



Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

RE: Annual Animal Usage Report Reminder
Fiscal Year: 2025

Animal Care

Fort Collins Office
2150 Centre Ave.
Building B, 3W11
Fort Collins, CO 80526

Phone: 970-494-7478
AnimalCare@usda.gov

Dear Registrant:

The Animal Welfare Act Regulations (9 CFR § 2.36 - Annual Reports) require all research registrants to file an Annual Report with Animal Care, documenting their animal usage for each fiscal year (October 1 through September 30). These reports must be submitted by December 1st of each year, even if you do not use or hold any animals during the fiscal year. Likewise, registrants whose registrations were canceled during the reporting fiscal year must complete and submit an Annual Report. Failure to do so constitutes a violation of the Animal Welfare Act Regulations and could result in enforcement action.

Annual Reports (APHIS Forms 7023 and 7023A) are submitted using the Animal Care online reporting system. More information on submitting an annual report and to access the Animal Care portal can be found via the following link: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/awa/research-facility-report> The Annual Report online portal will be open for facilities on October 1st.

Please fill out all applicable fields, including the signature of an authorized individual identified by the facility. Also, please make sure that each animal is listed under the appropriate animal group with common names and in the correct pain category.

After you have completed the form(s), keep a copy of the report for your records. Detailed instructions have been provided in the enclosed packet as well as tips on how to report your animals.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. We appreciate your efforts in adhering to the Animal Welfare Act and Regulations.

If you have questions regarding this letter or the Animal Welfare Act, please contact our office at 970-494-7477 or by email at AC.AnnualReports@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

Bernadette Juarez
Deputy Administrator
USDA-APHIS-Animal Care

Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Report Instructions

Annual Report Do's and Do Not's

- **DO** submit one Annual Report per registered facility. All site locations should be consolidated into one annual report.
- **DO** include a list of all authorized personnel for the registered facility (including the authorized person who signs the report) to ensure that our contact information is up to date.
- **DO NOT** leave the form blank; if submitting all zeroes, please include those on the form.
- **DO** call (970) 494-7477 if you have any questions regarding the annual report or any information required to be included.

Tips for Categorizing Animals

- Refer to the headings on Form 7023 and The Animal Welfare Act Regulations, § 2.36-Annual Report for information on each pain category.
- Useful guidance for pain and distress categorization is also available in the Animal Care Tech Note: Categorizing Pain and Distress on the Annual Report, available at:
<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/ac-tech-note-categorizing-animal-pain-or-distress.pdf>.
- Visit the [Animal Care website's annual report](#) page for additional resources on completing the annual report.
- Animals used for research, testing, teaching, or experiments at any time during the reporting year must be reported in Column C, D or E, as appropriate, whether or not they are still being held at the facility.
- For any animals that have been used and transferred to another facility during the fiscal year, the facility that used the animals in the highest pain category is required to report the animals on their annual report.
- Animals used in more than one study should be counted only once in the most painful/distressful category.
- Include animals involved in only husbandry, veterinary care, or colony management procedures in Column B.
- Euthanasia as defined in the Animal Welfare Regulations is not considered painful or distressful. Euthanasia should not be used to determine the pain category unless a method that causes pain or distress was required for scientific reasons.

Completing the APHIS Form 7023

Annual Reports are now completed and submitted electronically! All Annual Reports must be completed and submitted by December 1st.

Top Right: Fiscal year

- Enter the Fiscal Year (2025).

Block 1: Registration Number

- Enter the facility's registration number (also known as certificate number).

Block 2: Headquarters Research Facility

- Complete this block with the mailing information of the facility headquarters.
- Include the name of the facility and full mailing address with city, state, and zip code. P.O. boxes are acceptable for the facility's mailing address.
- Include the main telephone number for the facility.

Block 3: Reporting Facility/ Facility Locations

- List all facility locations, with physical addresses, where animals are being used or held. P.O. Boxes are not acceptable as addresses for site locations.
- Include phone numbers if different from the headquarters phone number.
- If more than two facilities need to be listed, use a separate sheet.

Blocks 4 through 13: Animal Usage Report

- Column A: Animals Covered by the Animal Welfare Regulations.
 - List all regulated animals by common name.
 - Do Not list any numbers under column A.
 - Do Not report birds and laboratory rats and mice bred for use in research.
 - Do Not report reptiles, amphibians, fish, or any animals not covered by the Animal Welfare Act.
 - Do Not report animals used in field studies (as defined in the Animal Welfare Regulations) or clinical trials under a veterinarian-client-patient relationship.
 - Report all birds not bred for use in research under "Birds" regardless of species.
 - Use the Other Farm Animal species and Other Animal species (Blocks 12 and 13) for species not listed on this form in Blocks 4-12.
 - Report wild and exotic rodents under Other Animals.
 - If more species need to be listed, use the APHIS 7023A- Continuation Form.
- Column B: Animals bred, conditioned, or held but not used for regulated purposes.

