ADOPITION OF LABORATORY ANIMALS

There is no way to avoid the truth that the vast majority of laboratory animals in America are euthanized in the research facility. Euthanasia is required for many projects for tissue collection. Some research projects may lead to illness or disease conditions for which euthanasia is the most humane treatment. Sometimes, however, animals finish a research project in good health and yet may not be suitable for any other research projects at the institution. In such circumstances, people will naturally consider the possibility of finding adoptive homes for the animals. An adoption program has the potential to decrease stress and raise morale for both the research and the animal care teams, and of course, can result in a long and happy life for the animal.

UCSF has a long-established adoption program for laboratory animals. Laboratory Animal Resource Center and Animal Welfare Assurance Program staff work with principal investigators and their staff to identify adoption candidates, write a description of the animal’s use at UCSF, issue a veterinary health certificate, and place the animal for adoption through local adoption agencies and animal shelters. Hundreds of animals have found homes through this program since its inception. Dogs and cats are the most obvious species for adoptions, but they’re hardly the only ones. Guinea pigs, zebra finches and rabbits can make fine pets as can the occasional rat, mouse or hamster. Animals hardly the only ones. Guinea pigs, zebra finches and rabbits can make fine pets as can the occasional rat, mouse or hamster. Animals have found homes through this program since its inception. Dogs and cats are the most obvious species for adoptions, but they’re hardly the only ones. Guinea pigs, zebra finches and rabbits can make fine pets as can the occasional rat, mouse or hamster. Animals have found homes through this program since its inception. Dogs and cats are the most obvious species for adoptions, but they’re hardly the only ones. Guinea pigs, zebra finches and rabbits can make fine pets as can the occasional rat, mouse or hamster. Animals have found homes through this program since its inception. Dogs and cats are the most obvious species for adoptions, but they’re hardly the only ones. Guinea pigs, zebra finches and rabbits can make fine pets as can the occasional rat, mouse or hamster. Animals have found homes through this program since its inception. Dogs and cats are the most obvious species for adoptions, but they’re hardly the only ones. Guinea pigs, zebra finches and rabbits can make fine pets as can the occasional rat, mouse or hamster. Animals have found homes through this program since its inception. Dogs and cats are the most obvious species for adoptions, but they’re hardly the only ones. Guinea pigs, zebra finches and rabbits can make fine pets as can the occasional rat, mouse or hamster. Animals have found homes through this program since its inception. Dogs and cats are the most obvious species for adoptions, but they’re hardly the only ones. Guinea pigs, zebra finches and rabbits can make fine pets as can the occasional rat, mouse or hamster.
Pinworms, continued

- Exporting: Many institutions have eliminated pinworms from their populations. This makes it increasingly difficult to export UCSF mice to collaborators or colleagues.
- Physiologic Effects: It is known that pinworms can alter immune response (with both mucosal and systemic effects), growth rates, and electrolyte transport, resulting in an uncontrolled variable in a variety of studies. The parasites can interfere with some other specific studies involving the gastrointestinal system, liver function, or nutrition.
- Hubandry Costs: Attempts to contain, rather than eradicate pinworms, including bagging items out of rooms, wearing protective clothes and performing extra room cleaning, increase hubandry and research costs.
- Transfer to New Buildings: The unprecedented UCSF building expansion will eventually have rodents entering new, clean facilities. Efforts are being taken to keep these new areas clear of rodent pathogens and eradicating pinworms is a part of that process.
- Better Treatment Options: As described below, better treatment options (fenbendazole feed) are now available.
- Users Committee Approval: LARC has outlined treatment plans to the rodent users committee. Together, LARC and the committee support the plan.

The planned regimen will take a total of 9 weeks. LARC personnel will administer the treated feed to animals receiving centralized care, and will provide medicated feed and coordinate scheduling with those groups providing their own care (such as lab housing or non-LARC areas). The planned starting date is September, 2002. Isolation and depopulation alternatives will occur at the same time and manner. Treatments occur as follows:

- Fenbendazole: Medicated chow will be fed for five 7-day periods with intervening 7-day periods of non-medicated chow. Total treatment will cover 9 weeks.
- Special Diets Studies: Animals on all-liquid diets or on specially formulated ground-chow diets will be treated with medicated special diet, if available. LARC will bear the additional costs of adding Fenbendazole to special diets. If not available to formulate with Fenbendazole, these rodents either need to be isolated and depopulated by the midpoint of the 9 weeks, or fed the standard (not special diet) medicated diet for that period.
- Isolation: The survery form. Any rodents not able to participate in the above treatments will need to be isolated and an endpoint of the study must be identified. At that time they will need to be euthanized and the rodent will eventually need to be emptied of all animals and decontaminated. This should happen by the midpoint of the 9-week treatment plan. Depending on the number of projects that need to use this treatment route, the campus-wide treatment may be delayed a very short time (weeks, not months) to allow such studies to finish and depopulate, if that extra time is needed. This will be determined based on the number of requests for this treatment option. Overall, this is the least desirable treatment plan.

