



Policy on Stabilization of Newly Arrived Research and Teaching Animals

Background: The guides state that newly received animals should be given a period for physiologic, psychologic, and nutritional stabilization before their use. The need for a stabilization period has been demonstrated in mice, rats, guinea pigs and other species. Effects of transport, large temperature fluctuations, as well as, changes in feed, water and housing conditions are physiological stressors which can impact both animal health status and research results.

Policy: Following transport to a campus facility, animals should be maintained in their home cages/pens for at least 48 hours prior to use in teaching or research activities. This is considered to be a minimum amount of time to allow for a period of initial physiologic, psychologic, and nutritional stabilization. The length of time necessary for stabilization depends on the species involved, type and duration of transport, and intended use of the animals. The researcher should evaluate whether additional stabilization time would be necessary and appropriate. In accordance with USDA policy, entrance physical exams are required on all USDA- regulated animal species prior to their use in research or teaching activities. These exams will be conducted by DAR or AACUP designated veterinary staff during the 48-hour acclimation period whenever possible; however, it may be necessary in some instances to extend the acclimation period to allow for completion of the required entrance physical exams.

Animals may be excluded from coverage of this policy and utilized within 48 hours of arrival for the following reasons:

1. Animals are to undergo immediate terminal procedures
2. PI provides justification explaining why stabilization is not necessary for their approved animal use.

Exceptions to the policy are reviewed and approved by the Division of Animal Resources (DAR) or Agricultural Animals Care and Use Program (AACUP) veterinary staff, or referred to the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for action.

Reference(s)

- Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Guide), NRC, 1996
- Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Agricultural Research and Teaching, FASS, 1999

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