

MORRIS ANIMAL FOUNDATION HEALTH STUDY POLICY FOR ANIMALS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION:

Morris Animal Foundation's (MAF) unwavering focus is to improve the health and well-being of companion animals and wildlife. Our founder, Dr. Mark Morris Sr., believed that the best way to accomplish this was through health studies that would address diseases and other health issues that specifically affect animals. These studies have advanced care for our pets and aided the survival of endangered species on the verge of extinction.

The sole purpose of MAF-funded research is to give both companion animal and wildlife veterinarians the tools and strategies they need to prevent, diagnose and treat diseases and health threats. As such, this research often requires the involvement of animals in our studies. Morris Animal Foundation is passionate about ensuring that every animal participating in a MAF-funded study is treated with respect and receives compassionate care, comfort and protection from pain and distress. The MAF Health Study Policy for Animals Involved in Research directs our study-selection process and helps us ensure the physical health as well as emotional well-being of all animals affected by our work.

GUIDELINES:

- 1.** Use of animals shall be humane and consistent with applicable laws and regulations and with standards established by local governing bodies whose function is the oversight of animals in research (e.g., Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee ~ IACUC). When a standard IACUC is unavailable (e.g., foreign country, veterinary practice, animal ranch/sanctuary, wildlife preserve, etc.), Morris Animal Foundation requires the review of the proposed animal use by an equivalent institutional review committee/agency or an established collaborating institution's IACUC. Alternatively, we reserve the right to require the applicant's institution to establish an official animal use review committee, equivalent to an IACUC, to be approved by Morris Animal Foundation. The living conditions of all animals shall be appropriate for their species and contribute to their health and comfort. All animal care, husbandry procedures and IACUC member structures shall, at a minimum, meet or exceed the guidelines set forth in the U.S. government's Animal Welfare Act (Title 9 CFR Subchapter A – Animal Welfare), the Public Health Service's Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, the National Research Council's Institute for Laboratory Animal Research (ILAR) Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (2011), 8th ed. Washington (DC): National Academies Press and/or further required regional regulations.
- 2.** Investigators and animal care staff shall have appropriate qualifications and experience for conducting procedures on living animals per IACUC approval. Each investigator on the study shall provide the required biographical sketch indicating those qualifications and experience.
- 3.** Morris Animal Foundation requires IACUC, or equivalent institutional review, approval from the submitting institution for all clinical trials even though such approval may not be a requirement of the institution.
- 4.** If a study utilizes archived samples, Morris Animal Foundation reserves the right to request a copy of the application and approval (IACUC, wildlife permit, etc.) covering the original collection of those samples.
- 5.** Morris Animal Foundation shall require informed owner/responsible agency consent in all clinical/research trials. An informed owner/responsible agency consent form of minimum standards shall be provided by the Foundation and executed by the Principal Investigator.
- 6.** Morris Animal Foundation reserves the right to perform announced or unannounced site visits and/or independent audits for program assessment and/or to investigate concerns dealing with animal welfare issues.

- 7.** Funding requests shall include statistical evidence that the number of animals proposed in the study is appropriate and minimally adequate to achieve the proposed results. It is also imperative that scientists requesting support shall review relevant literature (local and foreign) to prevent unnecessary replication of research, unnecessary utilization of animals or unnecessary utilization of health study funds.
- 8.** Every animal shall have compassionate care, comfort and protection from abuse and unnecessary pain and distress. Investigators shall not stage any type of predation among animals as part of the study. Investigators shall also minimize stress and fear in individuals or populations of animals.
- 9.** Investigators shall ensure that animals are appropriately socialized for their species and shall provide environmental enhancement.
- 10.** Whenever possible and when in the animal's best interest, investigators shall return the animals to the owner/responsible agency or make companion animals available for adoption at the end of the study.
- 11.** Morris Animal Foundation's Scientific Advisory Boards shall evaluate each proposal for scientific merit, relevance for optimizing animal health and consideration of animal welfare (minimizing discomfort, distress, pain).
- 12.** Morris Animal Foundation shall not fund health studies on an animal that require euthanasia as the study end point, unless 1) the nature of the disease or condition to be studied is of such significance for improving animal health that a terminal end point is justified (investigators shall be required to address euthanasia in all Morris Animal Foundation grant applications); and 2) meaningful information can be obtained no other way (i.e., alternative models have been thoroughly evaluated). All studies being considered for funding that require euthanasia as the study end point will have an additional evaluation by an ethics review panel.
- 13.** Morris Animal Foundation shall not fund health studies on an animal that require the induction of disease or injury, unless 1) the nature of the disease or condition to be studied is of such significance for improving animal health that induction of disease is justified (investigators shall be required to address induction of disease or injury in all Morris Animal Foundation grant applications); and 2) meaningful information can be obtained no other way (i.e., alternative models have been thoroughly evaluated). All studies being considered for funding that require the induction of disease or injury will have an additional evaluation by an ethics review panel.
- 14.** Morris Animal Foundation shall not fund animal health studies that induce or allow pain or distress, unless 1) the nature of the disease or condition to be studied is of such significance for improving animal health that induction of pain or distress is justified; and 2) meaningful information can be obtained no other way (i.e., alternative models have been thoroughly evaluated) and such pain or distress can be adequately controlled by appropriate anesthetic, analgesic or tranquilizing drugs. All studies being considered for funding that require the induction of pain or distress will have an additional evaluation by an ethics review panel.
- 15.** Morris Animal Foundation considers euthanasia acceptable when an animal develops unanticipated illness or injury that results in pain and suffering that cannot be alleviated with standard methods.
- 16.** Morris Animal Foundation reserves the right to terminate a study if progress is deemed unsatisfactory or if there are concerns about animal well-being.