INSTITUTIONAL SOCIAL HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT POLICY

Overview/Purpose

Social housing and environmental enrichment is addressed at the level of the individual housing area due to the size and scope of the program at The Ohio State University. The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) oversees social housing and environmental enrichment of all animals owned by the university and requires justification in the protocol if animals cannot be socially housed or enriched. Programmatic exceptions to social housing are noted below.

Definitions

- **Environmental Enrichment** – The provision of structures and resources that facilitate the expression of species-typical behaviors and promote psychological well-being through physical exercise, manipulative activities, and / or cognitive challenges according to species-specific characteristics
- **Social Enrichment** – Appropriate social interactions among members of the same species (conspecifics) or compatible species.
- **SOP** – Standard Operating Procedure
- **SMP** – Standard Management Plan

Requirements

1. Social animals are to be housed in stable pairs or groups unless:
   A. Scientific justification is provided in an IACUC approved Animal Use Protocol
   B. An OAV veterinarian exempts an animal for health or behavioral reasons (requires documentation)
   C. The animal is recovering from surgery, up to 72 hours, unless extended by an OAV veterinarian for clinical reasons. Longer periods must be justified in an approved Animal Use Protocol
   D. Females may be singly housed when visibly pregnant
   E. Adult boars, stallions, and male rabbits are not considered social animals and will be housed singly
   F. A single animal remains from a cohort due to situation of: attrition of cage/pen mates, uneven number of animals present, separation due to aggression, last remaining experimental cohort, single animal ordered, or no compatible cohort to be paired with at time of weaning

2. Additional enrichment must be provided for singly housed animals unless exempted for scientific or veterinary reasons

3. Environmental enrichment plans for animals owned and housed at The Ohio State University should be included in the associated SOP or SMP for that respective housing facility

4. Enrichment will be provided per facility SOP or SMP unless exempted by the IACUC in the approved animal use protocol due to scientific reasons or per an OAV veterinarian for clinical reasons
History of Revisions

055-00 - new policy approved 04/19/2019
055-01 – reviewed and approved 04/15/2022