

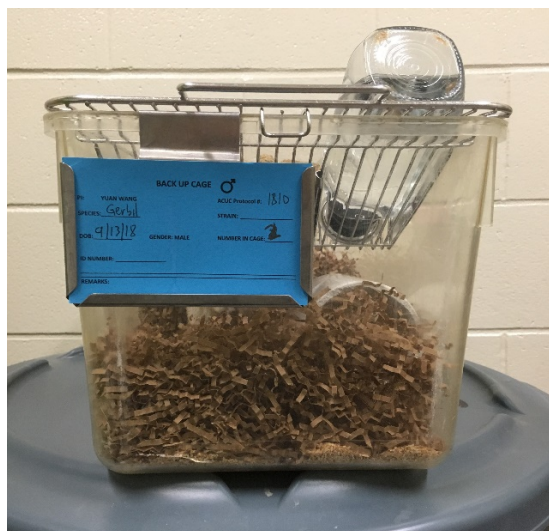


**Florida State University  
Animal Care and Use Program  
Program Wide Exception to *Guide* and *USDA Animal Welfare Regulations***

Per the ***Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals***, “all animals should be observed for signs of illness, injury or abnormal behavior by a person trained to recognize such signs. As a rule, such observation should occur at least daily, but more frequent observations may be required, such as during postoperative recovery, when animals are ill or have a physical deficit, or when animals are approaching a study endpoint. **Professional judgement should be used to ensure that the frequency and character of observations minimize risks to individual animals and do not compromise the research for which the animals are used.**”

Per the **USDA Animal Welfare Regulations**, “each research facility shall establish and maintain programs of adequate veterinary care that include daily observation of all animals to assess their health and well-being”.

**Problem:** Prairie voles and gerbils are burrowing species. In the wild, burrow systems are constructed of various substrates and consist of numerous surface entrances, extensively branched and interconnected tunnels and dead end passages, nest chambers, and feeding chambers. To mimic the natural habitat, vole and gerbil breeder colonies maintained at Florida State University are provided a thin-strand paper, nesting product that allows for weaving and manipulation of burrows and nests. As seen in the photographs below, the amount of nesting material required for burrowing activity and complex nest building may obfuscate daily observation of animals.





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