

Standard Operating Procedure

SOP Number: **02-18-4502**
Service: **Research**
Operating Section: **Husbandry**
Unit: **CMF**
Title: **Environmental Enrichment for Rabbits**

Purpose:

To establish the proper guidelines for the use of enrichment devices for rabbits

Procedure:

Physical Enrichment Devices

- 1) When in agreement with the objectives of the protocol, the structural and social environments of rabbits will be enhanced to encourage species-typical behavior, improve animal well-being and prevent maladaptive behaviors.
- 2) Enrichment devices that may be used in the primary enclosures of rabbits include bunny blocks, dumbbells, dura-chews, jingle balls, jump'n jacks, rabbit huts, stainless steel rattles or wood gnawing blocks.
- 3) Enrichment devices must be rotated out and sanitized at least once every two weeks during their cage change outs.
- 4) If a device's physical integrity is questioned, the use of that device will be discontinued immediately. All devices are evaluated during change outs to ensure they are free of sharp edges, defects, cracks, or other evidence of diminished integrity, and disposed of and replaced with a similar device if such evidence is found.
- 5) A specially designed "play cage" is available for rabbits. It is currently used for rabbits showing maladaptive behavior.

Dietary Enrichment

- 1) The use of physical enrichment devices and the use of dietary enrichment must not interfere with the objectives of the protocol.
- 2) Dietary enrichment must not be used to replace the standard rabbit diet that is provided unless it is stipulated in an IACUC approved protocol, nor must it cause any detrimental ailments that would cause health or physical changes (i.e. weight gain, malocclusion, etc).
- 3) Dietary enrichment that may be used in the primary enclosures of rabbits include timothy cubes, veggie-bites, supreme mini-treats, fruit crunchies, fruity-gems, rabbit stix, or other suitable food items.

- 4) Dietary enrichment items are evaluated daily and if items are found rancid, moldy, or otherwise unsafe for use, the items must be replaced with fresh dietary enrichment.

Comments:

None.

Responsible Official Signature		Date	
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QA Signature	Date		
<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>06/14/2019</i>		
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