Reference Policy #3 Veterinary Care

The use of expired medical materials such as drugs, fluids, or sutures on regulated animals is not considered to be acceptable veterinary practice and is not consistent with adequate veterinary care as required by the regulations promulgated under the Animal Welfare Act. The facility should either dispose of all such materials or segregate them in an appropriately labeled, physically separate location from non-expired medical materials.

For acute terminal procedures, where an animal is put under anesthesia, the research is carried out (surgery or testing of a compound) and the animal is euthanized without ever waking up, medical materials may be used beyond their "to be used by" date if such materials use does not adversely affect the animal’s wellbeing or compromise the validity of the scientific study. Anesthesia, analgesia, emergency drugs and euthanasia drugs that are within their expiration dates are required for all such procedures. Facilities allowing the use of expired medical materials in acute terminal procedures should have a policy covering the use of such materials and/or require investigators to describe in their animal activity proposals the intended use of expired materials. The attending veterinarian and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) are responsible for ensuring that proposed animal activities avoid or minimize discomfort, distress, and pain to the animal. APHIS has determined that these responsibilities cannot be met unless the veterinarian and the IACUC maintain control over the use of expired medical materials.