

WVU IACUC POLICY: Reuse of Research Animals

Purpose

In order to use research animals wisely, but to assure that animals are not over used in research, the WVU IACUC has established a policy to clarify the requirements for reuse of vertebrate animals which have undergone a previous experimental procedure. This policy has been developed to ensure compliance with the Animal Welfare Act and Public Health Service Policy and to ensure humane care and use of vertebrate animals.

Policy

1. When animals are transferred between protocols, transfers must be reported to the Office of Laboratory Animal Resources (OLAR) via submission of an "Animal Transfer Form". Note that OLAR and the WVU IACUC have the right to deny a protocol-to-protocol transfer for any reason.
2. If the animal(s) to be transferred has been used for experimental procedures, approval must be obtained from the attending veterinarian or the WVU IACUC before the animal can be transferred and reused.
3. Reuse of animals for new studies on the same protocol requires veterinary inspection and approval.
4. Transfer of naïve* animals between protocols does not need prior approval but does require notification of OLAR via submission of an "Animal Transfer Form".
5. In no case may a veterinarian or the WVU IACUC independently approve a transfer that would involve a USDA-covered animal having multiple survival surgeries across protocols (i.e., one surgery on one protocol, and the second surgery on another protocol), this includes surgeries for sterilization. Such transfers require USDA approval following a request from the Institutional Official. If an animal is obtained from a vendor that has already undergone a surgical procedure and another surgical procedure will be completed under an approved WVU IACUC protocol, USDA approval is not required.
6. In cases where drugs have been administered to animals that could cause deleterious effects (such as muscle necrosis at the injection site), these should not be reused.
7. In general, Category B or C animals can be reused, however, when food restriction or other intervention are used, there may be a period of nonuse where animals are evaluated and allowed to return to baseline for not less than 1 month. The attending veterinarian or designee will determine if the animal is of appropriate health status to be used without a period of nonuse. Animals that do not return to normal health cannot be used subsequently.

*Examples of naïve animals include: excess from shipments, animals that have not had any research manipulation or unused offspring from breeding colonies.