



**Title:** Rodent Health Surveillance

**Policy Number:** 006

**Policy Intent:** The intent of this policy is to describe measures intended to protect established research animals at TTU from potential pathogens and infections from non-commercial or non-approved source rodents.

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### **1. Purpose**

To prevent the inadvertent introduction of infected rodents, rodent products and rodent pathogens, and because rodents from other sources and institutions may be a potential source of infectious agents not present in the rodent colony at Texas Tech University. A health surveillance program shall be maintained for all rodents entering from commercial, non-commercial and/or non-approved source.

### **2. Background**

The management of a vigorous research program necessitates the movement of animals and other rodent products from one animal colony to another. This movement creates opportunities for the introduction of unwanted pathogens into established colonies, which can have an adverse effect on the animals, research and personnel, resulting in the loss of valuable resources and/or pose a human health hazard. For example, Hantavirus is present in some rats and wild rodents poses a risk to both established rodent colonies and to the humans who come into contact with these potentially infected animals. Current federal regulations pertaining to the movement of laboratory rodents or their products relate mainly to organisms causing disease in humans or domestic livestock. Therefore, it is important for TTU to supplement these regulations with policies and procedures designed to protect our rodent colonies and research mission. It is the goal of this policy to establish a dynamic balance between the need for animal movement and the protection of both human health and research critical to investigators here at TTU.

### **3. IACUC Policy**

The IACUC is committed to reduce the risk of introducing unwanted pathogens (infectious and zoonotic) into animal facilities and protect the research mission of Texas Tech University. It is, therefore, the policy of the IACUC, that all rodents will be monitored for disease through a sentinel rodent monitoring program, and furthermore, that all rodents obtained or transferred from non-approved commercial vendors or a non-commercial source must undergo a minimum 6-8 week quarantine period, during which they will be screened and treated for a variety of



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common pathogens. This mandatory isolation period is required regardless of any animal health screening information that may be provided by the transferring institution. Use of/contact with quarantined animals is strictly limited; research personnel may only access the quarantine housing rooms if prior arrangements have been made with ACS staff. Rodents from non-approved or non-commercial sources shall not be introduced into TTU animal facilities without prior approval of the Attending Veterinarian. Even though health information is required prior to shipment, these animals are not considered “free” from rodent pathogens until they complete an 6-8-week quarantine period, prior to release to the investigator and before being housed in a TTU vivarium.

### 4. Definitions

#### A. Typical Infectious agents:

1. Mice: norovirus, parvovirus, mouse hepatitis virus, rotavirus, Theiler’s murine encephalomyelitis virus, *Helicobacter* spp., *Pasturella pneumotropica*, pinworms and fur mites.
2. Rats: *Pneumocystis carinii*, parvovirus, rat theilovirus, *Helicobacter* spp., *P. pneumotropica* and pinworms

B. Approved supplier – Commercial vendor. This list includes, but may not be limited to, Charles River Laboratories, Harlan, Jackson Labs and Taconic. These are suppliers from which we can import animals and place them directly into one of our housing areas upon arrival. These vendors have intensive breeding and health surveillance programs and provide high quality research rodents. Animals from these vendors are considered free of rodent pathogens.

C. Approved supplier – Non-commercial vendor. This category includes all animals that originate from other research institutions (e.g. established lines that are from one investigator to another). While these institutions may have originally obtained animals from an approved vendor, vivarium standards and potential infectious agent exposure, requires these animals are not considered “free” from rodent pathogens and must go through the 6-8-week quarantine.

D. Non-approved supplier. This is an animal source from which we will not accept animals under any condition. This is usually due to the health status of the animals.

### 5. References

Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2131 et. seq.), as amended, and implementing regulations at 9 C.F.R., Part 1, et. seq. <http://www.nal.usda.gov/awic/legislat/awa.htm> and <http://www.nal.usda.gov/awic/legislat/usdaleg1.htm>

9 C.F.R. Part 3 [http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx\\_03/9cfr3\\_03.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_03/9cfr3_03.html)

Public Health Service Act, Sections 361-369 (42 U.S.C. 264-272), as amended and it’s implementing regulations at 42 C.F.R. Parts 71 and 72 <http://www.fda.gov/opacom/laws/phsvcact/phsvcact.htm>