

Column E Explanation

This form is intended as an aid to completing the Column E. explanation. It is not an official form and its use is voluntary. Names, addresses, protocols, veterinary care programs, and the like, are not required as part of an explanation. A Column E explanation must be written so as to be understood by lay persons as well as scientists.

1. Registration Number: 23-R-0021
2. Number of animals: 48
3. Species (common name): rabbit
4. Explain the procedure producing pain and/or distress

The objective of the research is to explore the evolution of Myxoma virus virulence. Following infection with various strains of the virus, rabbits are monitored for onset of clinical signs and progression of disease. The course and severity of clinical signs are documented and related to genetic variation between virus strains.

5. Provide scientific justification why pain and /or distress could not be relieved. State methods or means used to determine that pain and/or distress relieve would interfere with test results.

Medications may not be administered to reduce signs of disease because they would interfere with the goal of the study. However, the investigator, in consultation with the veterinarian and with the approval of the IACUC have established humane endpoints intended to relieve pain and or distress of any animal that becomes severely ill.

Summary of IACUC Approved Deviations from the Animal Welfare Act Regulations (AWAR)

AWAR Deviation 1: At a minimum, the non-human primate cages are changed and sanitized at least monthly rather than every two weeks as prescribed in the AWAR.

Over the years, veterinary staff observed behavioral changes in the tamarins such that they appear to be anxious and more aggressive (e.g. on occasions fights have occurred) when placed in freshly sanitized cages. To minimize the anxiety imposed by the cage changing process, the attending veterinarian in conjunction with the animal facilities manager proposed changing the cages less frequently to the IACUC. The justification to alter the cage changing schedule included the following points: 1) the animals are maintained in cages that have twice the required floor space, 2) the cages include three levels of living space so the floor is rarely accessed, 3) cage changing and sanitation disrupts the animals normal behavior patterns of the animals, and 4) the scientist working with the animals indicated the deviation will have no negative impact on his studies.

The IACUC evaluated the information provided in the proposed modification, and committee members unanimously approved the proposed change in cage change frequency.

AWAR Deviation 2: A non-human primate is housed singly rather than in a compatible pair or social group.

Penn State acquired seven pairs of tamarins for a researcher to conduct behavior studies. In 2011, one of the animals became ill, and was ultimately lost even though it received extensive veterinary care and attention. The IACUC was notified of the animal's death, and of the fact that the survivor of the pair must be housed singly. It was explained to the IACUC that the singly housed animal cannot be housed with one of the established pairs due to the fact that aggressive actions toward the single animal would jeopardize its health and welfare.

To minimize any distress that may be related to single housing, the animal is housed in a separate cage, but the same suite as the other tamarins. It is able to hear and see the other animals in the room, and its cage is equipped with enrichment devices. The IACUC has concurred that the deviation standard is necessary and in the interest of the animals health and well-being.