Policy for Mouse Cage Density

Overcrowding can occur in breeding cages when litters are not weaned on time or when trio breeding females get large litters. To promote animal welfare and to avoid overcrowding the density of mouse cages in AEM should adhere to the mouse cage density policy. The responsibility for complying with an acceptable cage density applies to all cages whether the activity is breeding or experimental.

The Copenhagen Animal Care and Use Program has been counseled on the policy by The Animal Welfare Body.

General policy

- Pups are weaned at 3-4 weeks of age.
- However, pups must be weaned before the next litter of the same female is born – regardless of pair or trio breeding.
- If a new litter is born before weaning of the previous, the oldest litter is weaned as soon as possible after it has been discovered that a female has two litters.
- If due to poor growth or welfare of the pups, it is desirable to keep them housed with the female for more than four weeks, the female is removed from the breeding cage and housed with the litter. When the litter is weaned, the female can be set up for breeding again. If the female was pregnant when removed from the breeding cage, both litters must be weaned before she is set up for breeding again.
- If by experience, it is known that a strain in trio breeding has more pups than allowed in a cage, the strain must only be bred in pairs.
- If by experience, it is known that a strain in pair breeding has more pups than allowed in a cage, the vets must be involved to find a solution.

Responsibility

- Researchers managing the breeding are responsible to adhere to the maximum cage density guidelines. If AEM staff identify overcrowded cages during daily checks, an OBS-card will be placed on the cage, indicating overcrowding and the researcher will be contacted. The researcher has 24-hours to take appropriate action to correct the overcrowding (i.e. remove post-parturient females and their new-born pups, wean animals, etc.). If after 24-hours the overcrowding has not been corrected, the AEM staff will separate the mice into more cages. A per-cage charge will be levied for each cage required to house mice at appropriate densities.
- If AEM animal caretakers manage the breeding, the animals caretakers are responsible to adhere to maximum cage density guidelines

Maximum allowed cage density for mice based on cage type in AEM.

Cage type, dimensions, floor area	Cage density is set taking into account maintenance of stable social groups.	
	Experiments	Breeding
GM500 “greenline” 501 cm2	<30: 6 >30: 5	1 male + 1 female w. one litter each (up to a total of 12 pups)
GM500+ “greenline” 524 cm2	<30: 6 >30: 5	1 male + 2 females w. one litter each (up to a total of 12 pups)
Type II (1284) 530 cm2	<30: 6 >30: 5	1 male + 2 females w. one litter each (up to a total of 12 pups)
Type III (1290) 800/820 cm2	<30: 10 >30: 8	1 male + 2 females w. one litter each (up to a total of 18 pups)
Innovive single use mouse 523 cm2	<30: 6 >30: 5	1 male + 2 females w. one litter each (up to a total of 12 pups)
Emerald 535 cm2	<30: 6 >30: 5	1 male + 2 females w. one litter each (up to a total of 12 pups)