

UGA IACUC Policy on Preservation of Animals Effected by a Disastrous Event

***Approved by the UGA IACUC
Effective June 20, 2013***

PHS policy states that Institutions receiving federal funds have an obligation to protect the federal investment in research by exercising due diligence. This protection covers research animals, personnel, facilities, and research data. Therefore, The UGA Animal Care and Use Program is required to have a "Disaster/Contingency Plan," including a method for preserving animals that are necessary for critical research or are irreplaceable.

The IACUC encourages all investigators using animals for research to protect and insure their animals and work. Investigators working on Federal or State grants have guidelines for preserving equipment and data funded by these entities, and other funding sources should have guidelines for safe guarding work supported by their money.

Investigator Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the investigator working in a URAR managed animal facility to ensure that his/her research and data will not be compromised by a disastrous event. Investigators are encouraged to cryopreserve unique rodent models. Data should be backed up with several copies stored at offsite locations. Investigators with irreplaceable animals or animals necessary for critical research should collaborate with URAR to label those cages or animals for easy identification during a disastrous event. A consistent, obvious, and easy to maintain identification system will be arranged with URAR and the researchers. This identification must be updated as necessary to be effective (i.e. replacement breeders must be identified as previously identified breeders age beyond reproductive efficiency).

Preservation of irreplaceable animals and animal necessary for critical research

During a disastrous event, URAR will work with local, State, and Federal authorities to preserve animal health and welfare. Research projects may be stopped if there is a prolonged period of physical plant or staff outage. Every effort will be made to preserve animal lives, including transportation of animals to alternative housing if their current location is not suitable for animal housing. Disasters that create a situation in which all animals cannot be preserved necessitate making decisions about which animals, if any, will be preserved.

Criteria used to decide priorities for response

These criteria are identified in collaboration with the URAR veterinarians and staff, investigators, and appropriate stake holders.

- Animal previously identified and marked as irreplaceable/necessary for critical research will be rescued first. (e.g. animals that have been on long-term studies, unique rodent strains)
- URAR veterinarians and staff will attempt to contact the researchers of animals which are not identified, to determine which animals are to be saved.
- After animals identified ahead of time, and any animals that researchers are able to communicate to URAR at the time of the event should be saved, animals will be prioritized in the following manner:
 - (1) Non human primates
 - (2) Dogs, cats, horses
 - (3) Ruminants and pigs
 - (4) Rabbits
 - (5) Rodents and birds
 - (6) Amphibians, Reptiles, Fish
- Animals housed in BSL3 containment will not be moved out of containment, and will be euthanized within containment if housing conditions are not adequate for their well being.

A good reference document is the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare article "Who You Gonna Call?" <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/references/lab02v31n8.htm>