

Animal Research Review Panel

Guideline 16, March 2002

Supervision of Animal Supply by Animal Ethics Committees

1. Introduction

The Animal Research Act requires that Animal Ethics Committees (AECs) supervise activities related to the supply of animals for use in research.

The supply of animals for research encompasses obtaining, breeding, nurturing, keeping and transporting animals for the purpose of them being supplied for use in connection with animal research.

The responsibility of an AEC to supervise animal supply activities at its establishment applies regardless of whether the establishment requires an animal supply licence for the animal supply activities it undertakes.

The degree to which facets of this policy are implemented by establishments and the intensity of AEC monitoring of animal supply activities will be influenced by the individual situation present at each establishment. Factors that will play a part in this include the number and species of animals held and whether animal breeding is conducted.

2. Animal Research Act

Section 14 (1A) of the Animal Research Act 1985 states:

“The animal care and ethics committee for a licensed animal supplier has the following functions:

(a) the supervision of the supply of animals for use in connection with animal research by the animal supplier, and

(b) such other functions as may be conferred or imposed on it by the Code of Practice”.

In addition Section 40 (2) states:

“An animal supplier’s licence is not to authorise, or purport to authorise, the supply of animals otherwise than:

(a) with the approval, and in accordance with the directions, of the animal care and ethics committee for the animal supplier, and

(b) in accordance with the Code of Practice”.

Establishments and individuals breeding animals for their **own use** are exempt from the requirement to have an Animal Supplier’s Licence as long as certain conditions are met. These are:

- * The supply of animals is for a research purpose approved by the AEC
- * The AEC approves the way in which the animals are managed and cared for
- * The AEC is satisfied that the use of animals is to be within the establishment (or by the individual) only
- * The AEC has approved the breeding and management of the animals as part of a protocol. (Regulation Schedule 3 Clause 5 (2))

Information on animal supply licences is contained in Fact Sheet 6: *Application for an Animal Supplier's Licence* which is available from the Animal Welfare Unit of NSW Agriculture.

3. Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes

Section 4 of the Code of Practice deals with "Acquisition and care of animals in breeding and holding areas".

In addition, Clause 2.2.1 states:

"AECs must have terms of reference which include provisions to:

(i) monitor the acquisition, transport, production, housing, care, use and disposal of animals".

Clause 2.2.26 states:

"AECs must ensure that adequate records are kept on the acquisition, breeding, health, care, housing, use and disposal of animals".

Clause 2.2.27 states:

"Inspections of all animal housing and laboratory areas must be conducted regularly by members of the AEC and appropriate records maintained to ensure compliance with the Code".

4. Purpose of supervision by AECs

The purpose of AEC supervision of the supply of animals for use in research is to ensure that the requirements of the Animal Research Act and the Code of Practice are implemented.

This includes ensuring that the principles of reduction and refinement in animal use are put into practice in all areas related to animal supply activities.

AECs need to be satisfied that the breeding or obtaining of animals is justified and that appropriate procedures are in place for all aspects of animal supply to ensure the welfare of the animals held.

5. Carrying out the supervisory role

5.1 Applications/ protocols

To ensure the AEC is informed about supply activities and to assist in monitoring of these activities, an application form for breeding (or obtaining) animals should be completed by the person responsible for breeding or obtaining animals. The form should be submitted to the AEC for consideration. A single "blanket" application and AEC approval may be sufficient for most situations within an institution (for example to cover the routine production of mice, rats and guinea pigs). A sample application form is attached. The application should be reviewed every 3 years.

Specific application would then need to be made for “special purpose” breeding such as the breeding of transgenic and immunocompromised animals. Depending on the situation, it may be appropriate for approval for this type of activity to be sought from the AEC as part of a research application or as a separate application for breeding. Note that any breeding which involves animals which have been the subject of genetic modification (involving the introduction of foreign DNA into cells or whole animals) must comply with clauses 3.3.54 to 3.3.57 of the Code of Practice.

5.2 Standard Operating Procedures

Standard operating procedures related to animal supply (for example procedures for transporting mice to and from the supply facility) may be developed and should be approved by the AEC. Clause 4.5.7 of the Code of Practice notes practices for which standard operating procedures should be developed. A review of standard operating procedures should be conducted by the AEC at least every 3 years.

5.3 Facilities

Facilities for housing and transporting animals for supply should be assessed and inspected in the same manner that research facilities are assessed and inspected (See ARRP Policy 13: *Inspections by AECs*). Regular inspections should be conducted by the AEC. A minimum requirement is that inspections are conducted annually.

