



Policy on Environmental Enrichment for Rabbits, Rodents and Ferrets

Policy: All rabbits, ferrets and rodents will be group housed whenever possible. Males, particularly rabbits, guinea pigs and mice, may need to be singly housed to prevent fighting. Singly housed rodents, other than guinea pigs, will be provided, as a minimum, supplemental nesting material such as a Nestlet with each cage. Singly caged rabbits and guinea pigs, without additional enrichment structures in their cages, will be provided either a chewable or manipulative object such as a nylon ball, alfalfa cube, or other item which can be replenished or sanitized weekly or supplemental bedding such as straw. Singly caged ferrets will have, as minimum enrichment, structures such as PVC tubes for hiding and climbing. These will be sanitized weekly.

Exceptions: Investigators who must singly cage animals and feel that enrichment materials may confound their research objectives must provide justification. Certain studies such as behavioral, toxicology and nutrition research may be confounded by additional bedding or cage structures. Exceptions to the policy are reviewed and approved by the DAR veterinary staff or referred to the IACUC for committee action.

Reference(s):

- Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Guide), NRC, 1996

Approved 6/7/99