

Policies and Procedures
J. F. Witter Teaching and Research Center

Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station
College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture
University of Maine

Updated December 11, 2012

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Introduction

This document describes the policies and procedures for use of the J.F. Witter Teaching and Research Center (Witter Center). The Witter Center includes Witter, Rogers, and Smith Farms. The Witter Center supports teaching, research and public outreach activities in the areas of dairy and equine sciences, forage production, crop science, and organic agriculture.

The Witter Center is available for use by faculty and students of the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture (NSFA) and University of Maine Cooperative Extension (Cooperative Extension). The Witter Center is also available for use by other University of Maine faculty and students at the discretion of the associate director and facility superintendent. Faculty with

appointments in the Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station have priority for land and animal allocations.

Please note that information on safety policies is provided elsewhere (see link for “Safety Information” on the Witter Center web page). The policies and procedures for the Witter Center apply to all facility users including faculty, instructors, staff, graduate and undergraduate students, and student employees.

Staff, Contact Information, and Availability

Superintendent

Jake Dyer, Farm Superintendent
(207) 581-2793 - office
(207) 581-1250 - fax
jake.dyer@maine.edu - email

Support Staff and Student Employees

The Witter Center employs four full-time employees, one part-time employee with a joint appointment with the Department of Animal and Veterinary Sciences (AVS), and as many as 10 student employees. Employees are generally not available for research or project activity. It is the responsibility of facility users to provide staffing for their projects. Users must notify the superintendent of new project employees. It is recommended that faculty introduce new employees to the superintendent and other facility staff.

Mailing Address

J.F. Witter Teaching and Research Center
101 Winslow Hall
Orono, ME 04469

Physical Addresses

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Witter Farm 160 Witter Farm Rd. Old Town, ME 04468 (207) 581-2793 | Rogers Farm 914 Bennoch Rd. Old Town, ME 04468 (207) 581-2793 | Smith Farm 1215 Stillwater Ave Old Town, ME 04468 (207) 827-4695 |
|--|--|---|

Normal business hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. Use of the facility outside of business hours is allowed with approval of the superintendent.

Emergency Contacts

| | |
|--|----------|
| Emergency | 911 |
| UM Public Safety | 581-4040 |
| Jake Dyer, Superintendent | 745-6181 |
| Safety and Environmental Management | 581-4055 |
| Maine Agricultural and Forest Exp. Station | 581-3205 |
| College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture | 581-3202 |

Facilities Description

Witter Farm

The Witter Farm supports teaching, research, and public outreach activities associated with equine and dairy science, forage production, and crop science. Witter Farm manages a commercial registered Holstein dairy and replacement herd along with standardbred horses. Corn silage, grass silage, dry hay, and a variety of other rotation crops are raised on the farm's 250 acres.

The Witter Farm complex consists of a variety of buildings and amenities:

- Equine barn with 30 box stalls and indoor exercise area
- Heifer barn with sorting gates and cattle chute
- 35-tie-stall dairy barn with maternity pens, pipeline milking system, 1000-gallon bulk milk tank, office area, and student locker room
- Calf barn with two group and seven individual pens
- (1) equipment storage building
- (1) commodities barn
- (1) outdoor horse shelter
- (1) outdoor riding arena
- (1) pole style barn
- (1) hay storage/farm shop
- Superintendent's house
- (8) concrete bunker silos
- (1) concrete manure pit
- Main office building consisting of a classroom, student computer lab, tack room, break room, restrooms, animal handling room, laboratory, equine office, dairy office, and farm operations office.

Rogers Farm

Rogers Farm primarily supports teaching, research and public outreach associated with crop science, horticulture, and organic agriculture. Much of the acreage at Rogers Farm is broken into 38 research plots ranging in size from ¼ acre to 6 acres.

