Policy on the Transfer of Post-surgical USDA Regulated Species from the Principal Investigator to the DLAR Veterinary Staff

PERFORMANCE STANDARD: To define the procedural expectations, which Principal Investigators (PI) and laboratory personnel must follow, when returning USDA-regulated species to home cages in DLAR-managed facilities.

BACKGROUND: Animals undergoing surgical procedures require post-operative care and monitoring in accordance with animal welfare regulations, the Principal Investigator’s Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)-approved protocol and Duke University Animal Care and Use Program policies and expectations.

ROLES:

The PI or any individual performing survival surgery on a USDA-regulated animal per an approved Duke IACUC protocol is responsible for ensuring the proper transfer of the animal back to its home cage. Animals must be transferred in accordance with Duke Animal Care and Use Program policies and expectations. Unless DLAR is contacted in advance and agrees to provide all immediate post-operative care, the PI is responsible for monitoring and documenting recovery of the animal until it is able to achieve and maintain sternal recumbency on its own.

POLICY:

1. When an animal is sufficiently recovered from anesthesia and meets the following criteria, it may be returned to its home cage:

- No additional emergency analgesics (e.g. Fentanyl, oxymorphone, or morphine) are needed.
- Animal maintains normal body temperature without secondary heat source for a length of time appropriate for the species.
- Animal can achieve and maintain sternal recumbency or ruminants (e.g. sheep, cattle, goats) should be able to walk.
- Animal is alert and responsive to touch and/or sound.
- Animal maintains expected post-operative parameters per approved protocol.
- Animal does not vocalize abnormally.
- No surgical complications are present such as bleeding, incisional dehiscence, vomiting, respiratory distress, neurological signs, etc.

2. The PI should notify DLAR veterinary staff in one of the following methods when the animal is being transferred to DLAR:

- During normal work hours, contact a DLAR veterinary technician or veterinarian to notify them of the animal being returned. DLAR personnel may observe or assess animal before accepting the animal.
- During evening or weekend hours, page the veterinary technician or veterinarian on call to notify them of the animal being returned. The DLAR individual may approve the transfer by phone or may ask the PI to wait until the DLAR veterinary staff member can observe and assess the animal before acceptance. (It is expected
that surgery of USDA-regulated species will not occur after hours or on weekends without prior approval by DLAR veterinary staff).

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Director, Division of Laboratory Animal Resources: ____________________________

John N. Norton

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