

Colorado State University

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

Policy on Social Management of Animals

Background

CSU's Animal Care and Use Program's environmental enrichment program is designed to promote species-specific behaviors to promote animal well-being while not compromising personnel safety, animal health and safety, or research goals. The IACUC views this as an important component of the animal care and use program.

Policy

Social Housing

Social housing is an important component of the environmental enrichment program for social species. However, not all animals of a social species are socially compatible and this may result in chronic stress, injury or other adverse effects. Species compatible housing can more readily be established if animals to be grouped are raised together from a young age, of the same sex, and remain in a stable group. However, the husbandry practices of vendors are unknown and animals are likely not maintained or shipped in compatible housing groups. Thus, CSU considers social housing to include compatible housing with conspecifics. However, in cases of social incompatibility described below, it is also considered to include singly housing animals in primary containment as long as there are conspecifics in the same secondary containment with which the animals can have visual, auditory, olfactory or tactile contact.

Requirement for Social Housing and Allowable Reasons for Single Housing

Social housing of social species is the standard practice at CSU. However single housing is allowable in the following situations:

- Social incompatibility resulting from inappropriate behavior (for instance, aggression in species such as rabbits, horses, and male mice)
- Veterinary concerns regarding animal well-being
- Cohort attrition (for instance: due to experimental design, implementation of humane endpoints, or due to veterinary concerns resulting in removal of cohorts)
- Scientific necessity described as a part of the investigator's animal use proposal and approved by the IACUC.

IACUC or Veterinary Approval Necessary for Single Housing

In the case of single housing of social species for scientific necessity, justification for the deviation from the social housing requirement must be provided in the animal care and use protocol and approved by the IACUC. If the Attending Veterinarian deems single housing necessary for incompatible individuals and/or veterinary concerns regarding animal well-being, this should be documented in the animal's health record. If single housing is required for a prolonged period, depending on the species and study requirements, the most appropriate and safest form of visual, auditory, olfactory and/or protected tactile contact with compatible conspecifics, or positive, species-appropriate interaction with animal care staff will be provided.

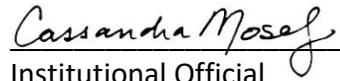
References

[Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th ed., 2011](#)

[Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching, 4th ed., 2020](#)

Institutional Endorsement

The “Policy on Social Management of Animals” approved by the IACUC on May 27, 2025 for recommendation to the Institutional Official supports the research, teaching and service mission of Colorado State University, and ensures that the welfare of animal subjects used therein will be protected. Therefore, as the Institutional Official, I declare the IACUC-recommended policy to be the policy of the Colorado State University Program of Animal Care and Use.



Institutional Official

06/16/2025

Date