Subject: Recordkeeping

BACKGROUND

The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (the Guide, NRC 2011) states: Medical records are a key element of the veterinary care program and are considered critical for documenting animal well-being as well as tracking animal care and use at a facility. (p. 115). Identification cards should include the source of the animal, the strain or stock, names and contact information for the responsible investigator(s), pertinent dates (e.g., arrival date, birth date, etc.), and protocol number when applicable. (p. 75)

IACUC Guidelines

The IACUC recommends that Principal Investigators keep procedural notes on individual animals, and have them readily available for the DLAR staff and veterinarians, Department of Research Compliance, as well as the IACUC.

Cage cards/Identification cards:

1. All cage cards include:
   a. Source of the animal
   b. Strain/Stock
   c. Pertinent dates (arrival date, birth date)
   d. Protocol number
2. DLAR maintains contact information for the investigators and laboratory staff at each building (not listed on cage card).
3. Cage cards cannot be re-used as the original information on the card will be inaccurate for the new cage/mice.
4. Multiple cage cards can be used on one cage in some instances (e.g. breeding); however, animals from multiple protocols cannot be housed in the same cage. Each cage must have one designated protocol assigned to it.
5. Animals cannot be housed on campus without an identification card associated with the cage/pen/run with the appropriate information listed.
6. For some species (zebrafish) it may be appropriate to have the Identification information posted at the room or rack level.

Recordkeeping*

1. Each animal under observation or treatment will be identified such that care for individual animals can be documented.
2. All approved animal procedures (e.g. injections, gavage, tumor induction, blood collection, genotyping, surgery) will be documented on cage cards or charts in the animal rooms.
3. Records will include observations outlined in protocols to assess animal wellbeing and/or euthanasia criteria.
4. Surgical procedure should be briefly stated/described, length of time the animal was anesthetized, and notes on any adverse events or other comments on the procedure itself.
5. Daily postoperative medical records of the animal will be maintained, including an evaluation of overall health, a description of any complications noted, treatment provided, and the removal of sutures, staples, wound clips, or other such devices.
6. Records will document administration of all medications and treatments given to animals, including those given to reduce pain or stress.

7. As a minimum, daily post-surgery records will cover the postoperative period (10 days and/or until wound closure material is removed).

8. Each entry in the records will include a signature or the initials of the person making the observation or treatment and the date.

9. All records will be readily available to the veterinary staff, the IACUC, or the Department of Research Compliance for review.

10. The names and contact numbers of persons to notify or consult in case of emergencies will be provided to the facility manager and veterinarian.

*Adopted from the VAMC “ANIMAL COMPONENT OF RESEARCH PROTOCOL (ACORP)” form.