

**University of Michigan**  
**University Committee on the Use and Care of Animals (UCUCA)**

**Policy Statement Regarding the Shipment of Neonatal Guinea Pigs**

Neonatal guinea pigs are more developed than many other species of mammals at birth; they are furred, have teeth, opened eyes and ears, and are fully mobile. However, although relatively well-developed, neonatal guinea pigs are still dependant on the sow for nutrition, warmth, stimulation of the urinary tract, and other vital purposes. As such, the UCUCA does not support the separation of an immature guinea pig from its sow for the estimated 24 hours required for shipment from the vendor to the University. Therefore, all guinea pigs younger than 21 days or weighing less than 165 grams, the estimated age and weight at weaning, must be shipped with their sow(s). Transportation of pre-weaned animals without the sow may be approved by the UCUCA if is scientifically justified and/or if it can be demonstrated that each animal's physiologic needs would be fulfilled during shipment.

References:

Harkness JE, Murray KA, Wagner JE. "Biology and diseases of guinea pigs." In: Fox JG, Anderson LC, Loew FM, and Quimby FW eds. *Laboratory Animal Medicine*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Academic Press, 2002; 203-246.

Quesenberry KE, Donnelly TM, Hillyer EV. "Biology, husbandry, and clinical techniques of guinea pigs and chinchillas." In: Quesenberry KE and Carpenter JW eds. *Ferrets, Rabbits, and Rodents Clinical Medicine and Surgery*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. St. Louis, Missouri: Saunders, 2004; 232-244.