Policy # AW-08-2018

Policy Title: Animal Housing Areas

Policy: In order to ensure the best occupational health and safety conditions, promote optimal biosecurity for animal colonies, protect animal health and welfare and to minimize experimental variables relative to the environment, unless otherwise permitted by the UConn IACUC, animals are required to be housed within the confines of centralized, dedicated animal facilities maintained by the University of Connecticut Animal Care Services or Department of Animal Science.

The UConn IACUC acknowledges that due to special equipment needs, highly-specific research requirements, and other factors, it may not always be possible or practical to house animals within the confines of UConn's animal research facilities. When these conditions exist, the IACUC will consider the circumstances under which animals may be housed outside of centralized dedicated animal facilities.

All animal housing areas must meet relevant physical plant performance standards as described in either the National Research Council's Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (“Guide”), or the Federation of Animal Science Societies Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching (“Ag Guide”); where exceptions are granted for housing animals outside of UConn's centralized dedicated housing facilities, the guidelines outlined below will be considered by the IACUC in its deliberations.

Animal housing areas must be reviewed and approved by the IACUC before use. Depending upon the nature of use, the IACUC-related process may involve an inspection and evaluation of the site for cataloging and assessment purposes in combination with the review of pertinent information associated with the animal use protocol.

The requirements for housing apply when:

- Any animals, either as a cohort or due to overlapping transfer, are held for greater than 12 hours outside of an animal research facility.

Categories of Housing:

I. Centralized Dedicated Animal Facility: Any IACUC-approved animal facility designed specifically for animals, managed by a dedicated staff of either Animal Care Services (ACS) or the Department of Animal Science (ANSCI) in the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources that have direct oversight by the UConn Director of Animal Care Services and Attending Veterinarian.
Examples include ACS vivaria (PBB, Ag Bio, Psychology, Atwater) and facilities operated by the UConn College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources (farm units, Spring Manor, Spring Hill isolation units).

Direct oversight by the AV constitutes:

a. Oversight, consultation and authority to ensure compliance with the National Research Council’s Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals and/or Federation of Animal Science Societies Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching.

b. Review of SOPs, preventative medicine practices, and consultation on facility improvements.

c. Direct access by the veterinary staff at all times and monthly rounds conducted by the AV. Access and review of all animal medical records on a routine basis to ensure proper clinical care of the animals and to identify issues/trends that may impact animal health.

II. Mammalian Satellite Facility: An IACUC-approved non-centralized housing facility maintained and managed primarily by an investigator in which any USDA or non-USDA mammalian species is held or housed for greater than 12 hours. Approval of these facilities will be subject to the following requirements:

a. When ACS is not conducting the husbandry, an SOP for animal husbandry must be developed and finalized with guidance from the Attending Veterinarian and/or another appropriate subject matter expert. The SOP must be reviewed and approved by the UConn IACUC as part of the protocol review process. The SOP must address the specifics of animal care and husbandry within the satellite housing area. In order for a mammalian satellite housing facility to be approved, the IACUC must be able to evaluate the following to ensure the satellite facility meets the requirements as outlined in either the “Guide” or “Ag Guide”: training of personnel in safe and proper animal care practices; occupational health and safety; disaster planning and emergency preparedness; veterinary care and oversight of the husbandry program; environmental control and monitoring; ventilation, air quality, illumination, noise and vibration prevention; food and drinking water; bedding and enrichment materials; cage and room sanitation; methods used to assess the effectiveness of sanitation programs; waste management, pest monitoring and control; emergency, weekend and holiday care; recordkeeping practices; and attributes of the facility including architectural features, storage and security.

b. The PI must work with the Attending Veterinarian to ensure that a qualified engineering consultation is obtained to verify that the HVAC system for the
proposed animal housing area operates to reliably provide negative differential air pressure and is supplied by 10-15 air changes per hour (ACPH). Engineering services likewise must provide assurance that the HVAC system will perform at a level to meet the current Guide standards for temperature and relative humidity control. Backup services must be described to cover for any unexpected loss of power for environmental control.

c. The PI must ensure that appropriate temperature and relative humidity monitoring is installed. Photoperiod control and monitoring technology must be installed that will meet the specifications of the regulations for animal housing rooms. The installation and maintenance of these systems and first response to alarms will be the responsibility of the PI.

