



Title: Enrichment

Policy Number: 029

Policy Intent: The intent of this policy is to ensure the highest quality health and well-being among animals used for research, teaching and demonstration.

Table of Contents

- 1. Purpose**
- 2. Background**
- 3. Policy**
- 4. Cleaning/Sanitizing**
- 5. References**

1. Purpose

- A. The TTU IACUC takes the stance that environmental enrichment (EE) has an important role in attaining great care for the animals in our charge. To ensure the highest quality health and well-being among animals used for research, teaching and demonstration.

2. Background

- A. Environmental enrichment is the use of physical or social aspects to improve the quality of life and enhance the physiological and psychological health and well-being of confined animals. EE provides animals with sensory and motor stimulation; and allows for the opportunity for species-specific behaviors and to explore and interact with their environment.
- B. The goal of EE should be to improve the biological function of the animal by:
 - 1) Increasing the number and range of normal/natural behaviors.
 - 2) Preventing the development of abnormal behaviors or reduce their frequency or severity.
 - 3) Increasing positive utilization of the environment.
 - 4) Increasing the animal's ability to cope with behavioral and physiological challenges.

3. Policy

- A. Environmental enrichment will be provided to all laboratory animals and USDA covered species unless an exemption from the enrichment program is justified in the IACUC protocol, or for animal health reasons as indicated by the University veterinarians. Enrichment is highly encouraged for the use of agriculture and wildlife species. Enrichment may be provided in various forms; social, occupational, physical, sensory, nutritional, natural.
 - 1) Social enrichment involves direct or indirect contact with conspecifics of the same species, a companion animal of a different species or with humans.
 - 2) Occupational enrichment includes psychological enrichment and exercise.
 - 3) Physical enrichment includes altering the size or complexity of the enclosure with objects, substrates or structures.
 - 4) Sensory enrichment includes visual, auditory, and olfactory stimuli.
 - 5) Nutritional enrichment is presenting varied or novel foods, changing food delivery, or providing special treats.



Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee™

6) Natural enrichment would be allowing animals to live in their natural environment (e.g. pasture).

- B. When possible, environmental enrichment will be provided on a rotational basis to keep objects novel and encourage exploratory behaviors. Details about enrichment items may be found in species-specific husbandry SOPs.
- C. Most animals used in research and teaching at TTU are considered social species, therefore, it is standard practice to pair or group house animals. However, when single housing is scientifically justified in the approved IACUC protocol, extra enrichment opportunities should be provided to improve the lives of non-socialized animals (see Social Housing Policy 27).

4. Cleaning/Sanitizing

- A. Clean, disinfect, sanitize or discard as needed or during the cage cleaning and sanitation schedule.
- B. If a device's integrity is questioned, the use of the device will be discontinued immediately. Devices are evaluated during change outs or cleaning to ensure free of sharp edges, defects, cracks, or other diminished integrity, and disposed of and replaced if evidence found.

5. References

- *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, 8th Edition
- *Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching*, 3rd Edition