Rogers Farm acreage supports the Penobscot County Master ss Demonstration Garden and Black Bear Food Guild (food guild). The food guild is a student organization managed by faculty from the Department of Plant, Soils, and Environmental Sciences. The food guild uses approximately 3 acres for organic vegetable production which is marketed through a community-supported agriculture (CSA) program. The 1.5-acre Master Gardeners Demonstration Garden is managed and maintained by Cooperative Extension and Master Gardeners volunteers.

Rogers Farm is segregated into two sections split by the Bennoch Road. The east side of the farm supports organic agriculture research and includes the Master Gardeners Demonstration Garden and land used by the food guild. The west side of the farm supports conventional agriculture crop research and forage production. Irrigation is available to some plots on both sides of the farm.

The Rogers Farm complex consists of a variety of buildings and amenities:

- (1) Quonset hut, which contains the farm office, maintenance shop, and drying room.
- (1) drying room with eight bays heated by an oil-fired boiler
- (1) storage barn
- (2) equipment storage barns
- (1) field lab consisting of a classroom and restroom
- (1) 24'x80' greenhouse owned by Cooperative Extension
- (1) storage shed owned by Cooperative Extension
- (2) 18'x50' greenhouses used by the food guild
- (1) 10'x20' storage shed used by the food guild
- (1) pesticide storage shed
- (26) conventional research plots (4) with irrigation access
- (12) organic research plots with irrigation access

Smith Farm

Smith Farm consists of two large fields (S2 and S5) measuring 11 and 35 acres, respectively. Historically, Smith Farm has been used for commercial row crop and grass/dry hay production. In recent years, 12 70'x 35' research plots have been integrated into S5 for use in crop research.

Facility Acknowledgment

When users acknowledge that project activity occurred at the Witter Center, identify the facility as J. F. Witter Teaching and Research Center, College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture. An image of the college logo is also available.

Regulatory Oversight

Due to the nature of research and teaching activities, the Witter Center is subject to regulatory oversight from federal and state agencies, private organization, and the university:

- United States Department of Agriculture
- Maine Department of Agriculture
- Maine Board of Pesticides Control
- University of Maine Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)
- Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
- University of Maine Department of Safety and Environmental Management (SEM)

Prior to the start of research and teaching activities, users should consult with the superintendent to ensure the proposed activity is compliant with regulations set forth by the above agencies and associations.

Superintendent and User Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Superintendent

- Oversees daily management of Witter Center operations.
- Facilitates research, teaching, and outreach activities of faculty and students.
- Maintains communication with facility users on projects and activities.
- Provides recommendations to facility users on facility, animal, and field use.

- Receives and approves requests for facility space, animal use, and field space.
- Supervises staff and students employed by the Witter Center.
- Ensures safety and environmental compliance by all users and staff and notifies supervisors of noncompliance.
- Maintains the facility infrastructure and associated equipment.
- The superintendent is the primary contact to the University of Maine's Facilities Management and outside contractors regarding infrastructural additions, maintenance, and repair.
- Oversees all pesticide applications and maintains appropriate documentation for the Maine Board of Pesticides Control.
- The superintendent reports to the associate director of the Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station.

Responsibilities of Facility Users

- Provide superintendent with advance notification of needs and future requests.
- Maintain communication with the superintendent regarding project activity.
- Adhere to all safety and use policies.
- Ensure that all staff, student employees, and students enrolled in courses, complete all required safety training before working or using the Witter Center facilities.
- Supervise employees, student employees, and students using the facilities under their direction.
- Adhere to all operational policies listed below.
- Begin using space, fields, or animals only after approval of such request has been granted.
- Notify superintendent when project or course is complete.
- Provide material and supplies needed for research, experiments, or teaching.
- Manage and maintain experiments, research projects, and course work.
- Clean up all areas after each activity (classroom, barns, handling areas, break rooms, computer laboratories, etc.).
- Dispose of used supplies, animal manures/hair, shavings into proper waste receptacles.

