

Timed Mating of Laboratory Rodents

Purpose

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) describes the basic procedures for routine care and husbandry of rodents. This establishes minimum standards for the housing and care of laboratory rodents under The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (The Act) and Regulations 1997. This code is intended to be read in conjunction with the current Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (The Australian Code).

Responsibility

Animal care staff, Facility Supervisors, Facilities Manager.

Materials

1. Cage cards
2. Rodent diet (within 6 months of the milling date)
3. Clean or sterilised water bottles
4. Clean or sterilised water valves
5. Clean or sterilised cages with bedding
6. Clean or sterilised micro-barrier tops and wire-bar lids or mesh bottomed cages
7. Clean or sterilised environmental enrichment devices
8. Liquid disinfectant; Clidox, Virkon or other.

Procedure

Timed mating of mice:

1. Stud males for use for timed matings are housed singly.
2. Females used for timed mating must be individually identifiable by presence of ear notch or other unique identification system.
3. Females are added to the stud male on the required date either singly or in harem.
4. Timed mating of mice is confirmed by presence of a vaginal plug.
5. Checking for presence of vaginal plugs must occur before 10am in the morning and presence or absence of a vaginal plug noted on the breeding card.
6. Once presence of a vaginal plug has been confirmed, plugged females must be removed from the breeding cage and housed separately or in groups as required.
7. Technical staff should confirm with the relevant PI their requirements for housing for plugged females.
8. PI will be informed on the date of plugging the number and identification of the females plugged on that date.
9. Date of plugging and female identification should be clearly marked on their cage card.

Timed mating of rats:

1. Where available, mesh bottomed cages are used for timed mating of rats.
2. Males and females should only be housed in mesh-bottomed cages for the purpose of timed mating and returned to conventional or barrier cages after mating has been confirmed.
3. A single male and female are used for timed mating of rats. Harem matings are not to be used for this purpose.
4. Mating is confirmed by the presence of a vaginal plug visible in the tray under the mesh cage bottom.
5. Once mating has been confirmed, both the male and female are removed to conventional housing.
6. Males must be housed singly post mating.
7. Females can be group housed post mating providing females can be individually identified.
8. Technical staff should confirm with the relevant PI their requirements for housing of plugged females.
9. PI will be informed on the date of plugging the number and identification of the females plugged on that date.
10. Date of plugging and female identification should be clearly marked on their cage card.