Animal Eye Consultants of Iowa

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

Policy # 19	**“Use of Shelter Dogs and Cats in Research and Teaching”**
Approval Date: 07/22/2025 (Replacing version 5/2022)	

A. Purpose

To establish the Animal Eye Consultants of Iowa IACUC?s policy for use of shelter animals in research and teaching activities.

B. Background

The AEC College of Veterinary Medicine uses shelter dogs and cats in instructional courses and provides veterinary care as a service. These activities are critical to the education and training of our veterinary students/residents and provide a direct benefit to the animals and shelters. However, the use of animals from shelters for research purposes falls under Iowa RCW 16.52.220 and can raise concerns and questions from the public so having a clear policy and procedure for any use is essential. AEC veterinary researchers conduct clinical trials that can have direct benefits to the participants so shelter animals should not automatically be excluded from these trials simply based on source when considering there are potential benefits.

Shelter animals come to AEC for veterinary care from non-contracted shelters and are treated like any other client-owned animal in the AEC Veterinary Teaching Hospital. Each animal shelter signs a consent form for each of the animals that will be provided with surgical care.

C. Policy

General Use of Shelter Animals

All use of any shelter animals for research or teaching requires owner consent in writing. Owner consent is obtained through individual animal use owner consent forms. IACUC approval does not supersede the requirement for written owner consent. Please review AEC IACUC Policy #7 for more information on IACUC oversight of privately-owned animals.

Use of Shelter Animals for Research Purposes

The AEC IACUC has elected not to approve the use of shelter dogs and cats for research purposes except under the following circumstances:

- The research uses minimally invasive study techniques and addresses a disease or other clinical problem that is specific to, or disproportionately affects, shelter dogs and cats. The specific goal is to improve the health and welfare of shelter animals. Some examples include study of infectious diseases endemic to shelter environments (kennel cough, calicivirus); and behavioral problems that negatively affect adoption of animals.

OR

The research will benefit the health of all animals, provided the study techniques are minimally invasive, and that an approximately equal number of client-owned and shelter-derived animals are recruited and studied. The goal is to avoid excluding shelter animals from participating in research that may ultimately enhance their health and well-being. The requirement for recruiting client-owned animals is to ensure that the study procedures would be acceptable to a pet owner.

AND

- The research has been verified to meet either of the above criteria by the CVM Shelter Animal Use Committee (process described below).

Process for Obtaining Approval to Conduct a Research Study Involving Shelter-Derived Animals

All requests to use shelter animals for research purposes that meet the exceptions described above must be reviewed and approved by the CVM Shelter Animal Use Committee (administered by the Director of the Shelter Medicine Program). Requests must be submitted in writing as an email attachment to the Director of the Shelter Medicine Program. This can be in the form of a draft ASAF application or other description of the proposed study that details the animal source and proposed animal use. Reasons as to why the research exceptions apply for this research project must also be included. The outcome of this review will be communicated by email to the investigator and the Animal Welfare Program Office.

The Director of the Shelter Medicine Program must obtain written approval (owner consent) from the shelter of origin management and its board of directors for the study before commencing any procedures (required under Iowa RCW 16.52.220).

The Animal Welfare Program Office will confirm approval by the CVM Shelter Animal Use Committee prior to IACUC approval. The use of shelter animals, including their source, must be clearly described in the IACUC approved ASAF.

Use of Shelter Animals for Teaching Purposes

Shelter animals may be used for teaching activities within the AEC CVM if the following conditions are met:

- The procedures conducted are routine and medically justified veterinary procedures conducted on shelter animals as a service to the animal as contracted by the shelter or are minimally invasive and approved in an IACUC teaching protocol.
    - Examples of medically justified medical procedures may include such things as spay/neuter, routine physicals or an epidural block in addition to general anesthesia for optimal pain control and so students learn to perform epidural blocks.
    - Examples of minimally invasive procedures that may not be clinically indicated but covered by an IACUC protocol for teaching

purposes include gait analysis, palpation, bandaging lab, blood draws, skin scraping, and sample collection for vaginal cytology.

- The procedures are performed under the supervision of a CVM veterinarian or VCS/CIS teaching staff.
- The animals are returned to the shelter following teaching and training activities for the shelter to manage under their shelter policies.

Euthanasia Service for Shelters

Animals designated for euthanasia by the owner agency of origin may be brought to AEC and humanely euthanized and preserved for instructional purposes under the following conditions. A specific consent form is used for this service.

- All such animals shall be provided to the AEC CVM at the sole discretion of the owner agency of origin's laws and policies.
- All such animals are humanely euthanized in accordance with an AVMA approved method as a veterinary service to the owner agency.

D. Resources

1. Animal Welfare Act (AWA, Public Law 89-544, 7 U.S.C.)

2. National Research Council Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, Eighth Edition. National Academy of Sciences, 2011

3. AEC IACUC Policy #5 ? Animal Acquisition and Disposition Policy and Guideline"

4. AEC IACUC Policy #7 ? IACUC Oversight of Research and Teaching Activities Using Privately Owned Animals"

5. Iowa RCW 16.52.220