

NEWSLETTER

RETURNING TO RESEARCH

As you restart your research and adapt to a changed environment, count on RARC for consistent support and services. We want to help where we can with flexible and responsive assistance in an evolving situation.



You can easily overlook basic tasks and helpful services during a challenging transition, so this issue of the RARC Newsletter offers six reminders of activities to consider. Good luck with your Research Reboot and let us know how we can help.

#1. REVIEW YOUR PROTOCOL

Revisit your protocol, paying close attention to procedures, animal numbers, and personnel. If you made adaptations to your study in response to changing circumstances, make sure your protocol reflects your adjustments and amend your protocol or request training if necessary.

We are hearing great stories about how researchers are helping each other accomplish work during occupancy restrictions: for example, one researcher cares for animals from several projects in the morning and a different researcher cares for them in the afternoon.

We encourage these collaborations, but remember, this is the type of change that might require an amendment or additional education. Add a new person to your study through a simple non-review change or contact RARC trainers to update training, if necessary, for staff taking on new responsibilities.

Visit www.rarc.wisc.edu/protocols/amend.html to read more about changes that require amendments and how those amendments are reviewed.

Contact RARC trainers -- trainer@rarc.wisc.edu – to arrange training. They provide basic hands-on training in person; problem-solving or technique review virtually.



Contact information for veterinary staff is posted

Whistle-Blower Policy is posted and current

#2 PREPARE FOR INSPECTIONS

The inspection team is finalizing details for resuming inspections and you can expect an email update soon. They are making changes to the process, including adding an option of virtual reviews, to ensure that you and the inspectors remain safe.

Although some aspects of inspection may be different, standard preparations still apply. Begin now to ready your lab for review: confirm that your record keeping is accessible and up to date; your space is generally clean, sanitized, and safe; signage is current; anesthesia equipment is well maintained; and that expired materials are removed.

Get more information about inspection preparation at
www.rarc.wisc.edu/tools_and_guides/inspections_preparation.html

Contact Carey Hannan with questions: hannan@rarc.wisc.edu

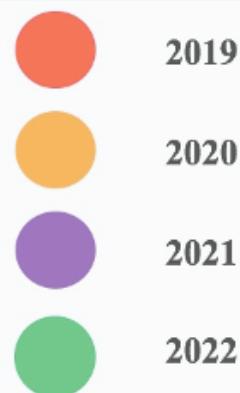
#3 CHECK EXPIRATION DATES

As you begin to move your paused project forward again, don't forget to assess your materials' expiration dates. Safeguard the animals under your care and avoid a citation from the USDA by carefully looking over your drugs, sutures, and feed and discarding anything that has expired.

Find more information about disposing expired drugs at
www.rarc.wisc.edu/tools_and_guides/drugs/expired_drugs.html



*REQUEST A COLORED DOT ID SYSTEM



The RARC Colored Dot ID sticker system – which uses color to indicate a year and a number to indicate a month -- lets you visually track what drugs need discarding.

Contact the Animal Program Assessment Specialists at apas@rarc.wisc.edu to receive directions and a set of colored stickers or to ask any questions about managing expired materials.

In the example at left, the isoflurane expires in October 2020. (10 equals October, orange equals 2020).

#4 ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL DISRUPTIONS

Your animals might have experienced disruptions to their accustomed light, temperature, or husbandry over the past few months and may be readjusting again now to a change in personnel and a resumption of normal routines and schedules.

Remember that environmental disruptions (such as turning on a light in an animal's room during a dark cycle) can impact animal health and research results. Talk to your veterinarian, veterinary technician, or RARC trainers to learn about your species' signs of stress and what to do when you see them. Be sure to factor possible disturbances into research findings.



#5 GET HELP WITH YOUR MOUSE COLONY

Turn to BRMS Core Services (SPF Breeding and Research Services) for help getting your research back on track. Their staff can provide you with breeding, common stock strains, or assistance with procedures such as injections; tissue and blood collection; diet and drug administration; and oral gavage.

Visit brms.wisc.edu/research-services/ for more information. Or contact Jody Peter, Associate Director of Research Cores: 608-712-9874, jody.peter@brms.wisc.edu

#6 RECALIBRATE FOR THE FUTURE

Use this returning-to-research time, like we are at RARC, to evaluate and refine your planning, problem-solving, and processes in response to adverse events. We encourage you to review your lab's handling of the pandemic research interruption and readjust where necessary to ensure your research is resilient and adaptive in the future.

For example, consider developing an explicit contingency plan for sharing resources with other researchers; making a checklist of what needs updating – like your protocol – in an emergency situation; making a list of what can be put on hold, such as breeding or extremely time-sensitive experiments; and thinking of ways to protect your critical lines like using cryopreservation or donating to strain repositories.

