
Valdosta State University Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee

Standard Operating Procedure 004

SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION OF ANIMAL ACTIVITY TO ENSURE ANIMAL WELFARE

PURPOSE: The Valdosta State University Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) has the authority to suspend or terminate animal activity to ensure the welfare of the animals. Suspension or termination may result from violation of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal Welfare Regulations, the U.S. Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Animals, the National Research Council's *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, or the approved animal use protocol. Suspension or termination may also occur if it is determined that an approved animal activity results in more pain or distress to the animals than anticipated or the welfare of the animals is otherwise negatively affected. Finally, suspension or termination may be necessary if unanticipated events occur that threaten the welfare of the animals.

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS:

Activity – An element of research, testing, or teaching procedures that involves the care and/or use of animals. IACUC approval must be obtained prior to any activity involving the use of animals. Excluded under this definition are activities involving only observation that do not interfere or interact with the animals. For example, using feeders or providing animals with shelter would not be excluded.

Animal – Any live non-human vertebrate animal used or intended for use in research, training, experimentation, testing, propagation, or related purpose, with the exclusion of embryos, tissue, and other biological samples.

- ♦ For embryos, the point in development at which oviparous, ovoviviparous, and viviparous species become regulated animals is specified by the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW). Viviparous and ovoviviparous species become regulated at parturition from the maternal animal. Oviparous species become regulated when they hatch from the egg. For fish, the VSU IACUC has determined a similar stage in development as the "buttoned-up" stage (when the embryo has fully absorbed the yolk sac and must forage on its own).
- ♦ For tissues and other biological samples, only those that have been collected from a live animal by a Valdosta State University investigator are regulated.

Euthanasia – The humane destruction of an animal accomplished by a method that produces rapid unconsciousness and subsequent death without evidence of pain or distress, or a method that utilizes anesthesia produced by an agent that causes painless loss of consciousness and subsequent death.

Institutional Official – The individual at a research facility or institution who is authorized to legally commit on behalf of the research facility or institution that federal animal care and use

regulations are being met and that appropriate resources are committed to the animal care and use program.

Principal Investigator – A faculty member or student who is responsible for a proposing and implementing a protocol to conduct animal research or to utilize animals in testing or instruction.

EUTHANASIA OF ANIMALS IN PAIN OR DISTRESS: The Attending Veterinarian, or his/her designee, has unilateral authority to euthanize an animal in extreme distress or pain that cannot be alleviated if euthanasia is determined to be in the best interest of the animal. The Attending Veterinarian, or his/her designee, will make a reasonable attempt to receive advice from the Principal Investigator before the decision to euthanize is made. A written record of such action will be submitted to the IACUC on the next working day. This report will indicate whether there were facility, husbandry, or programmatic deficiencies that led to the need for euthanasia.

SUSPENSION OR TERMINATION PROCEDURES: The IACUC Chair and/or the Attending Veterinarian may, on an emergency basis, immediately and unilaterally suspend an animal activity, either in full or in part, if the welfare of animals is in current or imminent jeopardy. The IACUC Chair and/or the Attending Veterinarian shall be solely responsible for determining whether current or imminent jeopardy exists. Following emergency suspension of the animal activity, the IACUC Chair shall convene the IACUC within five business days of the emergency suspension.

Any continuation of an emergency suspension or a termination of animal activity, in whole or in part, shall be voted on at a convened meeting of the IACUC at which a quorum is present. Actions shall require an affirmative vote of the majority of the members present. The IACUC shall also develop a recommended corrective action plan for any suspended animal activity.

REPORTING PROCEDURES: The Chair of the IACUC and/or the Veterinarian shall immediately report a suspension or termination to the Institutional Official (IO), including reasons for the action, and shall present the IACUC's recommended corrective action plan, if applicable.

The IO cannot overturn an IACUC suspension or termination, and the IO is required to take corrective action. If the suspended or terminated animal activity involves USDA-covered species or federal funding, the IO shall promptly report the suspension or termination, the circumstances surrounding the suspension or termination, and the corrective action taken to the Southern Regional Director of Animal Care, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the funding agency.

If the suspended or terminated animal activity involves U.S. Public Health Service funding, the IO shall report the suspension or termination to the Director of Compliance at the USPHS Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare. After IACUC and IO review and remedy, a formal report will be filed with OLAW that contains a full explanation of circumstances of the suspension or termination, a description of corrective actions taken, any minority views filed by IACUC members, and the status of the Principal Investigator's research program. This report shall be filed within three months of the suspension or termination

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR APPEAL: The Principal Investigator for any animal activity that has been suspended or terminated by the IACUC may appeal that action and request another review based on the correction of misinformation or additional information not available at the time of the initial review.