

THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEE

METABOLIC CRATE USE FOR SHEEP - AEC GUIDELINES

The Animal Ethics Committee endorses the principle that metabolic crates should not be used without specific AEC approval.

These guidelines were endorsed by the AEC at its meeting on 26 June 2003 as a result of reporting received from its Working Party on Use of Metabolic Crates for Sheep - which considered the matter in detail addressing specific terms of reference during the period January to June 2003.

The guidelines are to be applied to all sheep research conducted at the University of Adelaide. Applications for ethical approval must include full details on the methods/periods of sheep holding.

It is recognised that relevant experimental procedures at Adelaide fall into three main categories with varying requirements for restraint.

Category 1. Examples: Pre/Post Surgery, Blood sampling, Catheter flushing, Bolus dosing/injection

Category 2. Examples: Continuous infusion, Continuous physiological monitoring according to responses under investigation: eg Blood pressure monitoring, ECG monitoring. If performed in crates acclimatisation may need to be considered.

Category 3. Examples: Acute complex studies with multiple drug administration, frequent or continuous blood sampling and physiological monitoring. Use of short acting drugs with potent effects. Intensive experimental protocols involving a range of interventions and physiological monitoring. Collection of metabolic products. Acclimatisation may need to be considered.

These categories and the practices used to define them have been accepted as the guidelines for use by researchers and the Committee in consideration of research in which sheep require close restraint.

(1) Housed in pen; procedures in pen/divided pen:

Examples: Pre/Post Surgical, Blood sampling, Catheter flushing, Bolus dosing/injection.

(2) Housed in pen; procedure in divided pen OR transfer to crate for period of active intervention:

Examples: Continuous infusion, Continuous physiological monitoring according to responses under investigation: eg Blood pressure monitoring, ECG monitoring.

Animals in this category may need to be acclimatised to metabolic crates. Confinement in a divided pen may be a means to effect this. Researchers are asked to justify their proposals for periods of acclimatisation in metabolic crates, rather than have this stipulated.

(3) In crate or similar for period of active intervention:

Examples: Acute complex studies with multiple drug administration, frequent or continuous blood sampling and physiological monitoring. Use of short acting drugs with potent effects. Intensive experimental protocols involving a range of interventions and physiological monitoring, collection of metabolic products. These animals may also need to be acclimatised to crates and researchers are asked to justify the period of acclimatisation, rather than have this stipulated.