# STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

**DIVISION OF COMPARATIVE MEDICINE**
**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA**



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| **TITLE:** | **Animal Identification** |
| **SCOPE:** | All Animal Program Personnel |
| **RESPONSIBILITY:** | Program Assistant, Facility Manager, all Research and Animal Personnel |
| **PURPOSE:** | To Outline the Procedures for the Assignment and Maintenance of Animal Identification |

## I. PURPOSE

1. The following outlines the proper procedures for assignment of identification to laboratory animals.

## II. RESPONSIBILITY

1. The Program Assistant is responsible for assigning all non-rodent and USDA-regulated rodent species a unique intramural identification number at the time animals are ordered.

2. The research staff are responsible for assigning all non-regulated rodent species a unique intramural identification number if individual identification is required.

3. All program staff contribute to successful compliance with this policy.

## III. ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION

1. Non-rodent and USDA-regulated rodent animals are identified by a unique intramural USF identification number assigned by the Program Assistant, indicating federal fiscal year received, species, and cumulative number used.

2. All cage cards must include the requesting PI, the IACUC file number, date of arrival, the source, species or strain, sex, weight or age, and should include identifying features, permanent markings, and information regarding experimental procedures.

3. All primary animal housing units shall have a cage card affixed to the outside of the enclosure to identify the animals within the unit. Exceptions include: non-human primates which can be identified by placing magnetic cage cards on the housing room door and arranging the cage cards on the housing room door to reflect the relative location of the NHP primary enclosure within that room; and naked mole rats which can be identified by placing the cage card and holder immediately adjacent to the colony, either affixed to the shelf (in an open-shelving arrangement) or hanging on the CEU wall (when housed within a CEU)

4. In GLP studies, all information needed to specifically identify each individual animal housed within an animal-housing unit, including the unique individual animal identifying number or code, shall appear on the outside of that unit in the form of a cage card.

5. All animals received with USDA identification numbers (e.g., tags, tattoos, etc.) will have this identification, in addition to the unique intramural number, entered on the cage card and all clinical records.

6. Warm-blooded animals, excluding suckling rodents, used in GLP studies that require manipulations and observations over an extended period of time or in studies that require the animals to be removed from and returned to their home cages for any reason (e.g., cage cleaning, treatment, etc.) shall receive appropriate individual identification.

7. Identification can include noting natural markings, individual colors, sex, hair texture, size, and breed. Animals can also be identified by photographic means when animals exhibit unique natural markings (e.g., coat color, and color patterns).

8. Temporary marking systems can be used for the short-term identification of most common laboratory animals. Fur can be clipped or shaved at various locations or in distinct patterns on the animal's body. Non-toxic waterproof dyes, or colored markers can be used on light-colored fur or hairless areas on the tail in a variety of patterns, but these marks can wear off rapidly.

9. Collars are a commonly used identification device for cats, dogs, and nonhuman primates. Dogs and cats purchased from commercial suppliers may have a USDA number in the form of a tag attached to its collar as a means of unique identification.

10. Punching or notching holes at various positions in the ears corresponding to a predetermined numbering system can be used to identify individual animals. This method is commonly used in pigs, rats, and mice. It is not uncommon for hole and notches to either grow closed over time or become torn by the animal. It is important to check the markings regularly to be certain the animal can still be identified accurately.

11. Ear tags stamped with individual numbers can be affixed to the ear of the animal and are a means to uniquely identify a variety of species. These tags are commonly used in rodents, rabbits, sheep, goats, and cattle. This identification can be lost by grooming, fighting or by accident and should be checked regularly.

12. Avian species can be individually identified by numbered wing tags placed in the wing web or by numbered leg bands.

13. Tattooing is an effective way of uniquely identifying many species. Ear tattooing is often used in dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, monkeys, goats, sheep, and cattle. A tattoo is a frequently used method for permanent identification of dogs and may be placed in the ear, flank or in the oral cavity. The most reliable method of permanent identification of primates is the tattooing of a number on the chest or inner thigh where it is readily visible.

14. Injecting tattoo ink subcutaneously into the ears, tail, hocks or toes can permanently identify neonatal rats and mice. Usually a series or pattern of dots identifies individual animals.

15. Subcutaneous microchip transponders can be implanted in a variety of laboratory animal species providing each individual a unique means of identification. This

technology makes tracking large number of animals and data easy when interfaced with compatible computer software. In the case of naked mole rats, the microchip number will be assigned a corresponding intramural ID, a record of which will be maintained by the Program Assistant.

**Approved:** **Date:**