

**Exceptions Approved by the University of Montana IACUC  
October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022**

- a. RODENT CAGES (including dwarf hamsters and *Peromyscus*) for new weanlings, animals that are ill, post-operative or geriatric may have FOOD PELLETS AND SOFT FOOD placed on the cage floor. The justification is for health or scientific purposes (66 *Peromyscus* and 23 dwarf hamsters).
- b. DWARF HAMSTERS housed in ventilated cage racks undergo a COMPLETE CAGE CHANGE every 10-14 days. The justification includes the reduction of stress and litter mortality (via cannibalism), and the species is urine concentrating/water-conserving, which reduces urine and ammonia output (198 dwarf hamsters).
- c. PEROMYSCUS BREEDING PAIRS housed in static micro-isolators undergo a COMPLETE CAGE CHANGE every two weeks to increase breeding efficiency and decrease litter mortality. The justification includes reducing stress and litter mortality via cannibalism through less frequent disturbance of the animals (50 breeding pairs).
- d. PEROMYSCUS GIVING BIRTH AND PEROMYSCUS PRIOR TO EXPERIMENTAL EUTHANASIA housed in static micro-isolators may have the COMPLETE CAGE CHANGE DELAYED FOR UP TO 2 DAYS. The justification includes reducing stress and litter mortality via cannibalism and reducing stress in experimental animals just prior to euthanasia and tissue harvest (50 breeding pairs).
- e. DEGU are housed a minimum of 2 to a large cage and are FED DAILY ON THE CAGE FLOOR ½ cup of Guinea pig chow. The justification is the Guinea pig chow is pelleted in a smaller form than the mouse and rat chow and will not fit in the feed hoppers without dropping through. The University of Toronto (where the degus originated) placed the chow in bowls on the floor, but the degus rapidly dispersed the food onto the floor. Therefore, that university elected to feed the animals on the floor of the cage and recommended that we follow suit (130 degu).
- f. DEGU are housed in cages without filter tops to allow greater airflow and vocal communication between animals within all cages (130 degu).
- g. HARES are housed FREE-RANGE in two large outdoor enclosures at the Field Research Station Fort Missoula (FRSFM) – one for males and one for females following initial quarantine. The justification is that hares in the wild are solitary creatures but are known to coexist at high densities. It is also not the nature of hares to tunnel or dig burrows, and thus they cannot escape from the aviaries as they are currently constructed. This free-range setting is beneficial to social interactions and living in a more naturalistic setting. Should a hare need to be removed from social housing, it will be housed in a home cage within the aviary (15 snowshoe hares).
- h. HARES housed outdoors within home cages will have their cage-pans cleaned weekly, and a COMPLETE CAGE CHANGE for deep cleaning and disinfection will occur on a monthly basis, rather than bi-weekly. The justification for this altered cleaning schedule is that these wild hares have previously demonstrated the ability to harm themselves in their attempts to move away from human interaction. Therefore, limiting human interaction limits the possibility of self-inflicted harm (nosebleeds, scratches, lacerations, and broken backs) (11 snowshoe hares).