5.4 Records

Clause 4.5.8 of the Code of Practice describes records that should be kept for animal supply facilities. These records should be viewed by the AEC on a regular basis (for example at the time of inspection) and a collation of the records provided in reports to the AEC for assessment by the AEC (see item 5.5 Reports).

5.5 Reports

Reporting to the AEC on supply activities should be carried out at least every 6 months, and more often if determined necessary by the AEC.

To assist the AEC in monitoring the management of breeding colonies and to help ensure that overproduction is avoided, the following information should be included in reports submitted to the AEC for review:

- * the fertility, fecundity, morbidity and mortality of all breeding colonies;
- * the number of animals culled and the reasons for these numbers.

A sample report form is attached. It should be noted that reports may be requested by AECs in any form that assists them in assessing the information provided (for example in table form).

5.6 Checklist of animal supply activities to be supervised

The following is a checklist of some supply activities which AECs should supervise:

Obtaining animals

- source
- suitability of animals for intended research purpose
- acclimatisation
- quarantine

Transporting animals

- type
- duration
- animal containers / confinement of animals
- numbers of animals
- temperature control
- ventilation
- light
- noise
- bedding
- food / water

Housing animals

- buildings
- cages / pens / tubs
- light
- humidity
- temperature
- air quality
- noise
- shelter
- bedding / nesting material
- duration held

Care and management of animals

- health monitoring and care
- identification
- handling
- environmental enrichment
- social grouping / isolation
- staff numbers and competence

Breeding animals

- breeding programme
- numbers born
- numbers culled (healthy)
- numbers died (illness / injury)
- numbers supplied

Supply for research

- management of the supply of animals for approved research protocols within the institution
- management of the supply of animals external to the institution

Disposing of animals excess to supply needs

- destination
- methods of euthanasia
- expertise of operators

Animal Research Review Panel Sample Form - Application for Animal Ethics Committee Supervision of the Supply of Animals for Research

GENERAL INFORMATION

Under the Animal Research Act, the supply of animals for research encompasses obtaining, breeding, nurturing and keeping animals for the purpose of them being supplied for use in connection with animal research.

It is the responsibility of the **animal supplier** to ensure that all facets of animal care and use meet the requirements of the Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes. This includes a responsibility to protect and promote the welfare of animals used.

The Code of Practice embodies the principles of:

- * Reduction of animal use
- * Replacement of animal use
- * Refinement of animal use.

It is important to consider these principles when supplying animals for research.

Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) supervision is required for all supply activities.

The AEC must assess the impact on animals of all procedures during the supply operation.

The application should therefore focus on **what is happening to animals and what is being done to ensure their well-being**. It is important that this information is presented in a way that shows clearly what is happening to individual animals from the time they are born or obtained until their final destination. The impact of procedures needs to be clearly detailed. Factors that will impact on animals such as housing (type, duration, opportunity for social interaction) should be considered.

In preparing an application it is important for applicants to remember the composition of the AEC. Applications must be written primarily for an interested, intelligent person without a scientific background, not for a specialist. The use of specialist language is not helpful to the committee and may delay processing of an application while explanations are sought.

Animal suppliers should be familiar with:

- * Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (6th edition, 1997), published by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NH&MRC).
- * NSW Animal Research Act 1985.
- * NSW Animal Research Regulation 1995.
- * Animal Research Review Panel Guideline16: Supervision of Animal Supply by Animal Ethics Committees

Animal Research Review Panel Sample Form

APPLICATION FOR ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEE SUPERVISION OF THE SUPPLY OF ANIMALS FOR RESEARCH

NOTE: The supply of animals for research encompasses obtaining, breeding, nurturing, keeping and transporting animals for the purpose of them being supplied for use in connection with animal research.

PERSONNEL

1. Name of the owner/director of the supply unit

2. Address for correspondence:

Telephone: (work)

(home)

(mobile)

Facsimile:

E-mail:

3. Name of the manager of the animal supply unit:

The manager is the person with chief responsibility for the day to day running of the animal supply unit.

