Carcass Log
- RS may request found dead or newborn pups notifications immediately upon detection. ACSS, ACS, or VS will notify the RS via phone or email as requested by the RS.

Do Not Disturb: Cages marked 'Do Not Disturb' are not to be handled, opened, or moved by ACS for any reason; this includes providing food and water. Cage side observations/ health checks are still performed for these animals. If there is any concern about the welfare of animals marked 'Do Not Disturb', the VS should be notified immediately. Do Not Disturb cages that have sick animals or where animal welfare is compromised (e.g., flooded or contain mice with severe fight wounds) are excluded and animals must be treated immediately.



A pink rectangular card with the title "DO NOT DISTURB" at the top. Below the title are fields for "PI: _____ Protocol _____", "Reason _____", "From _____ Until _____", and a note: "Investigator is responsible for providing food, water, and cage changing (document below)". At the bottom, there are two columns labeled "Date" and "Initial" with three rows of lines for writing.

Food/Fluid Restriction Cage Cards: Used for studies involving food and/or fluid restriction.



A yellow rectangular card with the title "Food/Water Restriction" at the top and a right-pointing arrow. Below the title are fields for "PI: _____ Room: _____ Protocol: _____", "Type of Restriction" with radio buttons for "Food", "Water", and "Both", and "Start Date: _____ Duration of Restriction: _____". At the bottom, there is a table with three columns: "DATE", "Observations", and "Initials". The table has five rows for data entry.

Special Food/Water Cage Cards: Used to note any animal receiving a special diet (e.g., high fat diet or research diet) or water additives (e.g., medicated water). Contact ACSS or VS if food or water runs out. Report low food or water to the RS.

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SPECIAL DIET		SPECIAL WATER	
Feed Type: _____	Expiration Date: _____	PI: _____ Protocol: _____	Water Type: _____ EXP: _____
Investigator to provide feed Feed Added Date: _____ Initial: _____		Circle One To replace water PI or CMR Staff Document completed below Date: _____ Initial: _____	
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Special request(s) by RS:

- Submit special request to ACSS at least 7 days prior to required start date for situations such as, 'Do Not Disturb', special diet/water, specific enrichment, and no enrichment (with IACUC approval)

Euthanize Cards: Used to label cages of animals for euthanasia. Only euthanize the cages that are clearly marked. When in doubt, consult your supervisor or a vet tech before euthanizing animals. See the IACUC euthanasia document.

EUTHANIZE
Do Not Remove RFID cage Card
Sick Animals Must be Euthanized by Research Staff ASAP
Principal Investigator: _____
Research Staff Member Initials: _____ Date: _____
Place Card in Front of Original Cage Card
Food and Water must be Always Available

Single Housing Cards: Used to identify cages with singly housed animals. An additional enrichment object should be added to these cages.

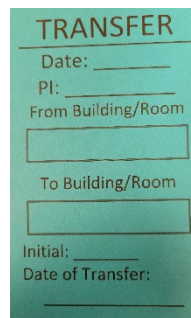
Single Housing
Date: _____ Initials: _____
All singly housed rodents require an extra enrichment item, unless justified in an IACUC protocol
Justification:
☐ Breeder male or Pregnant female
☐ Behaviorally incompatible
☐ Study design per protocol
☐ Last in cage
☐ Health Concern: _____

Transfer Cards: Used by RS to label cages to be transferred. RS must complete an animal transfer form with the ACFC platform and submit it to the facility supervisor for review.

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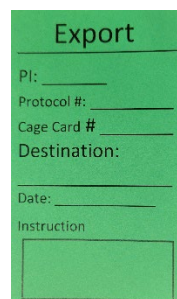
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A vertical rectangular form with a light blue background. At the top, the word "TRANSFER" is written in bold, black, uppercase letters. Below it, there are several fields for information: "Date:" followed by a line, "PI:" followed by a line, "From Building/Room" followed by a rectangular box, "To Building/Room" followed by a rectangular box, "Initial:" followed by a line, and "Date of Transfer:" followed by a line.

Export Cards: Used by RS to label cages to be exported.



A vertical rectangular form with a light green background. At the top, the word "Export" is written in bold, black, uppercase letters. Below it, there are several fields for information: "PI:" followed by a line, "Protocol #:" followed by a line, "Cage Card #" followed by a line, "Destination:" followed by a line, "Date:" followed by a line, and "Instruction" followed by a rectangular box.

PROCEDURES:

Daily Observations by ACS:

- All animals are observed daily, including weekends and holidays, for health and welfare status such as sick, injured, dead, and overcrowded animals.

Signs of disease, injury, pain, or distress may include but are not limited to abdominal distention, anorexia, corneal ulceration/rupture, coughing, dehydration, dermatitis, diarrhea, dystocia, head tilt, hemorrhage, hunched posture, lameness, lethargy, malocclusion, nasal discharge, ocular discharge, paresis/paralysis, prolapse, reduced mobility, rough coat, seizures, sneezing, swelling, tumor burden, weight loss, and wounds.

NOTE: If the RS is unavailable or does not respond in a timely fashion, the course of action is ultimately decided by the VS considering humane endpoints and animal welfare.

Veterinary Staff Observations:

MONDAY-FRIDAY, REGULAR WORK SHIFT (NON-HOLIDAYS):

- Visually observe animals in designated areas at least every two weeks.
- Examine all animal cages in designated areas with notification cards.
- Examine animals with treatment cards at least weekly.

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- Evaluate animal illness/condition reported by ACS and write diagnosis/treatment plan on notification cards/treatment sheet
- Notify the PI and/or research staff with any updates or concerns
- Re-visit (if applicable) sick or overcrowded animal(s) for follow-up.
- Assure proper action was taken for all recommendations.
- Assure all emergency cases have been cared for (receive treatment or euthanized) by the end of the day.
- Update digital medical record as appropriate or paper record for USDA species as per USDA medical records SOP.

PROCEDURES FOR COOK FARM ANIMAL RESEARCH:

The farm manager has primary responsibility to assure that the animals are healthy. All medical care, including preventative veterinary medical care, shall be coordinated under the direction of the farm manager or designee with the contract veterinarian(s) in consultation with the PI. Animals which require veterinary care beyond the capability of the farm staff will be referred to the contract veterinarian(s) for further evaluation and treatment.

- Large animal health, diagnosis, and treatment records will be organized and maintained for each species (herd), with oversight and ultimate responsibility for accuracy by the farm manager

NOTE: These records will be available for review and comment by VS.

Medical Records

- A. For USDA species, refer to the USDA Receiving and Medical Records SOP.
- B. For non-USDA species, treatments and observations are monitored on the appropriate cage card and in the digital medical record as appropriate.

REFERENCES:

SOP 3.01 Room Check/Care Procedures

SOP 7.02 Common Rodent Health Problems and Treatments

SOP 7.03 Sick Animal Notification Process

IACUC Document #F1 Euthanasia of Research Animals

IACUC Document #G1 Overcrowding and Single Housing for Rodents