



I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to allow research animals that are no longer assigned to protocols to be adopted by individuals as companion pets. The IACUC recognizes that adoption of research and teaching animals raises the potential for human health and safety concerns. While it is impossible to reduce health and safety risks to zero, animals selected for adoption must be healthy and present minimal risk of transmitting zoonotic infection (PI).

II. Background

The Animal Resource Center and Montana State University recognizes the invaluable contribution of research animals in the advancement of biomedical knowledge. The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) endorses and promotes the responsible, humane, and appropriate use of research animals while complying with the concept of “refinement, reduction, and replacement” in our use of research animals. The IACUC also recognizes that sometimes animals finish a research or teaching project in good health but are not suitable or needed for any other projects at the institution. In such circumstances, the Animal Resource Center may consider finding adoptive homes for the animals. It is understood and widely accepted that adoption programs not only enhance the quality of life for healthy research animals that are no longer needed by the University, but can also decrease stress and raise morale for both the research and animal care teams. We believe that responsible and compassionate researchers utilize animals only when necessary; therefore it follows that we should do our best to ensure good lives for those animals whose sacrifice is not required by science.

III. Procedure

The following conditions must be met in order to place an animal for adoption:

1. Adoption privileges are granted only with the approval of the Attending Veterinarian.
2. An animal will be considered for adoption only if:
 - a. The purpose for which the animal was acquired no longer exists
 - b. The animal will not be needed in another IACUC approved study
 - c. The animal has been returned to the Animal Resource Center
 - d. An adopter has been identified to adopt the animal.
3. Before being released for adoption, animals must be examined by the Attending Veterinarian and found to be in good health and of suitable temperament

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appropriate for a pet. Cats and rabbits must be neutered and receive all age-appropriate vaccinations, as is accepted by standard veterinary practice. Cats may be declawed if requested by the adopting party with the understanding that the cat will remain an indoor pet.

4. The individual adopting an animal must sign a waiver which states the University is not liable for any injury or damage to persons or property by the adopted animal. The waiver further states that no warranties, guarantees, or promises of any kind have been made or can be made with regard to the adopted animal's physical condition or temperament. The owner assumes all further responsibilities associated with responsible companion animal ownership.
 5. An animal purchased from a Class A dealer (purpose-bred) may be eligible for adoption as long as the above conditions are met.
 6. At the time of transfer of ownership, the adopter shall assume all financial responsibility for housing, care, and medication of that animal.
 7. For each animal being adopted an "Animal Adoption Agreement" will be completed and signed by the attending veterinarian and the adopting party. This record should be maintained by the Animal Resource Center for a period of 3 years from the date of signature by the new owner.
 8. Any deviations from the provisions of this policy must be approved by the Director of the Animal Resource Center and a simple majority of a quorum of the IACUC.
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