Operational Policies—Facilities

Security, Safety, Chemicals, Pesticides, and Pharmaceuticals

Security

The Witter Center is open to the public and for general use during regular university business hours (8:00-4:30 M-F). Activities that will occur regularly after-hours should be discussed with the superintendent and/or Rogers Farm facility manager at the beginning of each semester or field season. After-hours users of the facility may be required to use the logbook to sign in and out and to notify Public Safety via telephone.

Safety

All facility users must adhere to all university, college, and Witter Center safety policies. All required training and documentation must be completed before conducting any activity

associated with the Witter Center facilities and lands. Information on safety policies can be found via the link for “Safety” on the Witter Center web page.

Chemical Use

Chemicals (including aerosols, greases, oils, etc.) may not be brought onto the Witter Center without approval of the superintendent and/or Rogers Farm facility manager. Material safety data sheets (MSDS) must accompany all chemicals. Chemical use requires appropriate safety training. Chemical storage space is limited and approved chemicals should be purchased in the smallest quantity possible.

Pesticides

Only licensed personnel may handle or apply pesticides. All pesticides brought on to the Witter Center must be approved by the superintendent and/or Rogers Farm facility manager. Permission and submission of MSDS sheets are required before storing pesticides in pesticide- storage buildings. Pesticide storage at Witter Farm is located in the maintenance shop. Rogers Farm has a self- contained pesticide- storage shed. All containers must be clearly labeled with the owner’s name. Pesticide- storage space is limited, which makes material disposal high priority. It is the user’s responsibility to remove and properly process unused pesticides for disposal. This procedure often involves a chemical pick-up by the Department of Safety and Environmental Management. If possible, pesticides being evaluated for industry should be returned to the company sponsoring the project.

Pharmaceuticals

All veterinary pharmaceuticals brought on to the Witter Center must be approved by the superintendent, academic veterinarian, or practicing veterinarian. Pharmaceuticals are stored in a locked room adjacent to the classroom and research laboratory. Pharmaceuticals are subject to inspection by the University of Maine Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. Labels must be present and materials must not exceed the expiration date. It is the user’s responsibility to remove and properly process unused or expired pharmaceuticals at the end of each project or when the expiration date has passed.

Supplies, General Storage, and Crop Storage

Supplies

Users are responsible for providing their own materials and supplies for experiments, research projects, and teaching. Contact the superintendent when the joint purchase of common supplies by the Witter Center and faculty may reduce costs.

General Storage

- Request for storage space must be approved by the superintendent.
- Storage for specific projects, experiments, or teaching functions will have priority. Student clubs and team storage will be on first-come, first-served basis.
- Storage space is limited. Project-related storage is only available for short periods and should never extend past the end of the project. Supplies and materials should be purchased in quantities that will be used during the current project.

- Some long term storage for unique studies may be available. Requests should be directed to the superintendent.
- Materials should be clearly labeled with owner's name. Unlabeled items will be disposed of or relocated.
- Project materials should be stored in designated locations approved by the superintendent.
- Stored materials must not block access or egress.
- It is the user's responsibility to keep storage areas and student locker rooms clean and tidy.

Crop Storage—Drying Room

- An oil-heated drying room is available at Rogers Farm for drying and storage of research crops.
- Space in the drying room is limited and intent to use the drying room should be noted on the field-request form.
- The drying room should only be used for the time required to properly dry plant materials. Dry materials should either be processed, or moved to off-farm long term storage areas. It is the user's responsibility to properly dispose of plant materials and containers.
- The cost to operate the drying room is high. Please coordinate with other users to minimize the number of days the drying room operates annually.
- Materials in the drying room should be clearly labeled with the names of the owner and the project if possible.
- Users should notify the superintendent or facility manager when materials are put into or taken out of drying room.

