The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI MEDICAL CENTER

POLICY STATEMENT

Food and/or Fluid Restriction

Food and/or Fluid restriction procedures are occasionally utilized in research settings to provide incentive for an animal to behave in a particular manner. In all situations, at least minimal quantities of food and fluids should be available to provide for the development of young animals and to maintain long-term well-being of all animals.

Restriction for research purposes should be scientifically justified. Additionally, methods of assessing the program and frequent objective means of monitoring animal health should be a component of the program. Methods of assessing animal health include: body weight, hematocrit/hematology/serum chemistry, urinalysis, fecal production, and behavioral observations. Criteria should be considered for temporary or permanent removal of an animal from a food or fluid restriction protocol.

General components of the program may include:

1. Prior to beginning initial training animals should be examined by the LAF veterinary staff. Examination may include body weight measurements, assessing fecal and urinary output, and an estimate of the hydration status.

2. Prior to the first day of restriction, the animal should be weighed on at least three consecutive days of full ration and water access. This weight will serve as the baseline for that particular animal for that upcoming trial.

3. During training, each animal should be weighed daily, and a daily record of the weight and the amount of water consumed will be maintained in the animal housing area.

4. During training, fluids should be provided daily in order to maintain a weight of 90% of the animal’s baseline weight. (Consultation with the veterinary staff to establish a “recommended minimum” should occur as the minimum necessary will vary per species/diet specifications. Recommended minimum is to be noted in the approved Animal Activity Protocol.)

5. Individual animals may have quite unique fluid/food requirements. Frequent and routine animal assessments must be utilized to determine the specific food/fluid animal needs.
The UMMC Animal Activity Protocol form question #16 prompts the investigator to note if Food and/or Fluid Restriction is a component of the protocol. Further, the investigator must complete Appendix I and explain and justify the need for the restriction procedures.

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