d. Room organization, space allocation, and storage must be consistent with an animal housing facility as described in the Guide. Animal housing rooms should not be used for other storage while being used for animal housing. The PI is responsible for maintaining and ensuring that the satellite housing area is secured at all times, and otherwise explain any limits to security.

e. The PI is responsible for maintaining and ensuring that the satellite housing area is secured at all times, and otherwise explain any limits to security. Windows and/or doors shall be equipped with shades or other material to block access to public view.

f. Animal housing must be species specific unless otherwise approved by the IACUC.

g. Each day that an animal is held in the satellite housing area, an Animal/Room Daily Check List must be posted and completed. Records must be retained for three years and must be available for inspection by the IACUC, federal regulatory agencies and site visitors from the Association for the Assessment and Accreditation for Laboratory Animal Care, International (AAALAC).

h. The IACUC and veterinary staff must have access to the areas at all times. The IACUC will determine the best means of assuring proper access for the necessary personnel. IACUC will determine the best means of assuring proper access for the necessary lock on the room entry door controlled by a card key reader, or a keyed lock may be sufficient if approved by the IACUC.

i. Health Reporting- All animals must be checked daily (including weekends and holidays) by the ACS and/or PI or specified designee. The plan for ensuring that daily checks will be conducted should be described in the approved protocol.

j. A monthly report documenting animal mortality overall and relative to the daily census at the mammalian satellite housing facility must be submitted to ACS. The
plan for maintaining and submitting this report should be described in the approved protocol.

k. Prior to approval and housing the animals, the site must pass an inspection by at least two IACUC members. If approved, the satellite housing area will be subjected to semiannual IACUC facility inspection and will be part of the semiannual IACUC program review.

III. Non-mammalian Satellite Facility: An IACUC-approved non-centralized housing facility or area maintained and managed primarily by an investigator in which any non-mammalian species is held or housed for greater than 12 hours. Approval of these facilities will be subject to the following requirements:

a. When ACS is not conducting the husbandry, an SOP for animal husbandry must be developed and finalized with guidance from the Attending Veterinarian and/or another appropriate subject matter expert. The SOP must be reviewed and approved by the UConn IACUC as part of the protocol review process. The SOP must address the specifics of animal care and husbandry within the satellite housing area. In order for a non-mammalian satellite housing facility to be approved, the IACUC must be able to evaluate the following to ensure the satellite facility is appropriate for housing of the species in question: training of personnel in safe and proper animal care practices; occupational health and safety; disaster planning and emergency preparedness; veterinary care and oversight; emergency, weekend and holiday care; recordkeeping practices; and attributes of the facility including architectural features, storage and security.

b. The IACUC and veterinary staff must have access to the areas at all times, either directly or remotely (in the case of field-housed animals). The plan for ensuring access should be described in the approved protocol.

c. Health Reporting- All animals must be checked daily (including weekends and holidays) by the PI or specified designee, unless otherwise approved by the IACUC. The plan for ensuring that daily checks will be conducted should be described in the approved protocol.

d. A monthly report documenting animal mortality overall and relative to the daily census at housing site may be requested by the IACUC to be submitted to ACS. The plan for maintaining and submitting this report should be described in the approved protocol.

e. Prior to approval and housing the animals, the site must pass an inspection (either in-person or remote) by at least two IACUC members. If approved, this site will be subjected to semiannual IACUC facility inspection and will be part of the semiannual IACUC program review.
f. The PI is responsible for maintaining and ensuring that the satellite housing area is secured at all times, and otherwise explain any limits to security.

g. Animal housing must be species specific unless otherwise approved by the IACUC.

h. Each day that an animal is held in the satellite housing area an Animal/Room Daily Check List must be completed. Records must be retained for three years and must be available for inspection by the IACUC, federal regulatory agencies and site visitors from the Association for the Assessment and Accreditation for Laboratory Animal Care, International (AAALAC).

IV. Temporary off-site housing for agricultural animals used in shows, fairs, demonstrations, etc.: An IACUC-approved non-centralized housing facility where agricultural animals are temporarily held or housed during events, shows or demonstrations and managed primarily by animal science staff for greater than 12 hours. These facilities and circumstances are described in IACUC protocols and housing and husbandry is in accordance with the Ag Guide.