



SUBJECT: Animal Procurement and Acclimation	Effective Date: 1/26/2024	Policy Number: 10.4.3	
	Supersedes: 1/29/2021 2/22/2018 2/1/2015	Page 1	Of 5
	Responsible Authorities: Principal Investigator Vice President, Research Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Associate Vice President for Research, Research Integrity Assistant Vice President for Research, Comparative Medicine		

I. Background

Public Health Policy (PHS), the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (the *Guide*) and the Animal Welfare Regulations (AWR) agree that all animals used in research, teaching and testing have to be procured abiding to relevant federal, state and local laws and regulations. The *Guide* states that potential vendors should be evaluated for the quality of animals they supply. In general, vendors of purpose-bred animals provide information describing the genetic and pathogen status of their animals and relevant clinical history. Therefore, the use of purpose-bred and pre-conditioned animals is preferable when consistent with the research, teaching, and testing objectives whereas animals obtained from pet stores/distributors bear the potential for introducing health risks to personnel and other animals.

Regardless of whether the animals are quarantined, as per *Guide* newly received animals should be given a period for physiologic, behavioral, and nutritional acclimation before their use. The length of time for acclimation will depend on the type and duration of animal transportation, the species involved, and the intended use of the animals.

II. Purpose

This policy provides guidance to Research Personnel and Animal Care Staff in regards to procurement of animals for research, teaching, testing and training as well as appropriate acclimation to altered housing/environmental conditions to

facilitate the highest standards for the animal's health, welfare and quality of research.

III. General Statement

All animals acquired for use in research, teaching, and testing at FAU MUST be procured through Comparative Medicine and should be appropriately acclimated prior to any experimental procedure. This is not only essential for the well-being of the animals but also for the scientific outcome of the study.

IV. Policy

- A. The Attending Veterinarian (AV) is a member of the IACUC and responsible for the health and wellbeing of all animals used at FAU regardless of source and health status. The AV (in consultation with the PI or other experts in the field as applicable) will establish appropriate veterinary care and health surveillance programs.
- B. All animals used in research or teaching and housed in facilities at FAU must be procured through Comparative Medicine (CM) unless wild caught as described and approved in the particular IACUC protocol.
- C. The AV will establish a list of Approved Vendors based on the health status of the animals provided and depending on the vendor's health surveillance program, shipping arrangements, alert system for possible disease outbreaks and other relevant information. The list will be reviewed regularly but at least yearly by the AV or designee.
- D. Vendors that don't provide particular health information for animals they provide (i.e. uncommon laboratory animal species including fish, turtles) will be contacted by CM, their animal husbandry and care practices discussed, records secured if possible and after careful review of all relevant information approved by the AV.
- E. Animals provided by approved vendors will enter animal housing facilities without quarantine unless there is a reason determined by the AV. Procedures for quarantine of animals from non-approved vendors must be set forth by the AV and executed through Comparative Medicine (CM) personnel. The AV is responsible for communicating these procedures and possibilities for procurement of animals with respective research personnel.
- F. In general, research personnel will not have access to animals in quarantine and no experimental procedures or breeding can be performed during the quarantine process. Exemptions must be justified and approved by the AV.
- G. Research Personnel must order animals through VSATS (i.e. CM web based database) independent of source.
- H. Acclimation: Once animals are received at FAU facilities (including procured and wild caught animals) they should be acclimated a minimum of **three days** prior to use. An acclimation period of **seven days** is recommended for all animals used in survival surgical procedures, behavioral testing, and any other experimental procedures, the results of which are sensitive to stress.
- I. An acclimation period might not be necessary if the animals are utilized in acute experimental procedures that are not sensitive to stress such as harvest of certain tissues only.

- J. Depending on the species and health status of the animal(s) procured, additional conditioning may be required as determined by the AV.
- K. Any deviation from this policy must be described in the protocol and the scientific justification for the exception approved by the IACUC.

V. Definitions

- A. For the purpose of this policy, **procurement** refers to the acquisition of all animals from outside sources either commercial vendors or other research institutions. Procurement does not pertain to animals wild caught by the PI.
- B. **Approved Vendors** are commercial vendors that can provide purpose-bred and/or pre-conditioned animals with a known specific pathogen free health status, acceptable health surveillance program(s), superior shipping arrangements and other important conditions as determined by the AV.
- C. **Non-approved Vendors** are either commercial vendors or other research institutions providing animals with a heightened risk for introduction of possible infectious agents into existing animal housing facilities.
- D. **Quarantine** is a state of enforced isolation to reduce the risk of contaminating existing animal colonies with pathogens that might be harbored by newly arrived animals.
- E. **Acclimation** refers to the time immediately after arrival of shipped/transported animals and before starting experimental procedures that allows the animal to adjust to the new environment during which stress-induced hormone levels return to normal. Animals include both procured (i.e. through a vendor) and wild caught animals housed at FAU facilities.

