THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE
AUSTRALIA

# ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEE

# RODENT BREEDING AND WEANING POLICY

This Policy applies to all rodent breeding and weaning undertaken at the University of Adelaide.

## BREEDING PARAMETERS:

| | **Mouse** | **Rat** |
|---|---|---|
| *Breeding age:* | Male = 6-8 weeks<br>Female = 6-8 weeks | Male = 5-7 weeks<br>Female = 7-14 weeks |
| *Oestrus cycle length:* | 4-5 days | 4-5 days |
| *First Oestrus:* | 25-28 days | 40-65 days |
| *Duration of Pregnancy:* | 18–21 days | 20-21 days |
| *Weaning age:* | 21-28 days | 21 days |

## BREEDERS:

- **Mouse Breeding**
  The following cages can be used for Mouse breeding:

**a** **b** **c**

**a)** Long Narrow Cage; 1 Male : 1 Female (Monogamous Pair)
1 Male : 2 Females (Trios) *

**b)** Micro Isolator cage; 1 Male : 1 Female (Monogamous Pair)
1 Male : 2 Females (Trios) *

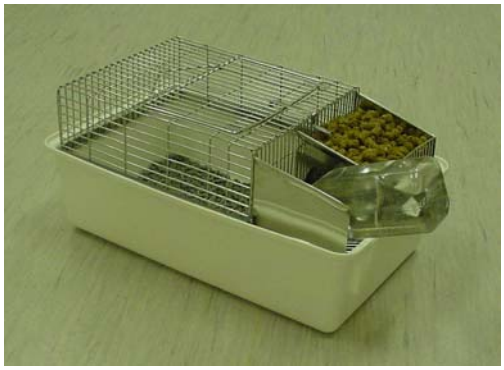
**c)** Large rectangle cage; Monogamous or Trios
1 Male : 3 Females (Harem) **

*** Note:** Trios are only used in the narrow cages and isolators if females are separated when they are pregnant

**** Note:** Harem mating allows the pregnant females to be moved to a littering cage or stay in the harem. If they remain in the harem this may be less successful, due to more disturbance and less tolerance when more than two females are present. Most inbred strains will not tolerate permanently mated groups with more than two females in the cage.

- **Rat breeding**

The following cage can be used for rat breeding:



**a)** Large cage with high lid; 1 Male : 1 Female (Monogamous)

***Note:*** Females must be removed once pregnant.

# WEANING:

1. Researchers with breeding colonies are to attend to their animals at least every second day, to check for newborn animals, weaning, separating of females, and a general check of the animals health and well-being.

2. Rats and Mice are to be weaned at 21-23 days.

3. If you have animals that are small, slow in developing or otherwise compromised you may request *exemption from point 2 with the Animal Welfare officer*, Hazel Johnston (Ext 34107)

   With this exemption, *mice* can be left up to 28 days before weaning, providing the following conditions are adhered to:
   a. The Dams are not with the sire and/or pregnant, otherwise they are to be weaned at 21 days. (Once litters are weaned, the dam can then be returned for breeding.)
   b. Litters are not left any longer than 28 days. This is the maximum and there will be no exceptions. (If 28 days falls on a Saturday or Sunday, we request you wean all of them Friday!)

4. Prior progeny must always be separated from the mother before she gives birth to a new litter.

5. Animals not weaned by the appropriate time can result in overcrowding, mortality, unplanned breeding among littermates and females with multiple litters.

6. Animal Services will wean any litters that are not weaned by the appropriate time at a charge to the researcher.

7. A water source must be available for newly weaned rodents at all times. You should make sure the rodents are able reach the sipper tubes of water bottles. Moisture packs can also be used as an additional source of moisture. See Animal care staff for use of this.

8. Easy access to a food source must also be provided. In the first 1-2 weeks after weaning an additional source may be required if the rodents can't reach the food hopper. Food placed in the cage bottom and food also soaked in a little water can help during this period, but be sure to check moistened food daily to prevent contamination with faeces and mould.

**Laboratory Animal Services offer weaning and the maintenance of breeding lines as well as tail tipping and identification of animals by our qualified animal care staff. Please contact us if you need any further information or special needs. Las.manager@adelaide.edu.au or call 8303 5340**

## REFERENCES


- The UFAW handbook on the care and management of Laboratory Animals Seventh Edition, Volume 1, 1999
- Boston University
  Laboratory Animal Science Centre



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*Endorsed by the AEC at its meeting on 26.6.03*