

Dear animal research staff,

The Office of Animal Resources (OAR) is sending this message to provide some information on preparations we are taking in response to the novel coronavirus pandemic. Please note that the best up-to-date recommendations, requirements, and guidance can be found at the OVPR web page linked here:

<https://research.uiowa.edu/covid-19-information-researchers#ANIMALSUBJECTS>

- OAR will follow its emergency preparedness plan, which includes provisions for pandemics and is updated annually. The principle focus of this plan is to maintain critical services while preventing the spread of illness through our workforce.
- The major impact of a local COVID-19 outbreak would be a reduction in workforce, which would impact OAR's ability to care for research animals across all campus facilities.
- If staff shortages become critical, the use of non-essential personnel from laboratories, students, and other volunteer pools that the university may develop are a potential source of workforce augmentation and would be utilized whenever possible.
- Stockpiles of feed, bedding and other support supplies are generally sufficient to address short-term (30 days or less) disruptions to deliveries or other supply chain issues.

Recommendations for research labs using animals:

- Research labs are encouraged to begin scaling back their active projects to only the most essential research necessary, which will allow OAR to focus its support services more strategically.
- Extremely rare or unique lines of research animals should be evaluated for cryopreservation and appropriate resources/services identified for that purpose. The campus offers these services locally through the Genome Editing Facility (<https://medicine.uiowa.edu/genomeediting/services>). Additional vendor information can be provided upon request.
- Breeding colonies should be reduced as much as possible as these create a significant strain on space and resource requirements. Labs that cannot continue to manage their breeding colonies must coordinate with OAR promptly to determine if support is available or if breeding must cease.
- Animals that require intensive treatment(s) or those for which lab staff provide their basic husbandry support (feed, water, cage changes) should be minimized and new projects involving these cohorts should not be started for the foreseeable future.
- Lab staff that could provide augmentation of the OAR workforce (e.g., previous OAR animal care staff, lab volunteers) should work directly with the OAR management staff to determine the best manner in which they can assist and to develop an alternate staff pool for future needs.

The Office of Animal Resources will continue to provide the best service possible through this challenging period and as always, maintain the health and welfare of the animals in our charge as the highest priority. Communication with the OAR is of the utmost importance if your lab has unplanned absences that affect animal care. It is through this advanced knowledge that OAR can help maintain critical research assets.

We sincerely appreciate the patience, understanding and cooperation from our research partners in the days and weeks ahead.

