



## I. Purpose

To describe the approved method for evaluating the need for humane euthanasia and/or recommend continued supportive care and assessment of animals that are part of RUSVM's Animal Care and Use Program that are considered to be in pain and/or distress, or terminally ill. The method of euthanasia should be consistent with the current AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals.

## II. Scope/Responsibility

The IACUC is responsible for oversight of the entire Animal Care and Use Program at RUSVM. The Clinical Veterinarian makes clinical decisions in any given case as to whether euthanasia is or is not necessary to minimize animal's stress and pain and to make sure that the procedure is performed correctly. The clinical veterinarian should refer to the [Sick Animal Reporting Flow Chart](#) for assistance in determining course of action and communication when an animal is reported sick.

The IACUC protocol should state how euthanasia is to be performed if this deviates from IACUC/RUSVM guidelines and what needs to be sampled from the animal prior to or following euthanasia. If any questions or concerns or conflicts occur, the Attending Veterinarian (AV) is to be contacted. Following euthanasia, the AV is to be notified in writing (email) within 48 hours.

## III. Definitions

**Clinical Veterinarian:** Either the applicable veterinarian on the on-call list or the veterinarian involved in a teaching/research protocol.

**Attending Veterinarian:** The Attending Veterinarian (AV) has the authority per the USDA Animal Welfare Act (AWA), the Institute for Laboratory Animal Research Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (The Guide) and in compliance with AAALACi guidelines to provide adequate veterinary care. The AWA states "Each research facility shall assure that the attending veterinarian has appropriate authority to ensure the provision of adequate veterinary care and to oversee the adequacy of other aspects of animal care and use".

## IV. Process/Procedures

The following 1-7 situations require euthanasia as a humane endpoint.

1. Wounding with such significant damage, that on recovery, the animal would be impaired in state or function.
2. An infection which does not respond to maximal doses of the proper antibiotic regime and/or other appropriate symptomatic treatment and can only continue to be kept alive with continuous supportive therapy.



3. An important experimental animal that can yield significant data if properly and humanely euthanized.
4. An animal which can no longer perform normal life sustaining behaviors such as eating, drinking, urination, defecation without intervention.
5. An aggressive neoplasm that effects the animal's well-being and where pain and suffering cannot be alleviated through treatment or medication.
6. An animal whose pain, distress and/ or suffering cannot be alleviated, for whatever reason. Alleviation of such pain or distress takes precedence over continuing or finishing the experiment or teaching procedure.
7. An animal that is assessed to be a danger to itself or other animals and humans and can not be trained or worked with to improve the condition.

The Euthanasia Assessment Score Sheet (see Appendix 1) should be used in all other cases where there exists concern for an animal's health and welfare; the Animal Assessment worksheet can be used as a tool to assess an animal's condition in determining if they should be euthanized, not euthanized and/or continue/start treatment and assessment under a veterinarian's supervision.

If euthanasia is determined to be the endpoint, follow the species specific IACUC approved Euthanasia SOP.

The Attending Veterinarian must be notified in writing (email) within 48 hours of the procedure.

## **V. Review**

This Policy is subject to annual review.

### **Policy Approval:**

16 January 2024

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**Signed**

**Dr. Jennifer Ketzis, IACUC Chair**

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**Date**



**Appendix 1. Euthanasia Assessment Score Sheet**

Physical Exam		Score
Body Temperature	Within 3% of reference range	0
	Great than 3% deviation from ref. range	3
Cardiovascular	HR Clinically appropriate	0
	HR Clinically inappropriate	3
	Pulse quality normal	0
	Pulse quality abnormal (poor or bounding)	3
Respiration	RR clinically appropriate	0
	Abnormal Pattern	3
	Inappropriate rate	2
Body Condition/BW	Normal Habitus	0
	Poor condition	2
	Emaciated	3
Attitude	Bright, alert responsive	0
	Quiet, alert, responsive	1
	Depressed, responsive, but ambulatory	3
	Restless, vocalising or immobile	5
	Depressed, unresponsive or non-ambulatory	7
	Comatose	10
Appetite	Good	0
	Decreased	1
	Poor	2
	Anorexic	3
	Not applicable (fasted)	1
Serum Biochemistry/CBC	No significant alterations	0
	Significant alterations but not severely abnormal	2
	Severe alterations	5
	Not applicable	2



Special Considerations	Ruminants: Rumen Atony	3
	Equids: Absent Gut Sounds	3
	Not applicable	1
Lameness	Grade 3	1
	Grade 4	2
	Grade 5	3
	Fracture: Non weight bearing	3
Assessment of Pain Level	On the line below put an "x" to reflect the level of pain. 0=No pain      10=Could not be more painful	
	0 10	
	X=0	0
	x>0<2	1
	x>2<4	2
	x>4<6	3
	x>6<8	4
	x>8≤10	5
Total Score		

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Normal/Little concern	0-5
Monitor q24	6-10
Monitor q12	11-15
Monitor q4	16-20
Constant Monitoring	21-34