

Washington State University
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

Guideline #4: Animal Feed and Feed Storage

Approval Date: 2/20/25 (Replacing Version 12/09/2021)

A. Purpose

This document is intended to provide guidance for proper storage of animal feed in both agricultural and biomedical settings at WSU.

B. Guideline

Feed Inspection and Expiration

1. All animal diets should be inspected for damage, spoilage, signs of infestation and for a milling date or expiration date upon arrival.
2. Expired diets should be properly discarded. Consider the following when determining expiration dates of animal diets:
 - a. Most natural ingredient, dry laboratory diets expire 180 days (6 months) from the milling date, unless otherwise defined in writing by the manufacturer.
 - b. Canned animal diets should follow the listed expiration date. Contact the manufacture for the shelf-life if product does not come with an expiration date.
 - c. Fresh diets are considered expired when they appear visibly spoiled, become discolored, wilted, stale, and would not be considered suitable for human consumption.
 - d. Diets with non-stabilized vitamin C and purified/chemically defined diets are typically good for 90 (3 months) days.
 - e. Cold storage or freezing may extend the shelf life, however, manufacturer's guidelines and expiration should be followed.
3. All diets (e.g., bagged, canned, and fresh diets) that are not labeled with a milling date or date of expiration must be clearly labeled with the date of purchase or received.
4. All stocks of foodstuffs should be rotated so that the oldest stock is used first.

Feed Storage

1. All bagged or bulk feed should be stored in designated rooms or areas within the facility separate from the animal rooms.
2. Bulk feed storage rooms in indoor facilities should be climate-controlled so that the room does not regularly go above 70°F (~21°C) or above 50% humidity. All bulk feed storage areas must be maintained to prevent chemical, moisture or vermin contamination.
3. Feed bags are to be stored off the floor and maintained at least 6 inches off the wall.
4. Opened feed in indoor facilities should be stored in a vermin proof container constructed of materials that are easily sanitized. Containers are to be disinfected before refilling. Secondary containers must be labeled with feed identification information and either an expiration date or a milling date.
5. Refrigerated diets should be stored in designated “animal diets only” refrigerators. Shelf life once opened should be based on recommendations of the feed manufacturer.
6. Large bulk feed storage containers are to be swept out of all previous feed and inspected for any spoilage before new feed is placed back into the bin. The bulk feed storage containers are to be sanitized on a schedule determined by the Facility Manager.
7. Hay is stored undercover and should be at least 6 inches away from the wall. Short term storage of small amounts of hay can be in feed carts.
8. For agricultural settings:
 - a. Feed for agricultural use and stored in outdoor areas such as barns do not require daily monitoring for temperature and humidity but do need a standard operating procedure for vermin control and sanitation.
 - b. Large bulk feed storage (silos, commodity sheds, wagons, totes, etc.) should be maintained to minimize pests, chemical and weather contamination, moisture, and microbial growth.
 - c. Food quality should always be checked for abnormalities such as moisture or mold prior to using.
 - d. Feed sacks or totes must be labeled with contents and manufacture date.
9. For appropriate vermin control, please see [Policy 15: Pest Control in Animal Facilities](#) for details.
10. Areas that do not meet the above standards will be reviewed by the IACUC and approved on a case-by-case basis. The IACUC will consider storage conditions, length of storage, and feed type during this evaluation.

A. References

1. [Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. 8th Edition. 2011.](#)
2. [Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching. 4th Edition. 2020.](#)
3. [Animal Welfare Act \(AWA, Public Law 89-544, 7 U.S.C.\).](#)