



Title: Identification of Animals

Policy Number: 022

Policy Intent: The intent of this policy is to describe the need and options for identification of animals engaged in an IACUC approved activity at Texas Tech University.

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1. Background

- A. The Animal Welfare Act, PHS Policy, and the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (The Guide) require that animals engaged in studies be properly identified to assure adequate provision of care and limitation of distress and discomfort. The Guide also includes an encouragement to consider identification in field studies, and places identification on the same level of significance as sedation, anesthesia, recovery, holding, and transportation. According to The Guide, there are several forms of identification which may be considered for effective and consistent identification of animals. According to the Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching (The Ag Guide) medical records need to include animal identification.

2. Policy

- A. All animals at TTU shall be identified for record keeping and health purposes. This policy applies to all animals that are used for research, testing, or teaching at TTU, whether on the main TTU campus, satellite locations or in a remote, or field research site; or has any association to a TTU IACUC approved study.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following examples of methods of animal identification are for illustrative purposes, and do not comprise a comprehensive list. Means of animal identification include room, rack, pen, stall, and cage cards with written, bar-coded, or radio frequency identification (RFID) information. Animals may wear collars, bands, or be marked by colored stains, ear notches/punches and tags, tattoos, or subcutaneous transponders.

Animals may be identified as a group when the animals are all held and managed in the same manner (e.g., four mice in a cage being used in the same study) or when they are being minimally managed for later use (e.g., three guinea pigs housed in the same cage for growth and maturation, a herd of sheep held on pasture to provide time for disease development).

Group Identification/Cage Card Identification:



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- A. The goal of group/cage card identification is to establish a relationship of responsibility, confirm the identity of the animals within, and provide a minimum of information about the animal which could assist the animal care staff with initial assessment of the animal if it appeared abnormal.
- 1) A group record must identify the number of animals in the group at the time each entry is made:
 - a. Size, sex, color, or other distinguishing characteristics which will allow a clear confirmation of this record for these animals,
 - b. Diagnostic, therapeutic, or experimental plans for the group of animals.
 - 2) Identification cards commonly include the following information:
 - a. Name of animal (horses, dogs or cats)
 - b. Colored picture of animal (dogs, cats)
 - c. Tags, tattoos or other permanent ID
 - d. Strain or stock (rodents) or breed (larger animals)
 - e. Names and contact information for the responsible investigator(s) or laboratory designated person
 - f. Pertinent dates (e.g., arrival date, birth date, etc.)
 - g. Protocol number
 - h. Genotype information (when applicable, should also be included).
 - i. Consistent, unambiguous abbreviations (e.g. B6, ICR, SW) should be used when the full genotype nomenclature is too lengthy.

Individual Identification: Animals should be identified by individual records when they are held as individuals (e.g. a rabbit in a cage, a pig in a pen), when they are receiving diagnostic or therapeutic care which others would not receive at the same point in time, or when keeping individual records would enhance clarity as to the needs, provisions, and oversight of an animals.

- A. Special Identification Techniques:
- 1) Freeze brands are preferred over hot brands on livestock as a means of permanent identification.
 - 2) Under all circumstances, aseptic practices should be followed.
 - 3) Use of anesthesia or analgesia should be commensurate with the age of the animals.
 - 4) Ear tags or ear punch/notch
 - 5) Ear tattoo or tail tattoo (mice)

4. Association with protocol

Acceptable methods of animal document association may range from information on identification cards to detailed computerized records for individual animals. The style or type of document required should be based upon the type of animal, the use of those animals, and the clinical needs of an individual animal.

5. Exceptions

- Studies that have been approved as strictly “observational” by the IACUC Committee.



- Wildlife field studies

6. References

- Guide for the Care and Use of Agriculture Animals, FASS 2010
- Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th Edition
- AWA Section 2141; 9 CFR, Part 2, Sections 2.38(g), 2.35(b), 2.50, 2.75(a)
- https://osp.od.nih.gov/wp-content/uploads/NIH_Guidelines.html# Section III-E-3. Experiments