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GUIDELINES FOR USE OF ANIMALS IN CLASSROOM

Reports indicate there is a need for guidelines pertaining to the use of animals in classrooms. In view of this need, the following statement has been prepared jointly by the Iowa Department of Public Instruction, the Iowa Department of Health and the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association.

Animals are sometimes desirable for certain demonstrations in the classroom. The demonstration may take only a few minutes or it might require several weeks. These guidelines are intended to be helpful for teachers in charge.

SELECTION OF ANIMALS: Selection of the proper species of animals is important. White mice, white rats and guinea pigs are the animals of choice for many classroom purposes. Hamsters, because of their sharp teeth and often nervous disposition, are not considered desirable for classroom demonstrations. A dog that is even tempered and obedient may be used, preferably under control of the owner. Young puppies are not satisfactory. Indigenous mice and rats and other wild animals are not suitable for classroom use.

CAGES: Cages should be of a size that will provide physical comfort for the animal. The space should be adequate to assure freedom of movement. The cages should be maintained in a clean, dry condition with adequate bedding.

FOOD: There should be convenient access to clean food. Each kind of animal has its own special requirements. If a change is to be made in the diet, it should be gradual rather than sudden.

WATER: There should be convenient access to clean water. A satisfactory gravity flow water bottle may be made by using a rubber stopper with a hole in it, a short piece of metal tubing 3/16 inches in diameter and a pint bottle. Insert the tube through the opening on the stopper, fill the bottle with water, place the stopper in the bottle and attach the bottle, upside down, to the side of the cage.

TEMPERATURE: Normal room temperatures are considered comfortable for most animals. Ventilation should be provided but animals should not be exposed to drafts.

HEALTH: Only healthy appearing animals should be used. Dogs and cats should have been immunized against rabies. Rabies vaccination of laboratory animals such as rats, mice, guinea pigs and rabbits is not recommended. Your local veterinarian should be consulted.

EXPERIMENTS: Attention is invited to "Guiding Principles in the Use of Animals by Secondary School Students and Science Club Members" from the National Society for Medical Research. These principles are quoted below:

“1. The basic aims of experiments involving animals are to achieve an understanding of life processes and to further man’s knowledge. The development of the scientific method can be enhanced, when teachers and science fair judges insist that experiments involving animals have clearly defined objectives, requiring the use of animals to demonstrate a biological principle or answer scientific propositions. Such experiments *must* be conducted with a respect for life and an appreciation of humane considerations that must be afforded all animals.

2. Protista and other invertebrates are preferable for most experiments involving animals. Their wide variety and the feasibility of using larger numbers than is usually possible with vertebrates makes them especially suitable.

3. To provide for humane treatment of animals, a qualified adult supervisor, who has had training in the proper care of laboratory animals, must assume primary responsibility for the conditions of any experiment that involves living vertebrates. If the school faculty includes no one with training in the proper care of laboratory animals, the services of such a person on a consulting basis *must* be obtained.

4. No experiment may be undertaken that involves anesthetic drugs, organisms pathogenic for man or other vertebrates, ionizing radiation, carcinogens, or surgical procedures other than veni-puncture or hypodermic injection, unless these procedures are performed under the immediate supervision of a biomedical scientist experienced in the field under investigation.

5. The comfort of the animal used in any experiment shall be a prime concern. No experiment using live animals shall be attempted unless the animals shall have been obtained from a reliable source and the following conditions can be assured: appropriate, comfortable quarters; adequate food and water; humane treatment and gentle handling. Proper quarters and care must be provided at all times, including week-ends and vacation periods. An experiment in nutritional deficiency may proceed only to the point where signs of the deficiency appear. Appropriate measures shall then be taken to correct the deficiency, if such action is feasible, or the animal(s) shall be killed by a humane method.”

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Available in kit form from Southwest Technical Products Corporation, 219 W. Rhapsody, San Antonio, Texas 78216, this variable rate xenon strobe light has proved to be the bargain of the year for physics teachers. All parts are furnished. Assembly time by a student was about three hours. Extra strobe lamps may be obtained from the same company for \$3.50.

Underwater Trails

The National Park Service maintains underwater interpretive trails complete with route markings and information signs, for snorkelers and scuba-equipped swimmers. They are in the Virgin Islands National Park, St. John, V.I., Buck Island Reef National Monument, St. Croix, V.I., and at Fort Jefferson National Monument, just west of the Florida keys.