In most cases, research should continue as usual during the treatment. You will receive notice of the actual treatment period to note in your study records. Typically, research work seems unaffected. Please consider that the presence of pinworms may already have as much or greater effect on your studies than treatment. You may choose to suspend sensitive studies during the treatment if you feel it is prudent.

The eradication effort will have the best chance of succeeding only if ALL rats and mice on campus are treated.

After campus-wide treatment, the existing quarantine program will be modified to process imported rodents arriving from noncommercial vendors with medicated feed during quarantine. During the treatment periods the available diets will be limited to Picolab Rodent Diet 20, an irradiated diet (Lab Diet #5053), Picolab Mouse Diet, an irradiated diet (Lab Diet #5058), and Formulab Diet (Lab Diet #5008). The composition of these diets can be reviewed at www.tdcat.com. The overwhelming majority of rodents are fed these three diets already.

What do you need to do?

Concerns: Notify LARC if there is a reason that your rodents cannot participate in the medicated feed treatments. Please provide specific reasons why treatment would endanger the health of any animal or data integrity of any specific animal study for review by the Annual Users Advisory Committee. Excluded animals will need to participate in an alternative option. You can contact us to discuss your concerns and consider options to relocate the animals to a containment area during treatment.

Special Diets: Notify LARC that your animals are on a special diet and state what that diet is, where you obtained it (with contact phone numbers and e-mail addresses) and identifying diet information. Please do so as soon as possible. It may take time to determine if the diet can be available. The entire treatment plan needs to begin at the same time.

Alternative Option of Isolation and Depopulation: Notify LARC if your intent is to isolate and depopulate your rodents by the midpoint of the nine-week treatment plan. Animals not treated may have some restrictions on their handling and use for some time. Space may also be a limiting factor in this route. Please only request this option as a last resort.

Questions, notifications and concerns may be addressed to LARC by sending an e-mail to: pinworms@larc.ucsf.edu. Be sure to include your animal species, location (building and room) and your phone numbers.

For the above, you need do nothing. LARC will handle the eradication effort. There is a good chance of success if everyone participates, but for this plan to work, all rodents need treatment or elimination by the end of the 9-week period. Through our joint efforts, the campus will change from presumed pinworm positive to pinworm free. We look forward to your cooperation as we undertake this important colony improvement initiative. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. Further notices will be sent over the summer.

SEROLOGY REPORTS FOR SHIPPING RODENTS

When shipping rodents to another institution, you will need a serology report. The volume of rodent shipping has grown and so large that a tracking system is needed. Your help allows LARC to track requests. Here is how to submit your requests:

Step 1: You must submit the request on the form entitled “Request to Export Animals From UCSF and Obtain Health Reports”. To find the form, go to the website at www.ucsf.larc. You will see the form directly under the Sentinel Program link (this link looks like a microscope) and on the forms page.

Step 2: Do you need additional tests before shipping? The reviewing institution must tell you what they need in order to answer this question, so please ask them. Information on our standard serology panel is available under the Sentinel Program link. Once you know if there are added tests, simply indicate what you need on the request form.

Step 3: Submit the request form by email to the new address: rodentship@larc.ucsf.edu.

Step 4: Once the request form is received, the shipping health reports coordinator (typically one of the LARC veterinarian technicians) does any needed physical examinations, collects serum samples, and does additional tests as needed.

The shipping coordinator will send a summary letter and the accompanying serology report to you and to the receiving institution. While a LARC veterinarian is not the primary shipping and serology request contact, a LARC veterinarian does review serology reports and test results. Any unusual findings will come to the LARC veterinarian’s attention, especially questions regarding diseases in the colonies.

A minimum of 5-10 working days will be required for this process from receipt of the request. If you have any questions, please contact us at rodentship@larc.ucsf.edu.