



Policy on Reporting and Investigating Animal Welfare Concerns

The University of Georgia is committed to the humane care of the animals used in its research and instructional activities. The USDA Animal Welfare Act Regulations, the Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, and the NRC *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* outline institutional responsibilities for investigating, reviewing and reporting concerns related to animal care and use. Although some administrative methods may vary among colleges or facilities, this policy serves as the basic guide in resolving problems that may be encountered.

Any concerns or issues pertaining to animal welfare must be reported to appropriate personnel to ensure timely resolution. Such personnel include the facility supervisor, a URAR Veterinarian or veterinary technician, the IACUC Chair, or the Office of Animal Care and Use. Methods for contacting appropriate personnel must be posted in every UGA animal facility, are listed below, and can be found at <http://research.uga.edu/oacu/>.

An individual who identifies a concern should first attempt to resolve the issue at the most immediate administrative level – for example, the facility supervisor. It is most likely that the issue will be resolved by and between persons most directly involved in the situation. If there is no resolution or explanation offered, then the individual should move to the next level of responsibility. **However, if there is any doubt about how to proceed with the concern, questions and problems can be taken directly and at any time to any of the UGA officials identified in this policy.** Examples of reportable scenarios are outlined below.

Deficiencies in basic animal needs, extremes in environmental temperature, and illnesses not associated with the IACUC-approved use of the animal must be promptly reported. While the animal care supervisor should be informed about facility problems affecting or potentially affecting animal welfare, a URAR veterinarian or veterinary technician, or person in a similar role should be promptly informed about sick or injured animals.

Painful or stressful research procedures must be reviewed and approved by the IACUC before the study is initiated. Any concerns that an animal may be experiencing unnecessary or excessive distress or pain during or following an experimental procedure should initially be discussed with the Principal Investigator. In the event that an animal is endangered or stressed because of handler inexperience, personnel witnessing the situation should offer to help if they are competent in the procedure, or, if they are not competent in the procedure, find someone else who can assist. Such an incident must be reported to the facility supervisor. If the response is not satisfactory or if the response is delayed, then the situation must be reported to appropriate personnel, as described above.

Uncaring or cruel behavior toward animals will not be tolerated in any research or teaching facilities at UGA. If this type of behavior is witnessed or suspected, the incident or situation must be reported

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immediately to appropriate personnel as described above.

Individuals will not be reprimanded or discriminated against for reporting concerns, and anonymity will be protected to the greatest extent possible, should it be requested.

If an individual reports a situation to a facility supervisor, a URAR veterinarian or veterinary technician, or an administrator, the person receiving the report must acknowledge the report, assure the reporting individual that more details will be provided as soon as possible, and contact the UGA IACUC. Upon resolution, the individual who reported the concern must be notified of the outcome if they so desire.

The UGA IACUC is responsible for investigating, reviewing, and resolving any animal welfare concerns reported to it. The regional USDA veterinarian responsible for animal welfare can, upon request, investigate any concerns not appropriately addressed by the UGA IACUC.

Humane Care Confidential Contacts

IACUC@uga.edu

IACUC Coordinator: 706-542-4004

Office of Animal Care and Use: 706-542-5933

Emergency Animal Care Contact: 706-542-7204

Ethics and Compliance Reporting Hotline: 1-877-516-3467