

Use of Live Animals in Teaching and Observational Field Studies

The care and use of animals in teaching, research and field studies are regulated by the Animal Welfare Act, the Public Health Service (PHS) Policy and a PHS publication called the "Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals". These regulations require that the use of live vertebrate animals for teaching or research first be approved by a Committee called the IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee). Teaching and research proposals are submitted to the IACUC and reviewed. In deciding whether to approve a protocol, the IACUC assesses whether alternatives to animal use exist for the proposed teaching or research proposals, whether the proposal using animals will be carried out in as humane a manner as possible, and whether unavoidable pain, distress and discomfort will be minimized by the use of specific analgesics, anesthetics or sedatives. Conduct of field studies will be in accordance with all applicable guidelines for field research. The regulations require that the IACUC include at least one Veterinarian, a scientist and a member representing community interests. The IACUC is responsible for reviewing the animal care program and all animal facilities and associated labs at least once every 6 months. Individuals reporting concerns about animal use are protected by law from repercussions, and the IACUC investigates all concerns over animals use that are reported.

Basic animal husbandry requirements are also specified by the regulations, ensuring that an animal's food, water and shelter are provided for in an optimal manner. The regulations further require that all personnel using animals be trained in appropriate handling techniques and experimental procedures and that persons coming in contact with animals are given information regarding the methods to minimize the risks involved in using animals. The Animal Care Program has an informative web page at www.safety.uwm.edu which has information on minimizing the risks involved in using animals including lab animal allergy information. The Animal Care Program at UWM is staffed and administered by a Veterinarian and a Lab Manager. These dedicated staff oversee the legal and humane treatment of animals and management of the animal facilities.