4. Provide details of the relevant qualifications and experience of the manager for this position:

5. List the qualifications, training and relevant experience of all animal care staff.

SUPPLY

6. What species (and strains if applicable) of animals will be supplied for research?

7. Provide details of the institution's animal supply licence (dates of licence, species approved for supply and conditions of licence)

(For institutions which hold an animal supply licence)

8. Are animals to be supplied externally to other institutions?

If Yes, provide names of the institutions

9. Are animals to be supplied internally within the institution?

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- 10. How is it ensured that animals supplied internally are only supplied in approved numbers for approved research protocols?**

ANIMAL CARE AND HUSBANDRY

- 11. List the locations of animal holding facilities.**

- 12. For each species of animal, provide a short description of the animal holding areas.**

Information should be included on:

- type of housing;
- the maximum number of animals which can be held;
- details of the size and construction of pens, cages and containers and the number of animals held in each;
- type of bedding/litter provided (if applicable);
- environmental variables (light, humidity, temperature, ventilation);
- if housed outdoors, details of shelter provided and means of protection from predators;
- environmental enrichment

- 13. Provide a short description of normal animal care, husbandry and health monitoring procedures, attaching copies of any documented procedures.**

- 14. How are animals identified?**

- 15. Detail the procedures for admission of new animals to the facility.**

- 16. What is the name of veterinarian or veterinary practice contacted when veterinary services are needed?**

- 17. Who will monitor the animals:**

Include names, qualifications and experience with the species being used

17.1 During weekdays?

17.2 At night (if applicable)?

17.3 During weekends and holidays?

- 18. Identify possible emergencies which might arise.**

- 19. List the procedures in place to deal with these emergencies.**
- 20. Who will be responsible for the management of emergencies and how will it be ensured that the nominee(s) can be contacted?**
- 21. How are animals transported to and from the supply unit?**
Give details of the vehicles and animal containers used and an approximation of the maximum duration of transport.
- 22. What types of stress may be experienced by animals during transport?**
- 23. What procedures are in place to minimise stress during transport?**

BREEDING PROGRAMMES

- 24. Provide details of the breeding programmes employed for each species.**

Information should be included on:

- the type of system used (eg harem system for mice);
- male: female ratio for breeding groups;
- timing/programme for mating;
- average time breeding animals are kept;
- criteria used in making a decision to cull breeding animals.

- 25. Is the breeding programme tailored to requirements and how is overproduction avoided?**

FATE OF ANIMALS

- 24. What happens to animals that are surplus to supply needs?**
- 25. What happens to animals when they are no longer useful?**
- 26. If animals are to be euthanased:**
- 26.1 How will this be done?**
- 26.2 Where will it be carried out?**
- 26.3 Who will carry it out and what is their experience in the technique(s) to be used?**

Declaration of Responsibilities

I declare that the supply of animals for use in connection with animal research will conform with the NSW Animal Research Act (1985) and Animal Research Regulation (1995) and the general principles of the NH&MRC "Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes". I accept responsibility for the conduct of all procedures detailed in this application and for the supervision of all personnel delegated to perform any such procedures.

I confirm that all personnel have read this application and have agreed to comply with procedures described and any conditions imposed by the Animal Ethics Committee.

Owner / Director

Date

Manager/Person in Charge

Date

Acknowledgment

Thanks are extended to the Director-General's Animal Ethics Committee and its Executive Officer, Mrs Amanda Paul, for the use of its supply application form in developing the Animal Research Review Panel's sample form.

Animal Research Review Panel Sample Form: Animal Supply Report Form

*Please give details for each species / strain separately.

* Where breeding activities for a species/strain do not overlap with activities where animals are introduced and held for subsequent supply to researchers, then it may assist the AEC to have these activities reported separately.

Report for the period:

1. Number of animals held at the beginning of the reporting period
2. Number of female breeders held at the beginning of the reporting period
3. Number of male breeders held at the beginning of the reporting period
4. Details on the turnover of animals during the reporting period
 - 4.1 Number introduced
 - 4.2 Number born
 - 4.3 Number sold / supplied
 - 4.4 Number died or euthanased (illness / injury)
 - 4.5 Number euthanased (healthy culls)
 - 4.6 Number euthanased (retired breeders)
 - 4.7 Number and percentage pre-weaning mortalities (illness / injury)
 - 4.8 Number and percentage pre-weaning mortalities (healthy culls)
5. Number of animals held at the end of the reporting period
6. Number of female breeders held at the end of the reporting period
7. Number of male breeders held at the end of the reporting period
8. The reasons for the number of healthy animals culled during the reporting period
9. Details of any disease in animals during the reporting period
10. Details of the causes of death due to illness during the reporting period
11. Details of any animals injured during the reporting period
12. Details of any health monitoring activities conducted during the reporting period
13. Details of individuals or institutions to whom animals were supplied during the reporting period
14. Numbers of animals supplied to each individual or institution during the reporting period
15. Details of the source of introduced animals during the reporting period
16. Number of animals introduced from each source during the reporting period
17. Details of any problems experienced during the reporting period
18. Please attach records of breeding performance (by room if applicable) for the reporting period
19. Details of any areas where the Animal Ethics Committee may assist the Animal Supply Unit

Signed:

Position:

Date: