

Montana Agricultural Experiment Station/College of Agriculture
Animal Operations Policies
October 2015 [DRAFT]

Mission

The mission of the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station (MAES) Farm and Ranch Units is to:

- Provide humane care for animals and human safety at all MAES units, consistent with all relevant animal care and use guidelines.
- Manage the natural resources associated with the units in a sustainable manner.
- Maintain the physical facilities in attractive and functional condition.
- Provide service and support to the research and teaching efforts conducted on farms and ranches.

Goals

By establishing written policies and protocols for MAES farm and ranch units, we intend to achieve the following:

- Enhance the quality of research projects and teaching activities.
- Enhance the safety and well-being of students, employees, and animals.
- Improve communication among users within each unit.
- Improve the efficiency of labor use.
- Improve job satisfaction for all employees.
- Identify and minimize inherent risks associated with MAES farm and ranch operations.

Responsibilities

- The **Director (MAES)** and **Department Heads (DH) of Animal and Range Sciences, Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology, and Veterinary and Molecular Biology** are responsible for the overall policies and procedures of farm and ranch animal operations. This includes:
 - Supervising the Animal Operations Manager (Director).
 - Establishing (Director) and monitoring budgets.
 - Establishing policies (DHs).
 - Program planning, e.g. equipment needs, facilities, personnel (DHs).
 - Facilitating interactions among farm/ranch personnel and faculty, staff, and students (DHs).
- The **Animal Operations Manager** working with Department Head(s) and reporting to the Director (MAES) is responsible for:
 - Care and monitoring of all MAES beef cattle and sheep.
 - Except where animals involved in projects where the project leader or faculty member has accepted clear responsibility as outlined in written, approved protocols.
 - Hiring, training, and supervising all farm/ranch personnel associated with animal operations, including Red Bluff Research Ranch.
 - Communicating with the MAES Farm Operations Manager to coordinate use and maintenance of MAES Bozeman properties for the production of feed and forage.
 - Fort Ellis Research Farm, including labor performed by individuals living in the houses, as part of their lease agreements.
 - Bozeman Agricultural Research and Teaching (BART) Farm, including labor performed by individuals living in the Nutrition Center and Miller Pavilion apartments, as part of their lease agreements.
 - Ensuring animal and facility security.
 - Coordinating use, maintenance, and repair of equipment and facilities.
 - Managing livestock activities.

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- ***Animal Operations Plans*** (beef cattle, sheep) shall be established annually with the appropriate Department Head(s) based on faculty input.
- Management activities shall be monitored via a set of written checkpoints, which are reported to the Department Head(s) and involved faculty.
 - Managing animal operations budgets as provided by the Director with advice by the Department Head(s).
 - Coordinating and supervising research and teaching activities as described in written protocols (described below).
 - Communicating effectively with research leaders and instructors.
 - Assisting DHs in developing and implementing a long-term vision for these programs.
- The ***Animal Operations Manager***, with approval from the Department Head(s), shall designate a senior farm employee to serve as ***Acting Animal Operations Manager*** in his (her) absence if the ***Assistant Farm and Animal Operations Manager*** is not available.
 - Procedures for contacting the ***Animal Operations Manager*** and the ***Assistant Manager*** shall be communicated to users by posting a contact list in:
 - The Animal and Range Sciences, Veterinary Molecular Biology, and Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology department offices.
 - The ***Animal Operations Manager's*** office.
 - The O.O. Thomas Nutrition Center.
 - The Miller Pavilion.
- The ***Animal Operations Committee*** (Department Heads, Farm Operations Manager) will provide advice to the Director and the ***Animal Operations Manager*** with regard to operations policy, unit management, and resource allocation.
- A separate ***A&RS Animal Operations Committee*** comprised of faculty with expertise with cattle, sheep, and horses will provide advice to the Animal Operations Manager and A&RS DH; such input will be used in discussions with the Director and/or the Animal Operations Committee.
- Regarding the equine/equitation program, the ***Animal Operations Manager*** is responsible for¹:
 - General operation and maintenance of Miller Pavilion.
 - Ensuring that MAES accounts for labor and materials used in support of the Equine Program are reimbursed by the A&RS DH.
- The ***MSU Rodeo Coach*** is responsible for²:
 - Communicating with the Animal Operations Manager in advance regarding the arrival and housing of all livestock associated with the Rodeo Team.
 - Collaborating with the Animal Operations Manager and the Animal and Range Sciences Department Head, including developing a written memorandum of understanding among the MSU Rodeo Team, the Animal and Range Sciences Department, and MAES.
 - Reimbursing MAES accounts for MAES unit expenses associated with feed, labor, health care, operations, maintenance associated with Rodeo Team activities, and any other pre-arranged services.
- The ***MSU Horseshoeing School Instructor*** shall be responsible for the management and care of all horses delivered to the school for services³.

¹ Horses are owned by the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station, but are primarily used for teaching purposes and thus are managed by the Equine Manager. The College of Agriculture provides no operations funds for the horse program. Student equitation fees, horse-boarding fees, and fees charged to groups using the Pavilion fund a major portion of activities associated with horses. The Montana Agricultural Experiment Station supports minimal horse care. The Animal Operations Manager shall be responsible for the feeding and care of horses housed at Red Bluff Research Ranch and the Fort Ellis Research Farm, except as specified in written and approved protocols.

² At various times during the year the MSU Rodeo Team houses livestock at the BART Farm.

³ The MSU Horseshoeing School, located at the BART Farm, is affiliated with the Department of Animal and Range Sciences.

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- Services provided to the Horseshoeing School by MAES shall be described in a written memorandum of understanding, which shall include arrangements for payment of any feed or other costs incurred by MAES.
- **Faculty interested in using animals or facilities for research** are responsible for:
 - Submitting written requests for animals and facilities in advance as outlined below.
 - Submitting written protocols, including animal use agreements with appropriate budgets, that describe their activities and the responsibilities for all project and MAES personnel.
 - Submitting appropriate forms to the MSU Animal Care and Use Committee.
 - Communicating with the Animal Operations Manager in a timely, professional and effective manner.
 - Ensuring that project personnel are trained in proper animal handling techniques and the safe use of all relevant equipment.
- **Faculty interested in using animals or facilities for teaching** are responsible for:
 - Submitting written requests for animals and facilities in advance as outlined below.
 - Submitting written protocols that describe their activities and the responsibilities for all project and farm unit personnel.
 - Submitting appropriate forms to the MSU Agricultural Animal Care and Use Committee.
 - Communicating with the Animal Operations Manager in a timely, professional and effective manner.
 - Instructing students on the safety risks associated with the activity, and training students in proper animal handling techniques and the safe operation of any relevant equipment.

Requests for Services or Resources

All requests for animal-related services from MAES farm and ranch units shall be made directly to the Animal Operations Manager in writing at least 30 days before the intended start date, with copies to the Department Head(s) associated with the request.

Budget Management

Only the Animal Operations Manager and/or Director (MAES), with DH(s) in an advisory role may make decisions that impact the budgets and expenditures entrusted to the Animal Operations Manager. Requests or proposals regarding activities that affect MAES farm unit budgets must be made directly, in writing, to the Animal Operations Manager. The Animal Operations Manager supervises all personnel paid from MAES budgets. The Animal Operations Manager has the right to suspend activities of non-MAES personnel if he believes that an activity has the potential to cause undue risk to animals or personnel, or damage to equipment or facilities.

Inherent Risks

Managing agricultural enterprises includes using machinery and equipment, strenuous activity, heavy lifting, and handling of livestock. These activities are associated with risks of human injury and disease, and risks of animal injury and disease. The policies and procedures established for the operation of the units are intended to reduce these risks, however, such risks cannot be eliminated.

Human Safety

Through experience, employees and students become more aware of risks and dangers and learn how to avoid them. However, training programs and operational policies have been established to minimize risks of injury and disease. All employees and students involved in the daily operation of the farm and ranch units shall:

- Maintain current vaccination against Tetanus.
- Be certified in animal care and handling via the Animal Caretakers Training Course.
- Be appropriately trained in the operation of all items of equipment they are required to operate.

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Specifics of the ***Animal Caretakers Training Course*** and certification procedures are outlined in a separate document. To summarize: 1) certification is required before beginning employment, and 2) annual update training and certification is required.

Training on safe operation of equipment shall be provided on an individual basis as needed by senior farm personnel. A safety checklist shall be developed by the Animal Operations Manager for each major type of equipment, filed in a notebook in the Animal Operations Manager's office, and attached to the equipment. No one shall operate a piece of equipment without this training. A checklist shall be maintained for all employees and students. For each individual, this file shall indicate the items of equipment that the individual is permitted to use, the date of training, and the initials of the "student" and "instructor."

Animal Safety and Well-Being

Preventing animal injury shall be addressed by training all employees and students in proper animal care, handling and security. The Animal Caretakers Training Course shall be the vehicle for this training. Preventing disease shall be addressed by implementing a sound and practical ***Health Management Plan***. The Animal Operations Manager, consulting with a licensed veterinarian, and the Department Head(s) shall develop this plan.

General Livestock Husbandry Policies and Procedures are specified in a separate document. In summary, these procedures specify responsibilities, control points, monitoring frequencies, and reporting standards for the general husbandry of livestock.

Animal Use in Research

Most animals on MAES properties are managed by the Animal Operations Manager (funded by MAES and COA) to support research and teaching. Some animals are associated with specialized research projects in the Veterinary Molecular Biology (VMB) Department; VMB personnel will be directly responsible for their care and management. The remainder of this section will apply to non-VMB research projects, except when they may affect MAES resources or impact research or teaching.

