



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
CB# 7193, 1140 Bioinformatics
(919) 966-5569 (919) 966-8429 (fax)
iacuc@med.unc.edu

UNC-CH Policy on Housing and Breeding Rats

In accordance with the recommendations of the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, the UNC-CH program abides by the following housing standards for rats:

❖ Regular Plastic Rat Cage

Material: Clear or yellow polycarbonate
Size: 19" w x 10.5" l x 8" h
Available floor space per cage: 143 sq. in.
Height requirement: 7"

<u>WEIGHT</u>	<u># OF ANIMALS PER CAGE</u>	<u>FLOOR AREA PER ANIMAL</u>
< 100 grams	8	17 sq. in. space required
100-200 grams	6	23 sq. in. space required
200-300 grams	4	29 sq. in. space required
300-400 grams	3	40 sq. in. space required
400-500 grams	2	60 sq. in. space required
> 500 grams	2	70 sq. in. space required

❖ Large Plastic Rat Cage

Material: Clear or yellow polycarbonate
Size: 22" w x 12" l x 8" h
Available floor space per cage: 202 sq. in.
Height requirement: 7"

<u>WEIGHT</u>	<u># OF ANIMALS PER CAGE</u>	<u>FLOOR AREA PER ANIMAL</u>
< 100 grams	11	17 sq. in. space required
100-200 grams	8	23 sq. in. space required
200-300 grams	6	29 sq. in. space required
300-400 grams	5	40 sq. in. space required
400-500 grams	3	60 sq. in. space required
> 500 grams	2	70 sq. in. space required

Breeding and Weaning Requirements

The IACUC recognizes two breeding schemes:

- 1) Monogamous pairing (one male and one female): This is the preferred breeding scheme.
 - 2) Trio breeding (one male and two female): This scheme is allowed but requires frequent monitoring. Prior to parturition, one of the females must be removed.
- Multiple males are not allowed to occupy the same cage with a single female unless an "Exception" has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the IACUC.
 - Under no circumstances are two females allowed to occupy a cage with two litters.
 - No more than one male is allowed in a cage with a female and her litter.
 - Most rat strains are ready to wean at approximately three weeks of age. For weaker strains, the IACUC will consider exceptions when scientifically justified.
 - If continuous breeding is used, older litters must be weaned prior to parturition or as soon as the new litter is noted.

Breeder cages must legibly indicate the date of birth for all litters. This information must be provided by the research staff

It is the investigator's responsibility to ensure that their colony stays in compliance within UNC-CH guidelines. In order to aid the investigator to maintain compliance, DLAM personnel will place a yellow "Action Required Card" on cages that exceed the cage densities described above. The card will notify the investigator of the latest acceptable date by which the corrective action must have occurred. If the immediate welfare of the animals is not at risk, resolution will be required to occur within two days. However, if a situation is deemed too extreme to allow for the 48 hour grace period, DLAM personnel have the authority to correct the situation immediately, or require resolution by the end of the same day. If no action has taken place after the allotted time posted on the yellow "Action Required Card", DLAM personnel will correct the cage density and assess a service charge on a per cage basis. A limited extension of the two-day grace period may be allowed for cards placed the day before a weekend. **Please do not rely on the placement of the yellow card to manage your colony!**

The IACUC will consider exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis ONLY if the investigator provides scientific justification with documentation. The "Exception" form submitted to the IACUC must specify the scientific basis for the exception along with any documentation that can be provided for the request and approximate number of cages involved. The exception will not be in effect until the PI has received written notification from the IACUC

DLAM will notify the IACUC of any breeding colonies with inordinate numbers of cages requiring DLAM corrective actions. The IACUC will take appropriate actions up to and including modification or suspension of breeding privileges until the investigator improves the colony management.