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The Ag Guide
AWA, PPM
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Title: Minimum Standards for Food Storage

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for food storage in teaching and research units.

II. Policy:

All units storing feed must meet or exceed these minimum requirements based on the USDA Animal Welfare Regulations (AWR), the ILAR Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (*Guide*), and/or the Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals Used in Research (*Ag Guide*). Animal feed must be properly handled and stored to prevent contamination and loss of nutrients quality.

III. Procedure:

Bagged feed should be stored off the floor on pallets or racks (*Guide*, pg. 66).

Open bags of feed must be contained in vermin proof containers with tightly sealable lids (*Guide*, pg. 66). The expiration date of the feed and the type of feed must be labeled on the food container.

All milled or bagged feed must be used by or discarded within 6 month of the milling date or by the manufacturer's expiration date (*Guide*, pg. 66). For bags arriving with no dates, indicate the date received and then use by or discard within 6 months of the arrival date. If the manufacturer guarantees a shorter or longer shelf life, this can be included in the facility SOP's with documentation from the manufacturer.

Food storage at less than 21°C (70°F) and below 50% relative humidity is recommended (*Guide*, pg. 66). Temperature and humidity must be logged regularly per facility SOP at a minimum of once per week. Daily temperature and humidity fluctuations above 21°C (70°F) and below 50% respectively are acceptable in facilities where the goal is to mimic the home environment of companion animals.

Food stored on pallets, racks, or carts must not touch the wall to promote sanitation and avoid the harboring of pests (*Guide*, pg. 69).

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Feed bags should be considered dirty and not taken into animal rooms. If feed bags must enter the animal room, such as vacuum packed irradiated rodent chow in plastic bags, then they should first be sprayed and wiped down with a disinfectant.

Feed with Vitamin C added (Guinea pig and nonhuman primate chow) must be used within 3 months of milling date unless food is micro-encapsulated for Vitamin C which may extend the shelf life to 6 months (follow manufacturers guidelines) (*Guide*, pg. 66).

Food storage containers should not be transferred between areas that pose different risks of contamination.

Food storage containers and lids must be cleaned and documented at least every 6 months. Food storage containers and lids must be replaced if they are damaged or cracked to ensure protection of their contents. For fresh produce and other non-processed feed stuff, the produce/feed stuff must be properly stored and labeled.

Produce must be disposed of when spoiled; one week is a general maximum fresh produce can be kept. Produce that does not turn or spoil in a one week period may be kept longer.

Substances that are toxic to animals but are required for normal husbandry practices must not be stored in the food storage or preparation areas.

Dead animals, animal parts, and animal waste must not be kept in food storage or food preparation areas, food freezers, food refrigerators or animal areas.

Only food that is currently being used may be kept in the animal areas.