- Enter the total number of animals of each species that was bred, conditioned, or held for use in teaching, testing, experiments, research, or surgery but not yet used for such purposes.
- Include animals used for breeding and their offspring if they were not used for research or teaching purposes this year.
- Include animals still held by the facility that were used in prior years but not this year.
- Column C: Animals used for research or teaching that did not involve pain, distress, or use of pain-relieving drugs.
 - Enter the total number of animals of each species that was used and did not experience more than momentary pain or distress.
 - Report animals that experienced routine research procedures (e.g., injections, tattooing, blood sampling) in this column.
- Column D: Animals used for research or teaching that involved more than momentary pain or distress for which appropriate anesthetic, analgesics, or tranquilizing drugs were used.
 - Enter the total number of animals of each species that experienced more than momentary pain or distress that was appropriately alleviated with anesthetics, analgesics, or tranquilizers.
- Column E: Animals used for research or teaching involving accompanying pain or distress and for which the use of appropriate pain-relieving drugs would have adversely affected the activity.
 - Enter the total number of animals of each species that experienced unalleviated pain or distress to prevent an adverse effect on the procedure, results, or interpretation of the activity.
 - Include an explanation of these procedures with the report. See the Column E and Exception FAQ sheet for additional guidance.
- Column F: Total Number of Animals Used in Research
 - Total each number of animals listed under **Column C, D, and E.**
 - Do not include animals listed under column B.

New This Year: If you submit Column “E” Explanation Attachments that contain confidential information, you must provide a clean copy of the attachment without redactions AND a copy of the attachment with the confidential information redacted or removed.

Avoiding Reporting Errors

General Tips:

- **DO** report animals used or held for use at any time during the reporting period only once, in the highest pain category the animal experienced.
- **DO NOT** report non-regulated animals including:
 - Laboratory rats and mice (genera *Rattus* and *Mus*).
 - Birds bred in captivity and used in research, teaching, testing, or experimentation.
 - Amphibians, reptiles, or fish.
 - Horses or other farm animals used for food or fiber, or for improving animal nutrition, breeding, management, or production efficiency, or improving the quality of food or fiber.
- **DO NOT** include client-owned animals participating in clinical trials in the context of medical care under a veterinary client relationship.
- **DO NOT** include animals used in a field study as defined in the AWA regulations. A field study means a study conducted on free-living wild animals in their natural habitat. However, this term excludes any study that involves an invasive procedure, harms, or materially alters the behavior of an animal under study. The IACUC determines whether an activity meets the definition.
- **DO NOT** report animals that a facility holds or uses outside the United States, or territories and possessions of the United States.

For teaching activities involving veterinary students or veterinary technology students:

- **DO** report facility-owned horses and other farm animals used for biomedical or non-agricultural research or teaching, including training of human or veterinary medical personnel in medical methods and procedures such as diagnostic techniques, surgery, anesthesia, and analgesia.
 - **DO NOT** include faculty- or student-owned animals used for teaching in the presence of their owner.
 - **DO NOT** include client-owned or shelter animals at spay-neuter clinics that are used only in the context of a veterinary client patient relationship.
 - **DO NOT** include animals on working farms used for teaching husbandry procedures at the farm location.
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Column “E” Explanation Attachments

If you have listed any animals in Column “E”, you are required to submit an attachment with an explanation of the procedures producing pain or distress and the reasons appropriate drugs were not used. This sheet provides useful guidance on attachments related to Column “E” explanations.

- **DO** use the APHIS 7023B form which can be found on our Annual Report website page. This form will assist you in addressing all regulatory requirements for reporting.
- Explain any procedures that caused pain or distress to the animals and reasons appropriate drugs were not used.
 - Explanations should be brief, in plain terms, and focus on what was done to the animal and what the animal experienced. For example, seizures, neurologic signs, inappetence, gastrointestinal signs, etc.
 - **DO NOT** include any protocols or IACUC meeting notes.
 - Include the reason(s) pain and distress could not be relieved, which should be science-based and in plain terms.
 - You may wish to include a statement that the IACUC approved the activity.
 - You may wish to briefly describe procedures that were used to limit pain or distress in Column “E” animals for context.
 - Bullet point format is acceptable.
- If pain or distress could not be relieved due to regulatory requirements, list the agency, the code of Federal Regulations (CFR) title number and the specific section number (e.g., APHIS 9 C.F.R. 113.102). If the requirement is in accordance with a guidance document, such as an agency notice or harmonization guideline, please provide sufficient information to identify the cited document.
- **Check your numbers!** Make sure the number of animals in the attached explanations matches the numbers reported in Column “E” on the APHIS Forms 7023 or 7023A. If they differ, you will be contacted requesting clarification.
- All explanations should be submitted in a format that is FOIA-ready. For questions relating to redaction, please contact us.

