

Dear Research Staff,

As we continue to face a surge in COVID-19 infections and close contacts requiring quarantine, the impacts are being felt across the campus and within the research enterprise. The Office of Animal Resources has been able to maintain adequate staffing to ensure the best possible care of the animals in our program while experiencing periodic absences impacting individual facilities.

In an effort to be transparent we are informing the animal research community that we are continuing to review and evaluate contingency plans for the coming months given that the cold and flu season are upon us and will be superimposed on the pandemic this winter.

We are asking all UI animal researchers, lab managers, and research staff members to consider what studies **must** be conducted to maintain continuity of current research efforts, maintain critical resources, or meet funding reporting requirements. For the next 3-4 months we would likewise ask that you please limit any additional, less critical research efforts and/or delay future projects that may necessitate placing new animal orders to pre-position them on site for those projects.

Please note that all guidelines from Phase 3 of the animal research ramp up plan are still in effect and can be referenced here: <https://animal.research.uiowa.edu/animal-research-ramp-guidance-phase-3>. These guidelines are intended to remain in effect through the winter months with no other restrictions or revisions for the foreseeable future. We cannot, however, predict what further actions may be directed by the central administration, CIMT or CCOM in regards to the evolving pandemic. Efforts to utilize existing animal resources without increase in animal populations and reducing unneeded colonies where possible, will assist the OAR by maintaining a manageable workload should staffing shortages become significant. Cryopreservation remains a viable option for preservation of unique rodent lines that are not currently needed for research projects. In addition, any critical rodent lines that have not yet been cryopreserved should be considered for that process to ensure security of those resources.

Finally, we are continuing to maintain a list of potential research staff that would be willing to volunteer as augmentees to the OAR caretaking staff, predominantly checking cages and rooms for health and welfare concerns, on a daily basis. If you are interested in having your name added to the list, please contact Katie Rurka, Assistant Husbandry Manager for OAR ([katherine-rurka@uiowa.edu](mailto:katherine-rurka@uiowa.edu)).

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of the requests outlined above and please, be safe and stay well!