

Appendix C: Summary of Pandemic Plan for Research Animal Facilities

This plan (summarized below) will be implemented once a pandemic plan is officially activated by Dalhousie Senior Administration. During a pandemic disease outbreak, the first priority for laboratory animal facilities is the health and safety of human caretakers. The second priority is the health and welfare of research animals.

Research animals must receive daily care. Adequate Animal Care includes:

- daily observation and health assessment
- provision of food and water
- provision of suitable living conditions (caging, bedding)
- provision of a suitable environment (temperature, ventilation, humidity etc.)
- access to veterinary care

A major concern during a pandemic is that there will be insufficient animal care staff to provide adequate daily care to research animals. It is therefore important to reduce/minimize animal numbers.

Detailed instructions for chain of command for animal care during the pandemic and updated telephone trees are provided by the Dalhousie Animal Care Crisis management internal document. If the University Director of Animal Care is unable to assume his/her responsibilities, the Director of the LSRI/Carleton Animal Care Facility will act on his/her behalf. If both of these people are unavailable, the Assistant Director of the Carleton Animal Care Facility will be responsible for animal care decisions.

Once a pandemic is declared, all Dalhousie University animal facilities will implement the following measures:

1. All personnel entering and working in the animal facilities will be required to wear gloves and a mask at all times to reduce the risk of disease transmission. This includes both research and animal care staff. Farm staff working in outdoor conditions will avoid close contact and hand wash frequently. Any personnel showing cold or flu like symptoms must self quarantine for 14 days and follow provincial guidelines for disease reporting.
2. No new animals will be ordered into the facilities. This includes animals from commercial suppliers, as well as animal importations from other academic institutions. Field studies involving capture and long term holding of animals in research facilities must also be suspended. Researchers are strongly advised to complete ongoing studies rapidly and are not permitted to initiate new studies, the exception being where such studies directly address the infectious agent involved in the pandemic.
3. All animal colonies will be reduced down to absolute minimum numbers to lessen workload, by research staff so they can ensure accurate identification of individuals and updating of breeding records. However, if research staff are unable to separate their animals in a timely fashion, animal care staff will do so.
4. Experimental procedures that require substantial special care are prohibited until the pandemic crisis has abated. For example, this would include recovery surgical procedures, experimental infection protocols and administration of substances likely to cause pain, distress or illness.
5. If there are not sufficient animal care staff to maintain adequate animal care, research staff will be contacted to determine if they can provide daily care to their research animals during the crisis. Research staff who have agreed to provide daily care to animals during the crisis must report daily to the University Director of Animal Care (or designate).
6. Some husbandry procedures or standard operating procedures may be amended as required at the discretion of the University Director of Animal Care (or designate). For example, cage changing schedules may be altered if animal care staff numbers are significantly reduced.
7. In exceptional circumstances where it becomes impossible to maintain adequate animal care during the pandemic, after exhausting all other available options, the University Director of Animal Care (or designate) may require the humane euthanasia of animals, to prevent suffering.