

## Mouse Housing and Cage Density Policy

### Background:

The Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC) and the Public Health Service (PHS) require that institutions base their animal care and use programs on the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (the *Guide*). The Yale University Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) must comply with the national standards and recommendations contained within the *Guide* when establishing mouse cage populations. Yale Animal Resources Center (YARC) is required to uphold the following density requirements:

### Holding Cages:

The individually ventilated cage (IVC) 75 sq. in., holds a maximum 150gm total of body weight, typically **five** adult mice. YARC technicians will continue to house new shipments at a maximum of five mice per cage. When the YARC staff observes a cage of mice with total body weight exceeding cage-specific body weight, they will move the excess mice to additional cages. The original cage will be labeled with the date, number of animals moved, and an identifying number or letter. New cages will be labeled with the name of Principal Investigator, protocol number, the date, the identifying number, and the number of mice.

### Breeding Cages: (cages that contain male and female mice, or pregnant mice)

The Micro-isolator (MI) and/or IVC can hold one breeding pair with a litter. The male may remain with the female during parturition through weaning. A cage is considered overcrowded if a new litter is born before the older litter is weaned or a litter remains with the parents beyond their weaning age. The standard weaning age is between 21-28 days (this is dependent on the number of pups/cage and their size, as the total allowable cage weight cannot be exceeded). Please refer to the **Guidelines for Mouse Cage Density Based on Body Weight document** (<http://info.med.yale.edu/iacuc/policies/mousecageguideline.pdf>)

- ***Progeny must always be separated from the mother before she gives birth to a new litter OR if the total cage weight exceeds 150 grams.***

### Policy:

Under the following conditions the mice must be separated. If not done by lab personnel, YARC staff will **automatically** separate the mice if any of the following conditions remain when the room is serviced the day after the condition is first noticed.

1. A harem breeding cage (more than 2 adults) with a newborn litter.
2. A newborn litter is found in a cage with an older litter. (Note: YARC will place a date of birth cage tag noting the date of birth of new litters and will automatically wean during service the following day).
3. Total cage weight exceeds 150 grams
4. A litter reaches 28 days of age

- ***As always YARC will separate mice in breeding cages if a humane concern is present or imminent.***

*The Principal Investigator will be charged the standard technician time rate for separating mice for any of the above reasons.*

Any exceptions to the above policy must have IACUC approval.

**APPROVED BY THE IACUC: 9/02**

**REVISIONS REVIEWED & APPROVED BY THE IACUC: 5/21/2008**