PANDEMIC FLU

Readiness – Pandemic Plan for Research Animals

Personnel Planning

1. Prepare for possible communication failures by keeping animal facility emergency contact list up to date. A quarterly review and update is recommended.

2. Identify essential positions in sufficient quantity necessary to maintain animal facility operations at normal capacity (e.g. cage wash, autoclave, inventory and materials ordering, animal husbandry, veterinary treatment, surgical support, animal recordkeeping). For each position, both contractor and government, identify names of 3 alternates. Review on a regular basis (semiannually is recommended) what responsibilities are associated with these positions. Managers should designate a minimum number of essential personnel to keep necessary functions operating. Instruct contract project managers to implement plans for similar arrangements for their personnel.

3. Develop and conduct cross-training for government and contract animal care staff to ensure all critical operations can continue (cage wash, autoclave, inventory, animal husbandry, veterinary treatment, surgical support, animal recordkeeping).

4. Develop plans for cancelling or alternative methods for conducting training, meetings or other group interactions. Consider staggered breaks or meal times to minimize larger congregations of animal facility staff.

Supply and Logistics Planning

1. Identify on site stockpile locations within animal facilities for critical items (1-2 month supply based on normal usage is recommended):

    - Animal feed and bedding
    - Personal protective equipment normally used for animal facility operation
    - Disinfectant and cage wash cleaning supplies
    - Hand sanitizers for personal hygiene

2. Identify critical supplies or equipment not available through NIH Supply and develop a stockpile plan and alternative sources for these items. Consider extended lead times for delivery of these items in establishing how much of each item should be stockpiled on site. Stockpiling of supplies should not commence unless directed by the Animal Resources Coordinator or other members of the Animal Resources Team as part of the NIH Continuity of Operations Plan.

3. Maintain at least one type of alternative communication capability, such as walkie-talkies and/or cellular phones.

Animal Husbandry and Health Planning

1. Establish key foot patterns to follow between clean and dirty areas of the facility to allow a diminished number of staff to carry out multiple functions without compromising animal health.

2. Conduct training (annually prior to flu season is recommended) on prevention techniques (proper hand washing and cough hygiene). (see Basic Principles.ppt)

3. Although transmission of pathogenic H5N1 strains from humans to mammalian species in a research setting has not been reported, studies have reported natural or experimental infections in cats, ferrets, pigs, rabbits, rats and mice.

Animal care staff experiencing flu-like symptoms should not handle animals and should be discouraged from reporting to work.

5. Develop alternative standard operating procedures to allow fewer staff to manage the animal colony husbandry (e.g. extended cage changing and sanitizing schedules). If procedures are outside of Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals recommendations (e.g. wire bar lid change once per month) obtain IACUC approval for all departures from the Guide based on the emergency situation. Additional examples of conservation of resources include using more bedding in solid bottom cages for rodents to allow less frequent changing and less frequent replacement of feed in rodent hoppers to extend feed supplies.

6. Develop plans for extended use of protective clothing or alternative types of protective clothing within the animal facility in case normal supplies of masks, gloves, disposable clothing, etc. are diminished or non existent.

7. For outdoor animal enclosures, consider barriers or other protective measures to limit exposure to wild bird or other vermin populations.