

Clemson University
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

Policy Number: 3.10

Policy Title: Requirements for Social Housing of Animals

Section 1: Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarification on the requirement to social house animals.

Section 2: Scope

This policy applies to all vertebrate animals housed at a University animal facility.

Section 3: Policy

Social housing refers to maintaining two or more compatible animals in the same primary enclosure and allowing direct contact and interaction. As described in *The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, social housing is the default method of housing. However, exceptions exist and are based on criteria such as social incompatibility, standard agricultural husbandry practices, veterinary concerns regarding animal well-being, or scientific necessity as approved by the IACUC.

If singly housing animals is deemed necessary, it should be limited to the minimum period necessary to achieve the objective and animals should be rehoused with appropriate cage/pen mates as soon as possible. During single housing, every effort should be made to maintain the following with animals of the same species:

- visual contact
- auditory contact
- olfactory contact
- protected tactile contact

In the absence of other animals, additional enrichment should be offered to a single housed animal. Examples of such enrichment may include additional positive interaction with humans, periodic release into larger enclosures, or supplemental enrichment items.

Exceptions to Social Housing

The IACUC approves single housing of social animals for standard agricultural husbandry practices or situations where attempts to socially house the animals could jeopardize animal welfare. When animals are single housed for such reasons, a specific justification in the animal use protocol and case by case approval by the IACUC are not required. Examples of such situations include, but are not limited to:

- separation of aggressive or incompatible animals (stallions or bulls housed individually due to inherent aggressiveness)

- pregnant females separated to prevent overcrowding following birth of offspring or for the safety of offspring
- individual housing in preparation for parturition
- quarantine prior to entering or reentering a facility or herd
- separation of littermates at weaning when the number of offspring does not allow for all animals in a litter to be placed with a compatible cage mate (single male weanlings)
- animals housed singly for short term recovery post-operatively; single housing must be for the minimum amount of time necessary for recovery and/or healing as determined by the PI in consultation with the Attending Veterinarian
- individual calf housing to prevent the spread of disease until the calf's innate immunity is sufficient to allow for comingling
- individual housing when an animal is considered a danger to other animals, to itself, or personnel
- individual housing that follows standard agricultural husbandry practices (horses in stalls)
- individual housing for clinical reasons at the discretion of the Attending Veterinarian based on medical concerns

Experimental Requirements: When single housing of social species (other than short term recovery from experimental manipulation) is necessary for experimental reasons, a scientific justification must be described in the animal use protocol, submitted for review and approval by the IACUC, and the single housing cannot begin until approval is granted by the IACUC for that protocol.