



CARE 624.01 Rabbit Health Monitoring Program

The intent of this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to describe the program for monitoring subclinical pathogens in rabbit colonies. This SOP is intended for use by CARE personnel. This SOP is approved by the Cornell Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and the Cornell Center for Animal Resources and Education (CARE). Any exemption must be submitted for approval by the IACUC, prior to its application.

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1. Introduction

This program is designed to monitor the efficacy of the biosecurity procedures preventing the introduction of pathogens to rabbit populations.

2. Materials

- Syringes and needles
- Blood tubes
- Fecal collection containers

3. Procedures

- a. Choosing the population of rabbits to monitor: monitor rabbit populations that are housed at Cornell for more than 4 to 6 weeks.
- b. Choosing the rabbits for sample collection:
 - i. Randomly select two rabbits from the population being monitored.
 - ii. Ensure the rabbits for sampling are older than 8 weeks and have been housed with the sample population for more than 4 to 6 weeks.
 - iii. In addition, sample all sick rabbits, euthanized rabbits or those found dead as instructed by a CARE veterinarian.
- c. Profile selection: submit a comprehensive profile from each sample population every 6 months.

NOTE: A comprehensive profile includes the following tests:

- Serology testing for Tyzzer's (TY2), *Encephalitozoon cuniculi* (ECUN), and Treponema (TREP).
- Parasitology testing performed on a pooled fecal flotation sample.

- d. Sample collection and submission:
 - i. For comprehensive profile
 - Collect 1.5 cc of blood, draw off serum and freeze it.
 - Send frozen serum samples on ice to RADIL (University of Missouri) as an overnight shipment.
 - Collect at least 5 fecal pellets.
 - Send fecal samples to the Cornell Veterinary College Diagnostic Lab.
 - ii. Sick or dead animals
 - Collect blood if possible.
 - Send serum to RADIL (University of Missouri) as described for the comprehensive profile.
 - Submit tissues and organs to the Cornell Pathology Lab.
 - Consult with CARE veterinarian for additional instructions on sample submission for sick and dead rabbits.
- e. Reporting test results
 - i. Promptly inform principal investigators and managers by e-mail of positive or equivocal results.
 - ii. Post results on the CARE web site.
- f. Documentation: keep historical data in the CARE files for at least 12 months.

4. Safety

- a. See [CARE SOP 711 Sharps Precautions](#).
- b. In case of injury from rabbits, see CARE SOP 707 Animal Related Injury.
- c. Observe proper hand washing, see [CARE SOP 713 Hygiene - Hand Washing](#).

5. Contingencies

- a. Consult CARE veterinary staff for any animal health issues:
 - Emergency assistance available 24/7: pager 1-800-349-2456.
 - Nonemergency assistance: 607-253-4378 or care@cornell.edu.

6. References

CARE SOP 707 Animal Related Injury:

<http://www.research.cornell.edu/CARE/documents/SOPs/CARE707.pdf>

CARE SOP 711 Sharps Precautions

<http://www.research.cornell.edu/CARE/documents/SOPs/CARE711.pdf>

CARE SOP 713 Hygiene - Hand Washing:

<http://www.research.cornell.edu/CARE/documents/SOPs/CARE713.pdf>

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