



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

FOR US POSTAL SERVICE DELIVERY:

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare  
6700B Rockledge Drive, Suite 2500, MSC 6910  
Bethesda, Maryland 20892-6910  
Home Page: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/olaw.htm>

FOR EXPRESS MAIL:

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare  
6700B Rockledge Drive, Suite 2500  
Bethesda, Maryland 20817  
Telephone: (301) 496-7163  
Facsimile: (301) 402-7065

November 20, 2018

Re: Animal Welfare Assurance  
A3236-01 [OLAW Case G]

Dr. Sarah Nusser  
Vice President for Research  
Iowa State University  
Beardshear Hall  
515 Morrill Road  
Ames, Iowa 50011

Dear Dr. Nusser,

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) acknowledges receipt of your November 8, 2018 letter reporting a serious deviation from the provisions of the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* at Iowa State University. According to the information provided, OLAW understands that two finches died after not receiving adequate food. Due to a miscommunication, the student animal caretakers did not feed the finches for 30 hours which led to the deaths of the birds, which require frequent feeding. The study was supported by NSF grant 1755197.

The corrective actions consisted of transferring the responsibility for the care of the birds from the student caretakers to the full-time animal care staff. Animal care staff was retrained on animal husbandry and communications.

Based on its assessment of this explanation, OLAW understands that measures have been implemented to correct and prevent recurrence of this problem. OLAW concurs with the actions taken by the institution to comply with the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Axel Wolff, M.S., D.V.M.  
Deputy Director  
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare

cc: IACUC Chair  
NSF Animal Welfare Officer

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Office of the Vice President for Research  
2610 Beardshear Hall  
Ames, Iowa 50011-2036  
515 294-6344  
FAX 515 294-6100

November 8, 2018

Dr. Brent Morse  
Director, Division of Compliance Oversight  
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare  
National Institutes of Health  
Rockledge 1, Suite 360, MSC 7982  
6705 Rockledge Drive  
Bethesda, MD 20892-7982

Dear Dr. Morse,

I am writing to report an incident that occurred at Iowa State University (ISU). This report follows a phone call inquiry to your office made by Sarah Kaatz earlier this week.

Our Animal Welfare Assurance number is A3236-01.

The National Science Foundation grant that supports this work is 1755197.

The goal of this IACUC-approved project is to study disease tolerance of house finches to *Mycoplasma gallisepticum*, an emerging bacterial pathogen of songbirds. House finches are captured from the wild for the purposes of this study and housed in a vivarium on campus. House finches are known to adjust well to captivity and are maintained on a mix of seed and bird pellets.

On Saturday, November 3, 2018, the PI contacted the Attending Veterinarian to report two unexpected finch deaths. The PI investigated the event and submitted an Unanticipated Event form to the IACUC office on November 5, 2018. The unanticipated event reported a miscommunication between student Laboratory Animal Resources (LAR) care staff whereby finches were not fed for 30 hours. House finches normally eat roughly  $\frac{1}{4}$  of their body weight per day, and as such, it is most likely that these animals died as a result of being without food during this time.

The PI has requested that these students no longer be charged with the care of his animals. Indeed, as corrective actions, LAR has relieved the students of their animal care duties and only full time animal care staff will be responsible for finch husbandry. The LAR leadership team will also conduct additional animal husbandry and communications training.

The IACUC discussed the unanticipated event at their full committee meeting on November 7, 2018. The committee determined there was adequate information reported to the committee and agreed with the corrective actions implemented by Lab Animal Resources.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,

(b) (6)

Dr. Sarah Nusser  
Institutional Official  
Vice President for Research

**Wolff, Axel (NIH/OD) [E]**

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**From:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Sent:** Friday, November 09, 2018 6:49 AM  
**To:** Kaatz, Sarah [VPR]  
**Cc:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Iowa State University report to OLAW

Thank you for this report, Ms. Kaatz. We will respond soon.

Axel Wolff, M.S., D.V.M.  
Deputy Director, OLAW

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**From:** Kaatz, Sarah [VPR] [mailto:skaatz@iastate.edu]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 08, 2018 2:01 PM  
**To:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>  
**Cc:** Nusser, Sarah M [VPR] <nusser@iastate.edu>; IACUC Committee <iacuc@iastate.edu>; (b) (6)  
(b) (6)  
**Subject:** Iowa State University report to OLAW

Good afternoon, Dr. Morse:

Please find attached the report for the incident we discussed earlier this week.

Thank you,  
Sarah

**Sarah E. Kaatz**  
Director  
Office for Responsible Research (ORR)  
Iowa State University  
2420 Lincoln Way, (b) (4)  
Ames, IA 50014  
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