Classrooms, Computer Laboratory, and Printing/Copying Services

Classrooms

The farm superintendent must approve the use of classrooms located at the Witter Center before formal scheduling. The classrooms are available for courses taught at the Witter Center and other meetings. To avoid conflicts, users should request space prior to the beginning of each semester.

All users are required to clean up after each use. Storage of items in the closets adjacent to the classrooms must be approved by the superintendent.

Computer Laboratory

The computer laboratory at the Witter Farm is available to staff, faculty, and students. Storage in the closet adjacent to the computer laboratory must be approved by the superintendent. Users are required to clean up after each use.

Printing/Copying

Printers and copiers are for Witter Center staff use only. All necessary printing and copying should be completed prior to using the Witter Center facilities.

Maintenance Shops, Laboratories, and Animal Handling Areas

Maintenance Shops

Generally, only Witter Center staff and authorized student employees are permitted to use the maintenance shops. Specialized training is required when working in these areas. All equipment fabrication and repair must be approved by the superintendent and work must be performed by trained staff personnel.

Laboratories

Use of laboratories not managed by specific academic departments must be approved by the superintendent. Use of the field lab at Rogers Farm must be approved by the facility manager. Use of the equine lab at Witter Farm must be approved by appropriate animal science faculty. Space should be requested prior to any activity. Only approved sanitation chemicals will be allowed in laboratories containing floor drains.

Animal-handling Areas

Animal-handling areas are available for use in research experiments and course instruction. Consultation with the superintendent prior to using these facilities is recommended to make sure equipment is functioning correctly and safely. Users are required to clean up after each use and dispose of supplies, manure, hair, etc., in the proper manner.

Operational Policies—Equipment and Vehicles

Motorized Equipment and Vehicles

Motorized Equipment

Generally, motorized equipment (tractors, utility vehicles, and lawnmowers), are for Witter Center staff use only. Exceptions can be made with authorization of the superintendent and/or Rogers Farm facility manager. Specialized tractor safety and driving safety documentation must be maintained to use this equipment. Any equipment brought onto Witter Center facilities must be approved by the superintendent.

Vehicles

Vehicles owned and maintained by the Witter Center are for staff use only.

Power Tools and Hand Tools

Power Tools

Generally, power tools (grinders, drills, chainsaws, string trimmers, tillers, skill saws, etc.) are for Witter Center staff use only. Exceptions can be made with authorization of the superintendent and/or Rogers Farm facility manager. Specialized training and personal protective equipment (PPE), is required to use this equipment. Any power tools brought onto Witter Center facilities must be approved by the superintendent.

Hand Tools

Some tools are available for general use such as rakes, shovels, hoes, manure forks, and wagons. These should be kept in good condition, cleaned, and returned immediately after use. Tools should not be removed from the facility.

Project-owned and Donated Equipment

Project-owned Equipment

Users are responsible for all costs (parts, maintenance, transportation, and labor) associated with project equipment purchased or acquired and brought onto the facilities. Storage of equipment must be approved by the superintendent. Special circumstances where equipment is shared between users and the Witter Center should be discussed with the superintendent before the equipment arrives at the facilities.

Donated Equipment

Approval must be received from the superintendent before accepting donated equipment for the facilities. Cost for future maintenance and use will be considered. The user who facilitates the donation is responsible for submission of required university forms to accept donations.

Operational Policies—Field Operations

Crop Amendments and Protectants

Manure/Compost

Manure supply from Witter Farm is limited. Users should notify the superintendent or Rogers Farm facility manager if manure will be needed for research projects. Manure is typically stored in the manure pit at Witter Farm. Trucking to stacking sites at Rogers and Smith Farms is available. Compost is not generally available. Compost purchases will be the responsibility of the user. Users should consult with the superintendent and/or Rogers Farm facility manager if bulk orders are to be stored on-farm.

Fertilizer

Fertilizer purchases for specific research projects will be the responsibility of the user. Witter Center staff will spread fertilizer at the field level. Users will be responsible for applying fertilizers to individual treatments. The Witter Center currently owns a broadcast spreader and drop spreader. Fertilizer can also be applied through certain planters.