REMINDERS:

Reporting may be retrospective or prospective.

- **Retrospective** reporting involves collecting data on individual animals to put each study animal into the most appropriate category based on clinical signs of pain and distress. While more labor intensive, this method generally produces more accurate reporting.
- **Prospective** reporting means that all animals used for a particular activity are categorized in the highest applicable pain category based on anticipated pain and distress associated with that activity. This method is less labor intensive but may result in animals being placed in a higher category than necessary.

Posting reports on the USDA website.

- Annual Reports are posted on the USDA website. Avoid including protocol numbers, proprietary information, personal identifiable information, and other confidential information. If your Column “E” Explanation Attachment does contain confidential information, you must provide two copies of the attachment: one clean copy without redactions and one copy with this information redacted.

Questions on Column “E” explanations?

- See the “Categorizing Animal Pain or Distress in Research Facility Annual Reports Tech Note available at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/ac-tech-note-categorizing-animal-pain-or-distress.pdf>
- Help is also available via the Animal Care Annual Report hotline at 970-494-7477 or by email at AC.AnnualReports@usda.gov.

Exception Attachments

Research facilities may make exceptions to the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) Regulations and Standards when necessary to accomplish the research design. Exceptions must be specified and explained by the Principal Investigator in the research proposal and approved by the IACUC. Additionally, some exceptions also require approval by APHIS before they may be implemented. You may be required to provide exceptions along with your annual reports. This sheet provides guidance on exceptions. Any exceptions received that are incorrect or incomplete will cause a delay in processing your annual report. Your annual report will not be considered received until all information has been received by Animal Care.



What to Report:

Exceptions TO report on the Annual Report should be noted as IACUC-approved on the report and include:

- Exceptions approved by the IACUC under 9 C.F.R. §2.38(k) that are not provided for under the AWA Regulations and Standards, such as:
 - Removal of resting platforms from cat enclosures.
 - Extension of interval for cleaning/sanitization of enclosures.
 - Keeping animals in 24-hour dark cycle.
 - Keeping animals in temperatures outside range described in the AWA standards for the relevant species.
- Exceptions approved by Animal Care, such as:
 - Approval for use of an animal in more than one major operative procedure from which it is allowed to recover under a special circumstance (9 C.F.R. §2.31(d)(1)(x)(c)).
 - Exception to the health certificate requirements (9 C.F.R. §2.38(h)(2)).
 - Temporary tethering of dogs used as the primary enclosure (9 C.F.R. §3.6(c)(4)).



What Not to Report:

Exceptions that should NOT be reported on the Annual Report include:

- Exceptions approved by the IACUC that are provided for under the AWA Regulations and Standards, such as:
 - Approval for use of an animal in more than one major operative procedure from which it is allowed to recover when justified for scientific reasons or required as routine veterinary procedure (9 C.F.R. § 2.31(d)(1)(x)(a-b)).
 - Short-term withholding of food and water from animals (9 C.F.R. § 2.38(f)(2)(ii)).
 - Exemption of an individual non-human primate or bird from some or all the environmental enhancement plan (9 C.F.R. § 3.81(e)(2) and 3.154(e)(2)).
 - Any deviation from the methods of euthanasia as defined in the AWA regulations which were justified for scientific reasons, in writing, by the investigator (9 C.F.R. § 2.31(d)(1)(xi)).
- Exceptions approved by a veterinarian as part of the provision of veterinary care, such as:
 - Animal is fasted for surgery conducted for husbandry reasons.
 - Any major operative procedures for medical or colony management purposes (9 C.F.R. § 2.31(d)(1)(x)(b)).
 - Animals housed in an enclosure that does not meet space requirements for medical reasons while recovering from husbandry or veterinary care-related surgery.
- Exceptions to regulations, guidance, or policies other than the AWA Regulations and Standards.
 - Do not report exceptions to *The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, PHS Policy, internal policies or procedures, etc.

Exception Attachments

Exception Attachment Requirements:

- Ensure that the attachments include a brief description of the exception, species (using common names), and the number of animals affected for the reporting year only (October 1 to September 30).
 - Report approved exceptions even when no animals experienced the exception during the reporting period.
 - The explanation should be readily understood by a lay person.
 - Bullet point format is acceptable.
 - The basic information that should be included is:
 - Common name and/or species name (make sure the animals match the ones documented on APHIS Form 7023 or 7023A).
 - Number of animals affected.
 - What the exception is (including the AWA Regulation or Standard).
 - Why the exception was required.
 - Include a statement that the IACUC approved the exception.
- Check your numbers! If the numbers of animals listed in an exception exceed the totals used in research for that species, you will be contacted requesting clarification.
- All exceptions should be submitted in a format that is FOIA-ready. For questions relating to redactions, please contact us.

Questions on Exemptions?

Help is available by calling the Animal Care Annual Report hotline at 970-494-7477 or by emailing AC.AnnualReports@usda.gov.