Policy 5 – Body Weight Loss
Version 2.0
Approval Date: 1/22/07, 3/5/13

Purpose – The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to investigators as to what are acceptable and not acceptable losses in animal body weight and/or body condition.

Background –

“…animals should be closely monitored to ensure that food and fluid intake meets their nutritional needs…” – the Guide

Body Condition Scoring (BCS):

The scorer picks up the mouse at the base of the tail and passes a finger over the sacroiliac bones (dorsal pelvis). Body condition is typically scored on a scale of 1-5, as described below: (see Figure 1)

1. Muscle wasting is advanced, fat deposits are absent, and bones are very prominent.
2. Bones are prominent. This suggests the mouse is becoming thin and its health is declining. Further decline of condition would warrant euthanasia.
3. Bones are palpable but not prominent. This is the optimal condition.
4. The mouse is well fleshed and bones are barely felt.
5. The mouse is obese and bones cannot be felt.

Policy –

Indications for euthanasia:

1. Weight loss ≥15% within one week (7d) that cannot be corrected by fluid therapy and is due to loss of lean body mass
2. Overall weight loss ≥20% or BCS ≤ 1.5

Note: BCS should be used when body weight does accurately reflect the mouse’s condition (such as tumors, pregnancy, ascites, juvenile rodents ≤ 50 days).

Any exceptions to this policy must have IACUC and Veterinary approval
Figure 1 - Body weight loss determination (3)

References -