

Purdue University Laboratory Animal Program Standards of Care

Title: Husbandry Care of Sheep

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the minimum standards of care for sheep.

II. Policy:

All units providing animal care for sheep used in agricultural research and teaching must meet or exceed these minimum requirements based on the Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals Used in Research (*Ag Guide*). Sheep used in biomedical research and non-standard agricultural teaching must additionally meet the requirements in the USDA Animal Welfare Regulations (*AWR*) and the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (*Guide*). Deviations or exceptions must be approved by the Attending Veterinarian and the IACUC.

III. Procedure:

Daily (365 days a year without exception):

- Observe each animal and check for health concerns (*AWR* 2.33).
- Ensure adequate feed and potable water is available (*Guide* pg. 65-68).
- Record sick and dead animals, and report unusually high morbidity and/or mortality to the Lab Animal Program (LAP) or designated clinical veterinarian per standard operating procedure (*AWR* 2.33, *Ag Guide* pg. 10).
- For temperature-controlled housing, record minimum and maximum temperatures and humidity.
 - Temperature range for sheep is 61°F to 81°F (*Guide* pg. 44).
 - Humidity range for sheep is 30% to 70% (*Guide* pg. 44).
- Spot clean cage, removing animals unless sufficient space is available for the animals to remain dry (*AWR* 3.131).
- Remove and replace any enrichment devices that are worn, damaged, or heavily soiled (*Guide* pg. 72).
- Clean and organize room, anterooms, and surrounding premises (*Guide* pg. 72).
- Record daily completion of each task, initial each task, and date the log.

Weekly:

- Observe each range animal and check for health concerns (*Ag Guide* pg. 22).
- Record sick and dead range animals, and report unusually high morbidity and/or mortality to the Lab Animal Program (LAP) or designated clinical veterinarian per standard operating procedure for reporting sick or dead animals (*Ag Guide* pg. 10).

As needed:

- Disinfect the animal room including walls, floors, and ceilings (if possible) (*Guide* pg. 72).
- All wooled sheep should be sheared at least annually.
- Remove and replace worn or damaged equipment from primary enclosures and surrounding facility (*Guide* pg. 72).
- Chow must be discarded after 6 months of the milling date unless manufacturer guidelines recommend a shorter or longer expiration date (*Guide* pg. 66).
- Clean and sanitize feed storage containers (*Guide* pg. 67).
- Each facility will develop their own best practices with sanitization typically occurring every 6 months or whenever there is a change in species but may vary with facility.

Environmental Enrichment:

- Refer to the Social and Environmental Enrichment Program for Research and Teaching Animals (IACUC SOP #: 305).

Facilities:

- Temperature alarms should be installed in all temperature-controlled rooms housing sheep (*Guide* pg. 143; *Ag Guide* pg. 19).
- Adequate ventilation must be provided for the health and comfort of the animal at all times.
 - A minimum of 10-15 fresh room air exchanges per hour shall be provided in animal housing areas (*Guide* pg. 46).
- Floors shall be moisture-resistant, non-absorbent, impact-resistant, and relatively smooth (*Guide* pg. 137).

Housing:

- Whenever possible, sheep should be socially housed in compatible groups (*Guide* pg. 51).
- Floor space taken up by food bowls, water containers, and enrichment devices should not be considered part of the floor space (*Guide* pg. 56).
- Space requirements for agricultural research and teaching sheep can be found in Table 10-1 of the *Ag Guide* pg. 142.
- Space requirements differ for biomedical research and agricultural use animals. Specific space requirements can be found in the *Guide* and the *Ag Guide*, respectively (see appendix 1).