Georgia State University
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
(IACUC)
It is the responsibility of the Georgia State University (GSU) Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) to ensure judicious and humane use of animals used in its teaching and research programs that is consistent with federal requirements.*

Policy on Weaning Mice

Weaning Mice

This policy describes the procedures for weaning mice. This policy is not mandatory but recommended for all researchers who maintain breeding colonies of genetically engineered mice (GEM) at Georgia State University. The purpose of the policy is to minimize adverse events associated with housing newly weaned GEMs. Some strains of GEMs have increased complications (i.e. illness, mortality) during weaning, as some strains are more “fragile” than other strains. We will refer to the GEMs with weaning complications as GEMWWC (genetically engineered mice with weaning complications). The GEMWWC strains will be identified by DAR and these strains will be required to adhere to the mouse weaning policy. DAR will notify respective labs, if they have any GEMWWC strains.

Training Requirements
Hands-on training is required for personnel who breed and wean strains of GEMWWC. Training will be provided through the Division of Animal Resources (DAR).

Delineation of Responsibilities
It is expected that both laboratory and DAR staff will provide appropriate care to all research animals on an ongoing basis. However, in situations where laboratory staff are breeding and weaning strains of GEMWWC, the laboratory is responsible for correctly setting up weanlings in new cages as described below. Once these animals are weaned, primary responsibility for their daily care shifts to the DAR animal care staff. However, as is the case in general, laboratory personnel are responsible for reporting to DAR any animal care issues that they observe as they are conducting other procedures with the research animals.

Weanling Cage Set Up

Cages
- To prevent overcrowding, mouse litters are to be weaned between 19 and 25 days postpartum. Exceptions are allowed, as indicated under the Special Circumstances section below. Regardless, it is the responsibility of the investigator to adhere to the maximum number of mice housed per cage policies:
  - 5 adult mice
  - Pair housed mice (1 female, 1 male): unrestricted number of pups
  - Breeding trios (2 females, 1 male): maximum of 12 pups per cage
- All weanling animals must be placed in a clean, standard rodent cage with food and water.
Water
- A fresh water bottle must be provided.

Food
- The food hoppers must be filled with chow appropriate for the particular strain.
- If breeding and weaning strains of GEMWWC, a portion cup must be placed in the bottom of the cage containing moistened rodent chow. The cup should be prepared by adding an excess of water to a few food pellets so that they become softened for easy consumption.

Verification by laboratory and DAR animal care personnel
- Once the weanling cage is set up, the laboratory member must initial and date a “Newly Weaned” card and insert it with the standard cage card such that it is visible to DAR animal care staff. These cards are provided by DAR (see Appendix A).
- By 5:00 pm of the day following initial set-up, DAR animal care staff must independently verify that the weaning cage is set up correctly and that the animals appear healthy. If this is the case, then the DAR animal care staff initial and date the weaning card.
- If the DAR animal care staff find that the cage has not been set up properly, they will correct the deficiencies upon discovery and initial and date the weaning card. They will then contact the lab and document the corrective care. A technician fee will apply for this additional care.

Subsequent Care
- Post-weaning, DAR animal care staff will monitor the animals on a daily basis.
- “Newly Weaned” cards will be removed at the discretion of DAR animal care staff (typically at the time of cage change).

Special Circumstances
The procedures indicated above are recommended for all genetically engineered mice (GEM) but required for genetically engineered mice with weaning complications (GEMWWC). It is understood that some strains of genetically engineered mice might require additional care, in those circumstances it is considered best practice for the laboratory staff to work with the veterinarian and DAR animal care personnel to develop specific programs of care for these strains. In these instances, the standard of care must be detailed in the IACUC protocol and the animal user should detail any special circumstances in the “Special Housing or Husbandry Requirements” section of the “Animal Requisition” form. Charges may apply if additional care is required. Issues to consider when developing a standard of care for a fragile strain/line include but are not limited to the following:
- Age of weaning past 25 days of age
- Addition of supplemental food/water sources such as hydration or nutrient gels

Appendix A: Newly Weanined Cage Card:
# NEWLY WEANED ANIMALS

(please initial and date each box as it is completed)

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<tr>
<th>Lab Setup</th>
<th>Day 1 DAR check</th>
<th>Cage ∆ DAR check</th>
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**Pertinent Regulations***

- U.S. Government Principles for the Utilization and Care of Vertebrate Animals Used in Testing, Research, and Training
- Public Health Service Policy
- Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals
- Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and AWA Regulations

**IACUC Approval Date:** 7/23/2015

**Signature IACUC Chair:** [Signature]

**Revision Dates:**