Use of livestock in MAES and grant-funded research projects affects general farm management, the use of feed resources including grazable forage, the scheduling of labor, and the use of facilities. The Department Head(s), after consulting with the Animal Operations Manager, shall decide how to allocate resources to specific projects, which will reimburse MAES accounts for any extraneous expenses incurred by MAES. Researchers who desire to use livestock in research projects must:

- Provide the Department Head(s) and the Animal Operations Manager a written request for use of animals and facilities at least six (6) months in advance.
 - Requests received with less lead-time than 6 months risk receiving lower priority in the allocation of animals, facilities, personnel, and feed resources.
 - Requests requiring changes in mating assignments or changes in the breeding protocol must be received at least three (3) months before the breeding season.
- Provide the Department Head(s) and the Animal Operations Manager a written protocol at least 1 month before project work begins. Points of clarification or negotiation shall be resolved before the project begins. Facilities cannot be modified unless they are approved in writing by the Animal Operations Manager and DH(s). No project may start without an approved protocol as indicated by:
 - A signed ***Animal Use Agreement***
 - A copy of the protocols submitted to the MSU Animal Care and Use Committee.
- ***Research Protocols*** should include the following:
 - Starting and ending dates of the project.
 - Rationale
 - Objectives
 - Experimental design

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- Personnel involved
- Animals required – specified by type, age, condition, sex and source.
- Animal management and facility requirements and specifications.
- Labor requirements, including times, dates, and the people responsible.
- Feed requirements, including responsibilities for purchase and preparation.
- Record of vaccines and shots.
- Details of data collection and personnel responsible.
- A budget that identifies financial support to complete the project.
- Have a face-to-face meeting with the Animal Operations Manager and other involved personnel before the project begins to discuss and clarify protocols and responsibilities.
- Communicate any modifications to protocols to the Animal Operations Manager as soon as possible, verbally and in writing.
- Communicate frequently with the Animal Operations Manager regarding the progress of the project.

Animal Use in Teaching

Animals are managed by the Animal Operations Manager (position primarily funded by MAES and modestly by COA) to support research and teaching. Use of livestock in courses and other educational activities affects general management, the use of feed resources including graze able forage, the scheduling of labor, and the use of facilities. The Animal Operations Manager, working in concert with Department Head(s), shall decide how to allocate resources to specific instructional activities.

Instructors who desire to use livestock in educational activities must:

- Provide the Animal Operations Manager a written request for animals and facilities at least six (6) months in advance.
 - Requests received with less lead-time than 6 months risk receiving lower priority in the allocation of animals, facilities, personnel and feed resources.
 - Requests requiring changes in mating assignments or changes in the breeding protocol must be received at least three (3) months before the breeding season.
 - Requests for continuing undergraduate courses need to be renewed annually.
- Provide the Animal Operations Manager a written protocol at least 1 month before the activity begins. Points of clarification or negotiation shall be resolved before the activity begins. Facilities cannot be modified unless they are approved in writing by the Animal Operations Manager and DH(s). No activity may start without an approved protocol as indicated by:
 - A signed ***Animal Use Agreement***.
 - A copy of the protocols submitted to the MSU Agricultural Animal Care and Use Committee.
- ***Instructional Protocols*** should include the following:
 - Starting and ending dates of the activities.
 - Times and frequency of activities.
 - Objectives.
 - Description of activities.
 - Personnel involved.
 - Animals required – specified by type, age, condition, sex and source.
 - Animal management and facility requirements and specifications.
 - Record of vaccines and shots.
 - Labor requirements, including times, dates, and persons responsible.
 - Feed requirements, including responsibilities for purchase and preparation.
 - A budget that identifies financial support for the instructional-related activity.
- Have a face-to-face meeting with the Animal Operations Manager and other involved personnel before the activity begins to discuss and clarify protocols and responsibilities.
 - Continuing activities, e.g., undergraduate courses, should have this meeting annually.

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- Communicate any modifications to protocols to the Animal Operations Manager as soon as possible, verbally and in writing.
- Communicate frequently with the Animal Operations Manager regarding the progress of the activity.

Resource Materials

Resource texts located in the Animal Operations Manager's office:

- *GUIDE for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Agricultural Research and Teaching* – FASS.
- *Handbook of Livestock Management* - Battaglia.
- *Montana Farm Flock Sheep Production Handbook* – Kott.
- *Producing Consumer Products from Sheep: The Sheep Safety and Quality Assurance Program* – Roeber, Belk, Levalley, Scanga, Sofos, and Smith.
- *Montana Beef Quality Assurance*, Vol 2.

The following resource materials must be stored in:

- The Animal Operations Manager's Office – MSU Bozeman Agricultural Research and Teaching Farm (BART Farm).
- The "Surgery Support Room" – Fort Ellis Research Farm.
- The Red Bluff Research Ranch Office.

Resources included in a single notebook:

- Emergency contacts and phone numbers.
- General Livestock Husbandry Policies and Procedures.
- Animal and Range Sciences Animal Operations Policies (this document).

Resources included in a second notebook:

- Current Research Protocols for projects at the unit.
- Current Instructional Protocols for activities at the unit.

Resources included in a third notebook:

- Operation and Safety Checklists – one for each type of equipment used at the unit.
- Training manual on use of equipment (when available).

Items to be filed in the Animal Operation Manager's Office:

- Animal Care certifications for all current employees.
- Animal and Range Sciences Livestock Health Management Plan.
- Equipment Operations and Safety certifications.