



IACUC Guidance:	TAMU-G-006	Title:	Guidelines for Animal Counting and Reporting of Animal Usage
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Location	Effective Date	Review By
College Station/Dallas/Galveston/Kingsville	09/01/2024	08/31/2027
Houston	10/01/2024	08/31/2027

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To define the IACUC’s position regarding which animals must be counted and when reporting of animal counts must be performed.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. Applies to vertebrate animals used for research, teaching, or other related purposes under the oversight of the Texas A&M University IACUC.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

- 3.1. The **IACUC** is responsible on behalf of the Institution for ensuring the establishment of a method to document and monitor numbers of animals acquired, born and/or used in support of IACUC approved AUPs which:
 - 3.1.1. Ensures that animals are accounted for in a timely manner, and
 - 3.1.2. Animal numbers approved by the IACUC are not exceeded.
- 3.2. The **PI** is responsible for:
 - 3.2.1. Identifying the source and approximate number of animals within the AUP proposal that are needed to support the described activities, including all animals to be acquired, born and/or used, and
 - 3.2.2. Tracking animals acquired, born and/or used in support of the IACUC approved AUP, and
 - 3.2.3. Reporting those numbers to the IACUC when requested, and
 - 3.2.4. Requesting additional animals in a timely manner to ensure animal numbers approved by the IACUC are not exceeded.
- 3.3. The **AWO** is responsible for collecting animal usage data on a timetable established by the IACUC or Institution and informing the IACUC when animal numbers approved by the IACUC are exceeded.

4. DEFINITIONS AND/OR ACRONYMS

- 4.1. **AAALAC:** AAALAC International is a private, nonprofit organization that promotes the humane treatment of animals in science through voluntary accreditation and assessment programs.
- 4.2. **Ag Guide:** Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching. Primary reference document for meeting the needs and requirements of agricultural animals utilized in production agriculture related research and teaching.
- 4.3. **Animal:** Any live, vertebrate animal used or intended for use in research, research training, experimentation, teaching, or biological testing or for related purposes.
- 4.4. **Animal Usage:** For the purposes of this document, all animals acquired and/or used in support of an IACUC approved AUP, including but not limited to animals purchased, leased, donated, born, hatched, free-living animal captured or otherwise materially altered, transferred, harvested or euthanized specifically for the activities described. Also applies to animals owned by an individual (e.g.: client owned animals), private or public entity or institution.
- 4.5. **AUP:** Animal Use Protocol. Document submitted by the PI indicating the housing and procedures involving animals.
- 4.6. **AWAR/AWR:** Animal Welfare Act Regulations. Also known as Animal Welfare Regulations. Regulations administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). USDA Animal Care, a unit under the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, administers the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and associated Animal Welfare Act Regulations.
- 4.7. **AWO:** Animal Welfare Office. Supports the IACUC administratively.



- 4.8. **Core Support:** Individuals performing professional activities such as husbandry or technical services as a function of a dedicated service organization.
- 4.9. **Core Support:** Individuals performing professional activities such as husbandry or technical services as a function of a service organization like ANSC, CoS vivaria, CMP, ARU, PAR, PRF, CVM, TIPS, TIGM, GHRC, POSC or VMP do not need to be listed individually as research participants in the AUP.
- 4.10. **Embryonic/Fetal Animal:** Young from implantation to birth or egg to hatching.
- 4.11. **Guidance:** Guidance documents are developed by the IACUC to provide procedural standards to the research community on the topics identified. Animal care and use program participants are expected to adhere to the standards described unless an exception has been requested and approved by the IACUC.
- 4.12. **IACUC:** Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. Institutional body responsible for ensuring adherence to federal regulation and institutional policy relating to the care and use of animals in teaching, testing and research. Appointed by the Institutional Official.
- 4.13. **Institution:** For the purposes of this document, Texas A&M University.
- 4.14. **OLAW:** Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare. Provides guidance and interpretation of the Public Health Service (PHS) Policy on the Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals for PHS-funded research and monitors compliance with the Policy by Assured Institutions.
- 4.15. **PI:** Principal Investigator. The individual who has ultimate administrative and programmatic responsibility for the design, execution, and management of a project utilizing vertebrate animals.
- 4.16. **(USDA) Pain Category:** A system of categorization of the potential for pain/distress experienced by animals covered by the Animal Welfare Regulations.
- 4.17. **USDA:** United States Department of Agriculture. USDA Animal Care, a unit under the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, administers the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and associated Animal Welfare Act Regulations (AWAR).

5. GUIDELINES OR PROCEDURE

5.1. Why must animals be counted?

- 5.1.1. The PHS Policy, AWAR and Ag Guide all require that AUPs specify and include the rationale for the (approximate) number of animals to be used in support of the IACUC approved activities. These standards implicitly require that institutions establish mechanisms to monitor and document animal usage to avoid the use of animals in numbers that exceed the number estimated in the approved AUP.
- 5.1.2. The institution is required to report the relevant number of animals used annually to both the USDA and AAALAC.
- 5.1.3. The collection and reporting of animal usage to the IACUC is required to maintain an AAALAC Accreditation as it demonstrates adherence to federal animal welfare regulations.

