POLICY #02: INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE (IACUC) POLICY ON FOOD AND WATER

Purpose: The following policy has been developed to ensure compliance with the Animal Welfare Act and Public Health Service Policy, and to ensure humane use and care of vertebrate animals. For the purposes of this policy, food or water deprivation is defined as any restriction in access to food or water.

1.1 Any restriction of food or water, or use of special diets that may induce morbidity in animals (e.g. high fat diet, calorie-restricted diet) for research purposes must be scientifically justified in the animal use protocol and must be approved by the IACUC.

1.2 The least restrictive intake that will achieve the scientific objective will be used.

1.3 Minimal quantities of food and water should be available for young animals (to provide for growth and development) and for chronic study animals (to maintain long-term well-being).

1.4 A program must be established to monitor physiologic and behavioral indices of each individual animal on protocol, including criteria for temporary or permanent removal of an animal from the experimental protocol (such as weight loss or state of hydration).

1.5 A plan for monitoring the animals must be established in consultation with the attending veterinarian and written in the protocol.

A) The Food Plan must include provisions for weighing the animals at least weekly, or more often, as might be needed for small animals such as rodents. Special attention should be given to ensuring that animals consume adequate water because water consumption may decrease with food restriction.

B) The Water Plan must include daily recording of fluid intake and recording of body weight at least once weekly, or more often, as might be needed by small animals such as rodents. Special attention should be given to ensuring that animals consume a balanced diet because food consumption may decrease with fluid restriction.

1.6 In conditioned response research, use of a highly preferred food as positive reinforcement is recommended instead of food restriction.