Whistle Blowing Policy
Reporting Concerns Involving the Use of Vertebrate Animals in Research, Teaching, and Testing

The University of Maine acknowledges and accepts responsibility for the ethical care and use of live vertebrate animals. It is essential that we assume responsibility for their welfare and that animal use for research or teaching purposes be conducted in a humane, compassionate manner.

The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) shall provide every animal facility manager or principal investigator with a notice describing how to report concerns regarding animal care. This information shall be posted in a visible location at every animal facility. This information will also be maintained on the IACUC website.

Persons who observe or learn of activities involving animals that they believe are inappropriate (inhumane treatment, neglect, unapproved procedures, etc.) or persons with questions or concerns on any animal care related matter, shall be encouraged to contact any one of the following individuals: the Institutional Veterinarian, the IACUC Chair, the Assistant to the IACUC, or the Institutional Official for Animal Welfare.

The individual contacted shall forward the report or concern to the IACUC for review and action. As outlined in the Animal Welfare Act 9CFR §2.31(c)(4), the IACUC is required to: “Review, and, if warranted, investigate concerns involving the care and use of animals at the research facility resulting from public complaints received and from reports of noncompliance received from laboratory or research facility personnel or employees.”

Complaints may be made anonymously. Complaints shall be dealt with confidentially to the extent reasonably possible. Regulations issued under the Animal Welfare Act 9CFR § 2.32(c)(4) provide that “No facility employee, Committee member, or laboratory personnel shall be discriminated against or be subject to any reprisal for reporting violations of any regulation or standards under the Act.” No member of the University (student or employee) is subject to any reprisal for reporting any suspected violations. Protection against reprisal for employees is also guaranteed through the collective bargaining agreements and/or the State of Maine’s Whistleblowers Protection Act.