

# UCUCA POLICY FOR MONITORING SANITATION OF PRIMARY ENCLOSURES

The health and well being of laboratory animals is directly dependant upon an effective sanitation program. The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* and the USDA's Animal Welfare Regulations specify that a program should be in place to monitor the effectiveness of sanitation procedures used in laboratory animal facilities. The following policy outlines the University Committee on Use and Care of Animals' (UCUCA) policy on sanitation practices for primary enclosures. A primary enclosure is defined as any cage, structure, or device that is used to restrict an animal(s) to a limited amount of space.

According to the USDA's Animal Welfare Regulations, there are three methods for sanitizing primary enclosures, and food and water receptacles:

- 1) Using live steam under pressure
- 2) Washing with soap or detergent and at least 180°F water (e.g., a mechanical cage washer)
- 3) Hand washing items by removing all organic material and mineral buildup; using an appropriate detergent and disinfectant; and following with a clean water rinse.

The UCUCA requires that various methods be used for ensuring effective sanitation of primary enclosures has occurred. If a mechanical cage washer is used, the water temperature must be monitored. Water temperature monitoring can be achieved with the use of a temperature indicator label or an equivalent method (e.g., temperature tape that reaches 180°F). For USDA-covered species, the water temperature for sanitizing primary enclosures must reach a minimum of 180°F. For non-USDA-covered species (i.e., laboratory rat and mouse), the water temperature needs to reach a minimum of 143°F. Temperature tapes should be washed and rinsed with a batch of cages, bottles, or sipper tubes in each mechanical washer at least weekly. Results of temperature monitoring should be maintained and readily available upon request by UCUCA or outside inspectors. For USDA-covered species, if water temperature fails to reach 180°F, one of the other two options listed above must be used to sanitize primary enclosures until the water is able to reach temperature. For non-USDA-covered species, when the minimum temperature of 143°F is not reached, primary enclosures can be disinfected with chemicals.

If hand washing is used, verifiable methods to assess bacterial loads must be used at least three times a year. Multiple samples will be taken from soiled and clean items by the ULAM veterinary technicians in order to determine the effectiveness of sanitation practices. The swabs are submitted to the ULAM Animal Diagnostic Laboratory (ADL) to determine whether enteric bacteria coliforms and or *pseudomonas* species are present in the sample. The animal facility supervisor reviews ADL reports and corrective action is taken for positive results. Records of bacterial testing should be maintained and readily accessible by UCUCA or outside inspectors.