5.2. Which animals must be counted?

- 5.2.1. All animals used in support of an IACUC approved AUP regardless of ownership, including animals that are:
 - 5.2.1.1. acquired (purchased, leased, rented, transferred, donated)
 - 5.2.1.2. enrolled (private or client owned animals)
 - 5.2.1.3. born or hatched
 - 5.2.1.3.1. including those euthanized to standardize litter size or remove excess animals, or to cull unwanted sex or harmful genotypes
 - 5.2.1.3.2. PHS Policy applies to amphibians and fish upon hatching
 - 5.2.1.3.2.1. a “count” may be performed by estimating density of the tank or aquaria
 - 5.2.1.4. free-living in their natural habitat and captured or otherwise materially altered (animal or environment),

5.2.1.5. used to provide tissues or byproducts harvested directly from the animal where the recipient has influence over the timing or method performed

5.2.1.6. euthanized or humanely harvested where the recipient has influence over the timing or method performed regardless of activities which occur before or after death

5.2.2. Each animal is counted as a single individual, at the highest pain category, for each AUP that the animal has been associated with over the reporting period (e.g.: weanling animals may be counted against both the breeding, or general housing, and research AUP).

5.3. Which animals do not need to be counted?

5.3.1. Prenatal, fetal, prehatch or embryonic animals (must count dam in case of live bearing animals)

5.3.2. Carcasses or animals from which tissues or byproducts are acquired for which the recipient has no influence in the timing or method of collection and/or euthanasia.

5.3.3. Free-living animals in their natural habitat where the study does not materially alter the animal, it's behavior, or environment.

5.4. When should counting occur?

5.4.1. Each PI is responsible for establishing a method, process or procedure which allows for the timely accounting of their specific animal usage.

5.4.2. PI's procuring animals through a core support unit may be able to utilize existing animal accounting software to acquire animal counts.

5.5. Reporting of Animal Counts

5.5.1. All PIs are required to report animal usage by pain category annually on a schedule adopted by the IACUC ("reporting period"); e.g.: every October for the previous 12 months (October 1 (past year) through September 30 (current year)).

5.5.1.1. TAMU-C-008c may be helpful in determining pain category

5.5.2. Animal counts for AUPs which closed or expired during the reporting period must still be provided.

5.5.3. PI's providing animal counts to the Office of the AV for the USDA annual report are encouraged to report the same animal numbers to the IACUC to reduce burden.

5.5.3.1. The process employed by the Office of the AV for collecting animal counts will adjust for usage across multiple AUPs to ensure that individual animals are reported once per year to the USDA as per federal regulation.

5.5.4. Reporting of animal counts must occur through whatever system or method has been adopted by the IACUC; e.g.: unsolicited emails or telephone calls with animal counts will not be accepted.

5.5.5. PI's will be informed of the timeline and system/method for reporting.

5.6. When should the PI request additional animals?

5.6.1. Modification of the IACUC approved AUP may occur at any time to ensure animal numbers approved by the IACUC are not exceeded.

6. RECORDS

6.1. Research records, including animal usage records, must be maintained consistent with Texas A&M University Standard Administrative Procedures (SAPS) 15.99.03.M1.03. and 29.01.03.M0.01

7. EXCEPTIONS

7.1. The PI may request an exception to the above standards by describing the departure in the AUP

7.2. For programmatic exceptions, the facility director or manager may submit a request for the exception using TAMU-F-013



8. REFERENCES, MATERIALS, AND/OR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

8.1. References:

8.1.1. OLAW:

8.1.1.1. [PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals](#)

8.1.1.2. [Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals](#)

8.1.1.3. OLAW FAQ F.2. [When and how should animals be tracked on approved protocols?](#)

8.1.2. USDA:

8.1.2.1. [Animal Welfare Regulations 9 CFR Ch.1 Subpart C § 2.31](#)

8.1.2.2. [Animal Welfare Inspection Guide](#)

8.1.3. American Society of Animal Science: [The Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching](#)

8.2. [IACUC/AWO Referenced Documents](#): (requires TAMU NetID authentication)

8.2.1. TAMU-C-008c Protocol Review Checklist - USDA or Not Addendum

8.2.2. TAMU-F-013 Request for Programmatic Exception from Animal Welfare Standards

8.3. Resources:

8.3.1. FASEB Webinar: [Streamlining Institutional Requirements for Animal Research on March 2018](#)

8.4. Texas A&M University SAPs:

8.4.1. [15.99.03.M1.03](#) The Responsible Stewardship of Research Data

8.4.2. [29.01.03.M0.01](#) Security of Electronic Information Resources

9. HISTORY

Effective Date	Version #	Description
09/01/2024	000	College Station/Dallas/Galveston/Kingsville: New document
10/01/2024	001	Houston: New Document