VI. Accountability

The Principal Investigator (PI) will be responsible for:

- Assuring that procedures are performed as described in the corresponding IACUC protocol and if necessary submitting an amendment to the protocol and awaiting approval before new method(s) is introduced.
- Following the procedures set forth in this policy in regards to ordering animals and working with the AV to find the best solution for procuring animals from non-approved vendors.
- Following procedures identified by veterinarians in regards to quarantine of animals from non-approved vendors
- Assuring that animals are acclimated as stated in this policy.

The IACUC will be responsible for:

- Reviewing and approving, requiring modifications in (to secure approval) or withholding approval of IACUC protocols and/or amendments.
- Providing oversight for all animal procedures conducted including proper procurement and acclimation of animals to observe animal welfare and high quality involving animal research models.
- Overseeing the health surveillance program directed by the AV including establishing a list of approved vendors and quarantine

procedures.

The Research Integrity office will be responsible for:

- Administrative support of the IACUC members to facilitate their regulatory function.
- Maintaining policy and assure regular review and update as necessary by the IACUC.

The Office of Comparative Medicine (CM) will be responsible for:

- Establishing an appropriate health surveillance program including a list of approved vendors and proper quarantine procedures for non-approved vendors.
- Contacting and evaluating vendors that don't provide particular health information regarding the animals they provide.
- Ordering animals based on approved IACUC protocols, accepting animals from carriers, completing required paperwork and filing, and notifying investigator(s) of their animal arrival.
- Oversight of quarantine procedures for animals from non-approved vendors

VII. Procedures

- A. The Research Laboratory will request a Purchase Order (PO)
 - i. Fill out the requisition form. If multiple purchases are anticipated, it is best to use a "blanket purchase order".
 - ii. The completed and signed requisition should go through the normal departmental process for vetting.
 - iii. Once the process is complete, a PO number will be assigned by Purchasing.
- B. If a Purchase Order process is not possible, a University-issued Purchasing card (pCard) may also be used as a method of paying for the order.
- C. The Research Laboratory will obtain an expense account number to be used for the animals from your department.
- D. The PI or designee of the Research Laboratory will complete the Animal Order Form or Animal Import Request Form in VSATS and submit it to Comparative Medicine for all animals ordered (approved and non-approved vendors).
 - i. The VSATS database requests an active IACUC protocol number, approved animal species/strain and sufficient remaining animal numbers, which are associated with a particular PI and/or protocol.
 - ii. If those criteria are not met for the particular laboratory and/or protocol in the system the process will not be allowed to go forward.
- E. CM will verify the order and communicate with the research personnel if further information or a different approach is necessary. If animals will be procured from non-approved vendors the AV will discuss the options for import of the animals depending on the health status and any quarantine procedures.
- F. The research personnel will receive verification emails
 - i. That the order was successfully submitted.

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- ii. That animals were ordered.
- iii. That animals have been received.

VIII. Policy Renewal Date
1/26/2027

IX. References

1. Obernier JA, Baldwin RL, **Establishing an Appropriate Period of Acclimatization Following Transportation of Laboratory Animals.** ILAR Journal, 47: 364-369, 2006.
2. Conour LA, Murray KA, Brown MJ, **Preparation of Animals for Research—Issues to Consider for Rodents and Rabbits.** ILAR Journal, 47: 283-94, 2006.
3. Landi MS, Kreider JW, Lang CM, Bullock LP, **Effects of shipping on the immune function in mice.** Am J Vet Res. 43: 1654-7, 1982.
4. Tuli JS, Smith JA, Morton DB, **Stress measurements in mice after transportation.** Laboratory Animals. 29: 132-8, 1995.
5. van Ruiven R, Meijer GW, Wieersma A, Baumans V, van Zutphen LF, Ritskes-Hoitinga J, **The influence of transportation stress on selected nutritional parameters to establish the necessary minimum period for adaptation in rat feeding studies.** Lab Anim 32(4): 446-56, 1998.

POLICY APPROVAL

Initiating Authority

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: Gregg B. Fields, Ph.D., Interim Vice President for Research

Executed signature pages are available in the Initiating Authority Office(s)