GUIDELINES FOR COUNTING ANIMAL NUMBERS

The following guidelines are provided to ensure that animal numbers are counted accurately and consistently by personnel authorized to track animal numbers in the IACUC database.

Scope:

This guideline applies to all animals produced or used under the auspices of a WSU IACUC-approved protocol regardless of location or species.

Principle:

According to federal regulations, all vertebrate animals used in teaching, testing, exhibition, and research are to be accounted for by the Institution. This accounting is done via approval of animal numbers on IACUC protocols and it is incumbent upon the institution to ensure the approved number of animals is not exceeded.

The NIH/OLAW further mandates that institutions appropriately monitor and document numbers of all animals acquired (through breeding or other means) and used in approved activities and not to exclude genetic culls or those produced in excess of need.

Guidelines:

Guidelines for counting animal numbers in vivaria or housing facilities:

- Count all live births (but don’t count still born animals)
- Count all animals that arrive alive from a commercial vendor or other source.
- To avoid double counting, don’t count newborns against the breeding protocol if it is known that they’ll be used under a different protocol. Instead, list them only on the protocol under which they will be used, under appropriate pain level.
- When originally entered, animals should be listed under their approved or intended pain category if known.
- Animals undergoing standard husbandry type procedures (genotyping, identification marking, vaccinations, etc) may be listed under the “B” category. Experimental procedures would increase the category to a “C” or above.
Accounting for multiple uses of animals:

In some circumstances, the same animal may be used for multiple procedures (e.g. blood draw and physical exam; or Stock animals and Prolonged restraint; or Tissue harvesting and antibody production etc.).

- If multiple procedures are done under the auspices of different protocols, the animal should be counted once against each protocol that it is used for.

- If multiple procedures are done under the auspices of a single protocol, an individual animal should only be counted once on that protocol.
  - No matter how many different procedures may be performed, the animal is still only counted one time per protocol. Performing multiple procedures on a single animal should be written in the IACUC protocol and approved by the committee before work can begin.

- If the individual animal is counted against a protocol, is then transferred to a different protocol (which it should be also counted against), and then returns to the original protocol, it should not be counted again against the original protocol. In other words, an individual animal should only be counted one time against a protocol no matter how many different times it leaves and then returns to that protocol.

The counting of animal numbers is crucial for ensuring that more animals are not used on a project than were approved by the IACUC. Using more animal numbers than approved is a violation of federal law.

Training for entering animal numbers is available via IACUC Office. Call the IACUC Coordinator at 335-7951 or email iacuc@wsu.edu to schedule one.

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