

UC Davis Office of the Attending Veterinarian Standards of Care

Policy:	SC-34-100
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Title: Husbandry Care of Poultry and Fowl

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the minimum standards of care for poultry (species of the Galliformes, Columbiforms, and Anseriformes superorder).

II. Policy:

All units providing animal care for poultry 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*). Poultry used in biomedical research and non-standard agricultural teaching must additionally meet the requirements in 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 (*Guide* pg. 112).
- 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.
- Record minimum and maximum temperatures and humidity.
 - Temperature range for adult poultry is 61°F to 81°F (*Guide* pg. 44).
 - For chicks, 90°F to 95°F (*Ag Guide* pg. 116)
 - For poults, 95°F to 100°F (*Ag Guide* pg. 116)
 - For ducklings, 85°F to 90°F (*Ag Guide* pg. 116)
 - Humidity range for poultry is 30% to 70% (*Guide* pg. 44) or <80% (*Ag Guide* pg 18).
- Spot clean excessively soiled or flooded areas of housing (*Guide* pg. 70).
- Clean and organize room, anterooms, and surrounding premises (*Guide* pg. 72).
- Record daily completion of tasks, initial, and date log sheet.

Weekly:

- Clean cages, feeders and waterers (*Guide* pg. 70).
- Replace bedding for animals in solid-bottom caging/housing.
- Clean footbaths, equipment, and remove trash as applicable.

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As needed:

- Disinfect the animal room including walls, floors, and ceilings (if possible) (*Guide* pg. 72).
- Remove and replace worn or damaged equipment from primary enclosures and surrounding facility (*Guide* pg. 72).
- Feed 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 per facility SOP (*Guide* pg. 67).
- Trim excessively long toenails and beaks per facility SOP.
- Clean wading pools as appropriate by husbandry SOP

Environmental Enrichment:

- Refer to the Environmental Enrichment policy (UC Davis Standard of Care SC-30-102).
- Poultry should be provided the opportunity to demonstrate species typical behavior. Examples of enrichment for poultry include perches, dust bathing substrate, and nesting boxes.
- 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 poultry (*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 (SC 50-102).

Housing:

- Whenever possible, poultry 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).
- Pasture poultry should be provided shelter, such as a hutch or coop, to protect them from inclement weather and which can accommodate all individuals (*Guide* pg. 54).
- Fencing should be erected around pastures and be of a sufficient height and mesh size as to secure birds within in and prevent predators and other wild species from entering the pasture (*Ag Guide* pg. 105). Electrified fencing may be used to enhance these capabilities, but must be easily disarmed and of a voltage low enough to not traumatize individual animals or people.
- Space requirements for agricultural research and teaching poultry can be found in Table 9-1 through 9-12 in the *Ag Guide* on pg. 106-114.

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- Space requirements for poultry (*Guide* Page 60)

Animal	Weight (kg)	Floor area/animal (ft ²)	Height
Pigeons	–	0.8	Cage height should be sufficient for the animals to stand erect with their feet on the floor
Quail	–	0.25	
Chickens	<0.25	0.25	
	Up to 0.5	0.5	
	Up to 1.5	1	
	Up to 3	2	
	>3	≥3	

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.