



OFFICE OF LABORATORY ANIMAL CARE

Operating Guidelines

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this Guideline is to describe the husbandry for crickets used as live prey items for reptiles under OLAC care.

DEFINITIONS/ACRONYMS

OLAC: Office of Laboratory Animal Care

Cricket Housing:

- Clear tubs that measure at least 12 inches deep
- Substrate: Vermiculite
 - Keeps the container dry and reduces odor
- Diet: Purina PMI Start & Grow crumble
 - Supplement with fresh cut fruit (sweet potatoes, orange)
- Water: ¾" tubes capped with "plugs of cotton"
 - Never standing water - crickets will drown

Environmental contaminants

- Ammonia (absorbed by vermiculite)
- high humidity
- Temperatures greater than 96F

Temperature:

- Ideal temperature is 82-86F
- Temperature range of 72-76F is acceptable but will delay development

Humidity:

Adults: less than 50%

Egg hatching: Near 100%

Lighting

There are no adverse effects due to light - continuous or diurnal

Biology

3 stages: egg, larvae, adult

Sexual maturity: 3-4 days of age

Females lay ova by 8-10 days of age

Females must re-mate every 2-3 weeks

Lay in batches of 50-100 eggs every 2-3 days

Life Span: 90 days

Handling

Crickets do not bite

Not easily damaged by being handled

Crickets do not transmit any diseases

PROCEDURE

1. Room Check

- a. Check room temperature and humidity daily and record values.
- b. When values are out of range, report to the Facility Supervisor and document communication in the "Notification of Facility Issues" section of the Cricket Daily Checklist.
 - Micro environment temperature and humidity are of most concern.
 - Maintain a thermometer within the crickets environment
- c. Check pest traps in the cricket room daily. If crickets or other pests are found in the trap, empty the trap into a plastic bag and place the bag in the freezer to await proper disposal.

2. Health Check: Perform health check daily.

- a. Check that crickets are active
 - If crickets are not active contact Facility Supervisor and/or assistant supervisor
- b. Check food and clean water is available

3. Feed/Water:

Daily: Change out food and water

- a. Diet for Crickets is composed of mash for chicks, - control volume to prevent excessive waste
- b. Dump leftover food into trash.
- c. Clean bowls with a scrub brush and hot water.
- d. Fill clean bowls with approved poultry feed.
- e. Add sweet potatoes, oranges, or other appropriate produce to the mesh funnels inside the holding barrel.

Weekly:

- a. Clean plastic tubes for water using a scrub brush.
- b. Refill tubes with clean water and plug each end with "plugs". This allows for water consumption throughout the week. (Each cricket holding barrel should have 2 water tubes)

4. Cleaning:
 - a. Clean cricket holding tubs once every other week.
 - b. Move crickets into a clean housing tub. Remove the old water tube and feed dish.
 - c. Dump debris and dead crickets into a trash bag and dispose.
 - d. Tubs will be cleaned via cage wash

5. New cricket delivery (new 3, 4, and 5-week old crickets are delivered every Wednesday)
 - a. Unpack new crickets and place them in clean barrels labeled with the appropriate age.
 - b. Provide them with food and water.

6. Calcium dusting
 - a. Dust all crickets liberally with calcium carbonate powder just prior to feeding reptiles

REVISION HISTORY			
REVISION NUMBER	AUTHOR(S)	EFFECTIVE DATE	REVISION(S)