Lime

Lime purchase and application at the field level will be the responsibility of the Witter Center. If lime is needed for multiple projects, users should communicate with each other and with the superintendent or Rogers Farm facility manager to minimize transportation costs and take advantage of any bulk-order discounts.

Pesticides

Pesticide purchases for specific research projects will be the responsibility of the user. Only licensed personnel are authorized to make pesticide applications. Witter Center staff is available

to make pesticide applications using tractor-mounted spraying equipment. Hand-spraying applications will be the responsibility of the licensed user or their licensed designee.

Field Preparation

Tillage

Witter Center staff will be responsible for field tillage operations. Users should consult with the superintendent and/or Rogers Farm facility manager to ensure the desired tillage tools are available. Properly trained users may also perform tillage operations with permission from the superintendent and/or Rogers Farm facility manager.

Mulching

Mulch purchases and hand application for specific research projects will be the responsibility of the user. A stacking site for bulk mulch orders is available at Rogers Farm.

Cultivation

Witter Center staff will be responsible for field cultivation operations. Users should consult with the superintendent and/or Rogers Farm facility manager to ensure the desired cultivation tools are available. Properly trained users may also perform cultivation operations with permission from Witter Center staff.

Mowing

Mowing field margins and for forage/turf research projects will be the responsibility of Witter Center staff. Users should consult with Witter Center staff to ensure desired equipment is available.

Crop Production

Planting

Witter Center staff will be responsible for planting operations. Properly trained users may also perform planting operations with permission from Witter Center staff. Multiple planters are available including air seeders, row crop planters (32" rows), grain drills, and a potato planter (34" rows). Users should consult with Witter Center staff to ensure desired planting equipment is available.

Irrigation

Irrigation hydrants are found at multiple locations at Rogers Farm. Irrigation systems are limited and users should consult with Rogers Farm facility manager to ensure desired equipment is available. The ability to irrigate is not available at Witter or Smith Farms.

Harvesting

Mechanical harvesting operations will be the responsibility of Witter Center staff. Properly trained facility users may also perform mechanical harvesting operations with permission from Witter Center staff. Hand-harvesting operations will be the responsibility of the user.

Transportation

Transportation of crops from field to storage will be the responsibility of Witter Center staff.

Storage

Crop storage is limited. There are no facilities for storing bulk grains, potatoes, or other vegetables. Temporary storage of these crops may be available. Users should consult with Witter Center staff in advance if storage of the aforementioned crops will be necessary. Bunker silos for forage crop storage are available at Witter Farm. Silo space is limited and users should consult with the superintendent well in advance if silos will be needed for research crop storage.

Data Collection and Sampling

Data collection and sampling of research plots will be the responsibility of the user.

Operational Policies—Animal Use

Animal Handling

Researchers and faculty who will require students or student employees to handle animals should first consult with the superintendent, dairy herdsman, and/or equine staff.

Safety

In addition to the general and farm-specific safety training required by Safety and Environmental Management, site-specific safety training is required prior to working with any animal. Site-specific safety training will be provided by Witter Center staff.

IACUC

Research, teaching, and other activities must be compliant with the University of Maine Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee guidelines. Inform the superintendent of non-routine animal care procedures. Approved proposals should be submitted to the superintendent for filing and display.

Bio-Security

Proper bio-security practices are essential in keeping the Witter Center's dairy and equine herds healthy and safe from on and off-farm contamination. Users should use care to keep water and feed supplies free from manure and other contaminants. Users traveling to or working on other farms should wear separate clothing and footwear or properly sanitize before returning to the Witter Center.

Proposing Addition of Animals or New Species

If it is anticipated that the addition of animals or introduction of new species will be necessary for projects, courses, or public events, consultation with the superintendent is required prior to the development of these plans. The proposal format can be found on the link for "forms" under Resources for Staff and Students on the Witter Center website.

