

## 2.2 Acquiring Organs, Tissues or Materials from Animals for Use in Scientific Research or Teaching by Scavenging

In some situations animal tissues and substances are available for collection from discarded **dead** animals. Another term used with reference to collection of materials from dead animals is "**scavenging**", or *collection from "animals killed for other purposes"*. That is, the animals have not been specifically killed for the purpose of obtaining these materials for scientific research or teaching. This definition includes materials sourced from abattoirs.

"Scavenging" tissue from carcasses is highly recommended<sup>1</sup> to be used (whenever possible) as an alternative to killing animals specifically for that purpose, because it reduces the number of animals used in research and teaching. Prior approval by the Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) is not a legislative requirement. However, the AEC should be informed when an investigator or teacher is "scavenging", especially if this is occurring on a regular basis. **Investigators are encouraged to inform the AEC promptly**, when practicable.

Subject to the conditions and considerations listed below, AEC approval may not be required prior to obtaining the material.

**1. The opportunity for scavenging must not influence the decision to kill the animal, nor the time when this occurs, if this comprises animal welfare.**

**2.** Collection of organs, tissues, materials or substances from a **living** animal for scientific or teaching purposes is a **scientific procedure** and requires prior approval from the AEC.

**3.** In some situations, animal tissues and substances from living animals are discarded following routine animal husbandry practices, or are discarded from veterinary practices following veterinary surgery or veterinary medical procedures. **The specific details of the particular situation must be provided to the AEC in order to determine whether AEC approval is required prior to collection or use of these materials for scientific or teaching purposes.** As **living** animals are involved there may be legal, ethical or welfare issues (e.g. owner consent). This is a University requirement.

**4.** In some situations, animal materials and substances (including urine, faeces, feathers and hair) are found discarded by an animal in its environment. **The specific details of the particular situation must be provided to the AEC in order to determine whether AEC approval is required prior to collection or use of these materials for scientific or teaching purposes.** As **living** animals are involved there may be legal, ethical or welfare issues (e.g. tracking wildlife, entering private property).

**5. Killing** an animal specifically to collect tissues or substances for scientific or teaching purposes is also a scientific procedure, is not considered to be a case of "scavenging", and therefore requires prior approval from the AEC.

### What do I have to do if scavenging?

#### • Scavenging from carcasses

AEC approval is not required prior to collecting and using the tissues or materials sourced from carcasses. However, the AEC should be informed when an investigator or teacher is "scavenging", especially if this is occurring on a regular basis. Investigators are encouraged to inform the AEC promptly, when practicable.

If considered desirable an Application for AEC approval of a project involving "scavenging" can be submitted.

"Scavenging" is not required to be entered in the *Annual Statistics Return and Progress Report*, however the source of the tissues/materials and the circumstances surrounding their collection must be documented and made available to the AEC upon request. Animal houses and investigators both have responsibilities for documenting the reason for the death of an animal, and the subsequent fate of the carcass.

**• Discarded tissues and substances from living animals**

The AEC must be informed prior to collecting and using the material, as living animals are involved and there may be legal, ethical or welfare issues. The source of the tissues/materials and the circumstances surrounding their collection must be documented and made available to the AEC upon request.

**Additional considerations to scavenging:**

- When researchers are scavenging tissue from privately owned animals or Veterinary Clinics, written consent of the owner of the animal must be obtained.
- Researchers obtaining tissues (including eggs, hair and feathers) collected from living or dead native wildlife (including road kills) require a wildlife permit from the Department of Environment and Heritage.
- If animal tissues are imported from overseas then additional permits may be required (AQIS, CITES).

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