

**TITLE: USDA Receiving and Medical Records****SOP Category: Veterinary****RUAC SOP #: 7.05****Page: 1 of 4****Effective Date: 09/27/2024****Approval:***Jeetendra Eswaraka***SCOPE:**

This SOP applies to all Animal Care Staff (ACS), ACS Supervisors (ACSS), and Veterinary Staff (VS) at the Rutgers University facilities.

**OBJECTIVE:**

Record keeping is an essential part of a functioning animal care program. The objective of this SOP is to describe the procedures for receiving USDA species and establishing medical records.

**PROCEDURES:****A. DEFINITIONS**

**Acclimation period:** The period to allow the animal to become accustomed to new surroundings. A minimum acclimation period of 72 hours is required to reduce stress from shipping and transport, and to adapt to new housing facilities. Any USDA animal destined for survival surgery should have a minimum acclimation period of 5 days.

**Quarantine:** The process of housing newly arrived non-SPF animals, or animals with potential for zoonotic transmission, in separate areas from other animals and research personnel until released for use by VS. During the quarantine period, the animal becomes accustomed to new surroundings, is observed for incidence of disease, treated for possible infections, and samples can be taken for diagnostic testing. The quarantine period may be counted towards the acclimation period.

**Acute use:** Animals that will be used by the investigator for terminal studies within a 7-day period after arrival.

**Chronic use:** Animals that will be used for a survival surgical procedure or stay in the facility longer than 7 days.

**USDA Animals:** Any warm-blooded vertebrate (e.g., pigs, guinea pigs, rabbits, non-human primates, dogs, hamsters, gerbils, woodchucks, etc.) excluding farm animals used for agricultural research or use, mice from the genus *Mus*, rats from the genus *Rattus*, and captive bred birds.

**B. METHOD**

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- Ensure radio frequency identification (RFID) cards cage cards are printed and clean cages are ready prior to arrival.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for species being handled.
- Upon arrival of an animal, ACS or ACSS will:
  - Check animal order and determine conformance with order specifications, review shipping documents including USDA shipping forms, health certificates, and any health records provided by the vendors
  - Evaluate the general condition of the animal and place animals in clean cages with appropriate cage cards and/or RFID cards. Larger species may have the RFID identification card placed on a wall near the cage.
  - Notify VS about the delivery.

**NOTE:** VS will notify the PI of any health problems with the animals. A clinical record will be initiated by the VS conforming to standard record keeping practices.

On the day of arrival, CMR staff performs a visual assessment of the animals and notify VS if there are health issues. Within 72 hours, the Veterinarian will perform a health examination of the animals.

- Each animal should receive its own medical record, with the exception of USDA Rodents. Records for USDA Rodents will be maintained as a batch or a cage level – as long as the treatments and clinical condition of the animals in the group are the same. If an individual animal is different in status from its cage mates, then it will be individually identified by distinct markings, ear tag, ear notch, microchipping, or other identification.
- The medical record must contain a copy of the USDA shipping forms, health certificates, and any health/colony record provided by the vendor. Each record may have a cover sheet that indicates the signalment of the animal, identification number, PI, and protocol information. The record may also include any anesthesia logs or surgery reports, physical examination forms, clinical health records, breeding records, any diagnostic results, and a final disposition report.

All procedures are documented at the time of the event. All entries should include the date, time, notes regarding the procedure(s), and initials of the staff making the notation. Veterinary staff must document clinically ill animals.

- Medical records are stored for at least three years. Regulated species records are stored based on the university policy requirements.

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- A minimum acclimation period of 3 days is required for survival experimental procedures. Upon completion of the acclimation or quarantine period, animals are available to the PI.
- In non-rodent species, a VS, ACS, or designated laboratory staff may perform monthly weights, and nail/hoof trims if necessary. Veterinarians will perform regular checks and examinations on animals.
- Confirmation of animal ID will be made prior to any procedures.

### C. SPECIAL SPECIES CONSIDERATIONS

Refer to Husbandry SOPs for additional information

- **Hamsters:** Can be aggressive with one another (and with people) and should generally not be housed together unless shipped together. Some food pellets should be placed on the bottom of the cage or in a shallow bowl.
- **Gerbils:** On delivery, open the view port and observe for behavior or mobility issues. Alert VS and ACSS of any immediate health concerns. Cup/scoop the animal(s) or use an animal transport container to move them. Some food pellets should be placed on bottom of cage. Once in cage, monitor gerbils for normal ambulation and rearing behavior. Gerbils are also prone to seizures when handled.
- **Rabbits:** A water bottle and a bowl of water should be provided in addition to the automatic watering system if available. Rabbits should be withheld from receiving pellets on the day of delivery but should be provided with generous amounts of fresh timothy hay on the day of arrival, and every day thereafter for the duration of housing within the facility. On subsequent acclimation days, the rabbits should be fed as follows:
  - **Day 1** – 25% of daily pelleted ration = 1.25 ounce
  - **Day 2** – 50% of daily pelleted ration = 2.5 ounces
  - **Day 3** – 75% of daily pelleted ration = 3.75 ounces
  - **Day 4 and subsequent** – 100% of daily pelleted ration = 4-6 ounces (100-150g)
- **Sheep:** Female sheep must have been tested for Q fever with two negative samples at least three weeks apart; the final test being negative within 1 week prior to delivery.

**Table 1: Medical Forms as applicable**

Form	Staff Use	Indications for Documentation
Medical Record Cover Form	CMR and Research Staff	Overview of animal(s) signalment, identification number, PI information, major health issues, weights, and other miscellaneous information.
Physical Examination Form	VS only	All complete physical exams; including procurement and long-term care

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Anesthesia Form	CMR staff and Research Staff	Use of anesthesia from administration until end for surgical procedure
Recovery Observation Form	CMR staff and Research Staff	Vitals of patient once placed in recovery cage, but before being returned to home cage
Sedation Monitoring Form	CMR staff and Research Staff	Use of anesthesia from administration until end for non-surgical procedure
Exemption from Pair or Group-Housing	CMR staff	Indicates reasons for single housing. Re-review based on study design exemption or veterinary approval.

**REFERENCE:**

Animal Receiving SOP

Animal Husbandry SOPs for USDA Species