Operational Policies—Student Clubs

Facilities at the Witter Center are available to student clubs for meetings, events, and other activities when these activities require specific resources at the farms or when these activities are directly associated with academic or research activities occurring on farm. Regular club meetings generally should be held on campus or at other locations. Because of security and safety requirements, meetings and events on farm are limited to regular facility hours (Mon-Fri, 8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.) unless approved by the superintendent.

Contact the superintendent for approval to use facilities. The superintendent will consult with academic units for input. See “Operational Policy—Events” for information on requirements for faculty adviser involvement in club-sponsored events.

Operational Policies—Events

Public Events

The Witter Center is available for hosting university-sponsored events upon consultation with the superintendent and/or Rogers Farm facility manager. An event-request form must be submitted a minimum of 45 days before the date of the event.

Student groups requesting to hold events at the Witter Center must have a faculty advisor. The faculty advisor will act as a liaison between the student group and superintendent and will be responsible for coordinating the event with the superintendent and ensuring that required forms are completed.

Request Forms

Field and Plot Request Form

Request for space or services must be made on the Crop Land Use and Staff Request Form (available on the experiment station’s web page: <http://umaine.edu/mafes/home/resources-for-staff/#2>).

Event Request Form

Animal Use Request Form

(available on the experiment station’s web page: <http://umaine.edu/mafes/home/resources-for-staff/#2>).

Addition of Animal or New Species Request Form

Facility Use Charge

Effective October 1, 2011, all project or activity directors requesting services at Witter Center must provide funds for facility fees for basic services and/or labor costs for other services except when the activity is part of contract initiated prior to July 1, 2011. Fees and labor rates are set by the college to provide reimbursement for *direct costs* incurred at its facilities for services provided in support of individual projects and activities. Fees and labor rates apply to all research, teaching, outreach and other projects and activities requiring or requesting services.

Specific information on fees and administrative procedures is provided on the Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station web site ([Service Fees and Labor Rates at Farms and Greenhouses](#)). Fees and labor rates for services are established consistent with the Policies and Procedures on Direct Cost Recovery and Sharing at Crop, Greenhouse, and Livestock Facilities of the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture (available at: <http://umaine.edu/mafes/home/resources-for-staff/#2>) and policies of the University of Maine Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

Witter Center Advisory Committee

The Witter Center Advisory Committee advises the superintendent and dean/director on policies, procedures, and priorities for the Witter Center (Witter, Rogers, and Smith Farms). Names of committee members and their contact information can be found on the Witter Center web site under Resources for Staff and Students.

The Witter Center Advisory Committee meets at least annually. The committee advises the dean/director in the following areas:

1. Priorities for equipment maintenance and replacement.
2. Priorities for infrastructure maintenance and improvement.
3. Long-range operational planning.
4. Budget management for meeting facility missions, goals, and objectives.
5. Planning and procedures for the allocation of facility space and related resources.
6. Implementation of safety procedures.

The committee also is charged with developing 5-year missions, goals, and objectives for facilities for approval by the dean/director. The committee seeks input from appropriate academic unit chairs and teaching coordinators when advice to the superintendents or dean/director may influence teaching programs.

The Witter Center Advisory Committee and Rogers Farm and Witter Farm Advisory Committees share the above responsibilities for advising the superintendent and the dean/director. The *Witter Center* Advisory Committee shall advise the dean/director in areas #1-4 above for the Center as a whole and develop the Center's 5-year missions, goals, and objectives. The *Rogers Farm* Advisory Committee and *Witter Farm* Advisory Committee shall advise the superintendent and dean/director in areas #5 and #6.

The Smith Farm is comprised of cropland used in conjunction with both Witter Farm and Rogers Farm activities. Input on allocation of Smith Farm lands will shift between Witter Farm and Rogers Farm local committees based on current use.