



IACUC Policy 300 : Diet Restriction of Animals
SPECIAL/REGULATED DIETS/WATER/HOUSING POLICY

Policy

The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* indicates that topics to be considered in the animal use protocol include nonstandard housing and husbandry requirements. This policy ensures the welfare of research animals undergoing nonstandard husbandry procedures (fasting, feeding/watering or special housing conditions) provided by investigators.

Definitions

- A. Special diets: Any diet or water that replaces the standard animal diet or water.
- B. Regulated diets: Diet or water that deviates from LAC-TU Standard Operating Procedures. If there is any portion of the day where food or water is not available, it is considered regulated.
- C. Fasting: For studies fasting food not water in mice, rats and hamsters under 100g involving deprivation of 16 hours or less, and likewise for periods of 24 hours or less for rabbits and rats weighing over 100g
- D. Special housing conditions: Conditions that replace standard housing conditions, such as extended exposure to cold to induce torpor, exposure to nonstandard temperatures for the study of thermoregulation, or housing of animals in metabolic cages.

Responsibilities

- A. Principal Investigator (PI) – The PI is responsible for ensuring that all laboratory personnel who oversee nonstandard husbandry procedures for research animals understand and abide by this policy.
- B. Laboratory Animal Center Staff (LACS) – Animal care personnel are responsible for communicating problems with the monitoring documentation (currently cage cards and daily log) for animals undergoing nonstandard husbandry procedures and reverting animals to standard husbandry conditions if appropriate.

C. Thammasat University Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) – Nonstandard husbandry procedures for research animals must be described and justified in the Animal Use Protocol and approved by the IACUC before implementation.

Procedures

- A. If animals are being fasted, a card indicating the start and end (date and time) of the fast must be placed on each cage of fasting animals. “fasting” cards for this purpose are available from LACS. If it is a one-time fast, a feeding/care log is not needed. A special care log sheet must be posted and maintained in each room where animals are being fed special or regulated diets/water, or are being maintained under special housing conditions. The log must clearly designate start and end dates for that month of this special procedure. Updated contact names and emergency phone numbers must also be included on this sheet.
- B. Each cage of animals must be clearly marked with a “special diet/water” cage card that correspond to the feeding/care log (a special care log sheet is attached; cage cards and logs are available from LACS). The cards should indicate the start and end dates of the procedure. However, if this is to be continuous over many months, this information may be noted on the cage card (e.g., “ongoing”, “always”, “daily”). If special procedures are complex and/or entail more than simple dietary changes, a daily check list, as outlined in the PI's Animal Use Protocol, must be incorporated with the special care log sheet and must be maintained and posted in the animal housing area.
- C. When returning care to LACS, the PI must do all of the following:
 1. Supply all cages with standard diet and/or water
 2. Remove “special diet/water” cards from all cages. “Special diet/water” cards may be placed behind standard cage cards for later use, but the standard cage card must be visible so that all cages appear normal to LACS animal care staff.
 3. Indicate return to LACS care clearly, with appropriate dates, on the feeding/care log, or remove the special care log sheet and maintain with lab records.
- D. Due to the fragile nature of many special diets, the level of food available to each animal must be checked a minimum once a day daily. Stored special diets or supplements must be covered and clearly labeled, noting contents, responsible investigator and expiration date.

- E. Animals that are on regulated diets/water or in special housing conditions must be checked daily including weekends. A description of acceptable amount of food/water (e.g., food hopper may only contain several pieces of food or might be empty at times) should be included on the special care log sheet.
- F. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the LACS Veterinarian staff at 02-5644440 ext. 7560