POLICY

The restriction of or access to food or fluids from an animal’s ad libitum (free feeding) consumption is referred to by the Guide as “Regulation”. This may entail scheduled access to food or fluid sources or restriction of the total daily amount of food or fluid provided to the animal. Regulation of food or fluid intake may be required for the conduct of some physiological, neuroscience, and behavioral research protocols. The objective is to use the least regulation that will maintain the well-being of the research animals, while at the same time helping the investigator achieve the scientific objective.

Scientific justification must be provided when food or fluid regulation is proposed. The development of IACUC protocols that involve food or fluid regulation requires the evaluation of three factors: the necessary level of regulation, the potential adverse consequences, and methods for assessing the health and well-being of the animals.

Animals that require food and/or fluid regulation must be closely monitored to ensure that food and fluid intake meets their nutritional needs. Body weights must be recorded at least weekly. Written records must be maintained for each animal to document daily food and fluid consumption, hydration status, and any behavioral or clinical changes used as criteria for temporary or permanent removal of an animal from a protocol.

Definitions of Food and/or Fluid Regulation:
• Scheduled Access – An animal consumes as much as desired at regular intervals.
• Restriction – The total volume of food or fluid consumed is strictly monitored and controlled.

REGULATION

Animal Welfare Act and Regulations, in accordance with 9 CFR, Ch.1 Part 3-standards-Subpart A through Subpart D.


PROCEDURES

1.0 Protocol Requirements:

1.1 Provide the justification for food/fluid regulation.

1.2 Provide a complete description of the proposed food/fluid regulation including the feeding schedule, length of regulation, and/or the total amount of the food/fluid restriction (i.e. an exact percentage of the amount of food/fluid being restricted that was calculated from a measured amount of normal daily consumption).

1.3 Describe any potential adverse effects from the regulation and how the animals will be monitored to detect those adverse effects. Monitoring must include daily observation, food/fluid consumption, and weekly bodyweights.

1.4 Indicate criteria (behavioral and/or clinical changes) to be used for temporary or permanent removal of an animal from regulation.
2.0 Record Keeping: A daily log sheet for food or fluid regulation is available for use (see below).  

2.1 The following items must be maintained for each animal on study:

A. General information including protocol number, PI, contact person, etc.
B. Baseline weight (before regulation period begins)
C. Daily food consumption (g)
D. Daily fluid consumption (ml)
E. Feeding Schedule if scheduled access
F. Daily health observations (e.g., hydration status, behavior, body condition score)
G. Weekly weight (may be more often if protocol requirements indicate)
H. Date, Time, and Initials of personnel who evaluated animal-daily.

LINKS TO RELATED FORMS, RECORD LOGS, AND SOPS

Daily Log Sheet for Food or Fluid Regulation