

## UC Davis Office of the Attending Veterinarian Standards of Care

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### **Title: Husbandry Care of Sheep**

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I. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the minimum standards of care for sheep (*Ovis aries*).

II. Policy:

All units providing animal care for sheep used in agricultural research and teaching must meet or exceed these minimum requirements based on the Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals Used in Research (*Ag Guide*). Sheep used in biomedical research and non-standard agricultural teaching must additionally meet the requirements in the USDA Animal Welfare Regulations (*AWR*), the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (*Guide*), and Public Health Service Policy (*PHS*). Deviations or exceptions must be approved by the Attending Veterinarian and the IACUC.

III. Procedure:

**Daily (365 days a year without exception):**

- Observe each animal and check for health concerns (*AWR* 2.33).
- Ensure adequate feed and potable water is available (*Guide* pg. 65-68).
- Record sick and dead animals, and report them to Campus Veterinary Services (CVS) or designated clinical veterinarian per standard operating procedure for reporting sick or dead animals.
- For temperature-controlled housing, record minimum and maximum temperatures and humidity.
  - Temperature range for sheep is 61°F to 81°F (*Guide* pg. 44).
  - Humidity range for sheep is 30% to 70% (*Guide* pg. 44).
- Spot clean cage, removing animals unless sufficient space is available for the animals to remain dry (*AWR* 3.131).
- Remove and replace any enrichment devices that are worn, damaged, or heavily soiled (*Guide* pg. 72)
- Clean and organize room, anterooms, and surrounding premises (*Guide* pg. 72).
- Record daily completion of tasks, initial, and date log sheet.

**As needed:**

- Disinfect the animal room including walls, floors, and ceilings (if possible) (*Guide* pg. 72).

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- All woolen sheep should be sheared at least annually.
- Remove and replace worn or damaged equipment from primary enclosures and surrounding facility (*Guide* pg. 72).
- Chow must be discarded after 6 months of the milling date unless manufacturer guidelines recommend a shorter or longer expiration date (*Guide* pg. 66).
- Clean and sanitize feed storage containers (*Guide* pg. 67).

### **Environmental Enrichment:**

- Refer to the Environmental Enrichment policy.
- Sheep should be provided the opportunity to demonstrate species typical behavior. Examples of enrichment for sheep include conspecifics (*Guide* pg. 53).
- Devices must be checked regularly for wear and discarded when safety hazards are observed.

### **Facilities:**

- Temperature alarms must be installed in all temperature-controlled rooms housing sheep (*Guide* pg. 143).
- Adequate ventilation must be provided for the health and comfort of the animal at all times.
  - A minimum of 10-15 fresh room air exchanges per hour shall be provided in animal housing areas (*Guide* pg. 46).
- Floors shall be moisture-resistant, non-absorbent, impact-resistant, and relatively smooth (*Guide* pg. 137). Refer to Physical Plant and Facilities Maintenance policy.

### **Housing:**

- Whenever possible, sheep should be socially housed in compatible groups (*Guide* pg. 51).
- Floor space taken up by food bowls, water containers, and enrichment devices should not be considered part of the floor space (*Guide* pg. 56).
- Space requirements for agricultural research and teaching sheep can be found in Table 10-1 of the *Ag Guide* pg. 130.
- Space requirements for sheep:

Number of Animals/ Enclosure	Weight (kg)	Floor Area/Animal (in <sup>2</sup> )
1	<15	10
1	Up to 50	15
1	>50	≥20
2-5	<25	8.5
2-5	Up to 50	12.5
2-5	>50	≥17
>5	<25	7.5
>5	Up to 50	11.3
>5	>50	≥15

(*Guide* pg. 62)

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**When housing this species, please also refer to the Animal Care Program's Standards of Care Policy on Pest Control, Identification and Labeling of Cages, Environmental Enrichment, Food Storage, House-Keeping in Facilities Housing Biomedical Research Animals, Physical Plant Facilities Maintenance, as well as the IACUC's Policy on Social Housing of Social Species.**