Institutional Animal Care & Use Program - UTEP	
Title: Counting Fetal & Neonatal Rodents	
Policy #: 016	**Date in Effect**: 27 February 2015
Version: C	**Rev Date**: 15 December 2025
In Effect ☒ **Rescinded** ☐	**Date Rescinded**:

A) RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of all personnel using animals in research and teaching to ensure that the counting, manipulation, and disposition of unweaned rodents (including fetuses) bred solely for experimental manipulation or tissue/cell harvest follow the standards outlined below. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the IACUC when good justification is provided for deviating from it.

B) APPLICATION

This policy applies to all rodents used in research and teaching at UTEP.

C) DEFINITIONS

1) Unweaned rodents
   a) Weaning age refers to the age at which animals are nutritionally and behaviorally independent from the dam
   b) Mice, rats, voles, and Syrian hamsters under the weaning age of around 21 days (+-2 days) (or as approved as an exception by the IACUC).
   c) Guinea pigs under the weaning age of around 14 days (+-2 days) (or as approved as an exception by the IACUC).
   d) Mongolian gerbils under the weaning age of around 25 days (+-2 days) (or as approved as an exception by the IACUC).
   e) The Attending Veterinarian may approve extension to these weaning ages on a case-by-case basis for clinical reasons.
2) Fetuses (generally starting at 60% of the gestational period) are defined as such starting on the following days:
   a) Mice, voles, and rats - day 13 of gestation to parturition.
   b) Syrian hamsters - day 11 of gestation to parturition.
   c) Guinea pigs - day 39 of gestation to parturition.
   d) Mongolian gerbils – day 16 of gestation to parturition.

3) Manipulations – sexing (for culling purposes), harvesting, or sampling tissue from unweaned animals (e.g., organ harvesting, tail biopsy, ear punch for genotyping).

D) PROCEDURES

1) Counting

a) Investigators must indicate in the protocol application the minimum number of litters of fetal and/or neonatal rodents needed for the three-year span of the protocol to procure the tissue, cells, or progeny for their study. A brief explanation should be given to justify a need that might otherwise seem excessive.

b) The protocol will further specify the following:

(1) The total estimated number of pups that will be generated.

(2) The total estimated number of pups that will be manipulated in any way for the research protocol.

(3) The total estimated number of pups that will be maintained for breeding purposes.

(4) The total estimated number of pups that will be otherwise disposed of WITHOUT research manipulation.

(a) # euthanized

(b) # transferred to another PI/protocol.

c) Fetal pups, which are utilized prior to birth or directly harvested from the dam for tissue, will be counted with the dam as “litter” (1 dam + litter = 1 animal).

d) If animals will be euthanized at or before weaning because they are of the wrong genotype or sex for the experiment, they should be counted as animals held but not subject to experimental manipulation.

2) Logging

a) To help estimate the number of animals produced in the breeding colony for protocol tracking purposes, the number of animals brought to parturition but manipulated before weaning will be logged on the breeding cage cards for each cage and must be logged by the PI/Lab staff for their own records.
b) For animals not manipulated prior to weaning, no logging is required.
c) It will be the responsibility of the PI/lab staff to log the litter once discovered in the breeding cage on the cage card; unless LARC is assisting with the breeding of the PI/lab staff, then LARC will notify the PI/lab staff directly.
d) Any other comments or animal observations in which LARC needs to be made aware, please email LARC directly at larc@utep.edu.

Review History	
Revision Version:	**Revision Date**:
A	27 February 2015
B	27 April 2020
C	15 December 2025