



## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE 808 ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM FOR GUINEA PIGS

---

### 1. PURPOSE

---

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) describes the guinea pigs' appropriate environmental enrichment program.

---

### 2. RESPONSIBILITY

---

Principal investigator (PI), their research staff.

---

### 3. PROCEDURES

---

- 3.1. Environmental enrichment aims to allow guinea pigs to express species-specific behavior, prevent injurious and stereotypical behavior, and promote physical and mental health, thus enhancing animal welfare.
- 3.2. Environmental enrichment should be biologically relevant (i.e., hiding, socializing, foraging) so that it does not lose its enriching value over time.
- 3.3. Social Contact:
  - 3.3.1. Pair or group house guinea pigs.
  - 3.3.2. Guinea pigs may be singly housed in some cases:
    - 3.3.2.1. Incompatibility.
    - 3.3.2.2. Medical reasons.
    - 3.3.2.3. Last, in the experiment.
    - 3.3.2.4. Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approved the specific protocol.
- 3.4. Housing System:
  - 3.4.1. The housing allows maximal species-specific behaviors and minimal stress-induced behaviors.
  - 3.4.2. Guinea pigs scare easily; minimize noise and sudden movements adjacent to housing enclosures.
    - 3.4.2.1. Minimal cage height – 17.8cm, Minimal floor space 652 sq. cm per adult Guinea pig, solid bottom cage or hiding place.
- 3.5. Dietary Enrichment:
  - 3.5.1. Provide seed bar, other seed mixture, or alfalfa cubes, preferably daily or at least twice a week.
  - 3.5.2. Provide small quantities of fresh vegetables and fruits regularly (2-3 times/week). Vegetables or fruit should be thoroughly rinsed before use.
- 3.6. Objects:
  - 3.6.1. Shelter:

3.6.1.1. Provide shelter, tube, or box.

3.6.1.2. The shelter should provide enough protected space for all cage occupants.

3.6.2 Toys:

3.6.2.1 Provide at least one toy in all cages (e.g., metal or plastic chains or rings mounted on the cage side.)

3.7. Marking:

3.7.1. Cages with single animals **must** be marked with specific cage cards indicating the reason for solitary housing and the date of housing.

3.8. Exemption:

3.8.1. Exemption from this environmental enrichment program must be justified and approved by the IACUC or prescribed for medical reasons by the veterinarian staff.

**SOP 808 ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM FOR GUINEA PIGS**

*Written on (dd,mm,yyyy) 01.11.2022*

*Revised on (dd,mm,yyyy) 15.03.2023*

*Approved by the BGU Animal Policy and Welfare Oversight Committee*