



Animal Program Policy

Title: Social Housing
Date Created: 11/18/14
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Animals that live in social groups in the wild should be housed in groups in the Forsyth Animal Facility. Species used at Forsyth that should be housed in appropriate social groups include:

- Mice
- Rats
- Rabbits
- Guinea Pigs
- Hamsters

Individual housing of these species for experimental purposes must be approved by the IACUC.

Mice

All mice, including males should be provided nesting material and appropriate enrichment.

Females – 3-5 per cage. Avoid addition or removal of cage mates as this can be stressful.

Males

- 3-5 per cage, 3 is preferable.
- Housing two per cage is not recommended.
- Housing together from weaning can prevent fighting.
- Retired breeders must be housed individually or preferably with a non-fertile female.
- Transfer of soiled bedding at cage change can reduce fighting.
- Some species (Balb/c, FVB) are more prone to fighting than others (C57BL/6).
- When attempting to co-house adult males, introduce before co-housing and observe daily for the first week for signs of fighting and separate if needed.
- Non-rigid housing can be helpful (cardboard huts).

Rats and Hamsters

As for mice, these species should be housed in groups sized appropriately for the cage used.

Rabbits

- Rabbits less than 15 weeks of age should be housed together whenever possible.
- Co-housed animals should be monitored for fighting, especially males.
- Individually housed animals must have opportunities for interaction both in cage and outside of the cage.

Guinea Pigs

- Should be housed together in single sex groups
- Enrichment and hiding opportunities should be provided.