1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this guideline is to define the criteria for permitting individuals to fulfill the role as Principal Investigator (PI) on an Agricultural Animal Care & Use Committee (AACUC) protocol.

1. **Scope**

This guideline applies to PIs, and management responsible for identifying a new or replacement PI.

1. **Definitions**

Principal Investigator (PI): An MSU employee responsible for a proposal (i.e., “animal use protocol”) to conduct research and for the design and implementation of research involving animals.

1. **Qualifications/Eligibility**

Principal Investigator (PI):

1. Research Protocol Principal Investigator: To be a PI, an individual must meet the criteria as defined in the Office of Sponsored Programs Principal Investigator Guide, \*[Appendix D Who Can Serve as a PI](https://www.montana.edu/research/osp/documents/WhocanbeaPIReijoPera2015.pdf).
2. Teaching Protocol Principal Investigator: A tenure track, non-tenure track (adjunct/NTT), or instructor of record teaching a course using agricultural animals.
3. **Accountability/Responsibility**
4. The PI is accountable for:
5. Obtaining AACUC approval of a protocol describing required experimental procedures and associated animal care and use, and ensuring active protocols are current through amendments and annual renewals.
6. Consultation with the Program Veterinarian regarding husbandry, handling, medical treatment, immobilization, sedation, analgesia euthanasia, surgical planning, perioperative care and all procedures involving pain and/or distress for the development of protocols.
7. Consultation with the Program Veterinarian for amendments involving pain and/or distress.
8. Ensuring the conduct of the research, testing and/or teaching involving the care and use of animals, following the methodologies described in the AACUC approved protocol.
9. The care and use of animals in ways judged to be scientifically, technically and humanely appropriate (e.g. minimized pain and distress).
10. Reporting of events impacting or potentially impacting animal care, use and welfare to the Program Veterinarian or designee or AACUC.
11. Reporting deviations from approved protocols to the Program Veterinarian or AACUC.
12. The oversight of animal census associated with the approved AACUC protocol.
13. The PIs have the authority to provide the following assurances:
14. All activities in the protocol:
    1. Are in accord and consistent with the Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals and the Animal Welfare Act regulations, as applicable.
    2. Comply with MSU policies, procedures and guidelines regarding the humane care and use of agricultural animals in research and teaching.
15. No activities involving live vertebrate animals will begin without an approved AACUC animal use protocol, or amendment as applicable.
16. All AACUC approved protocols will be kept accurate and up-to-date and will be submitted in a timely manner to ensure annual review and approval.
17. All experiments or teaching activities involving live animals will be performed under the PI’s direct or delegated supervision. The PI may delegate hands-on animal work to qualified members. However, the PI remains ultimately accountable for the conduct of the research and teaching procedures performed on animals as outlined in the AACUC-approved protocol.
18. All personnel are adequately educated, trained and verified as competent prior to performing procedures under a protocol with the exception of training procedures as applicable.
19. All personnel conducting activities with the protocol must promptly report animals showing evidence of pain, distress or clinical health issues to a veterinarian.

NOTE: PIs must recognize that emergency veterinary care may need to be administered to animals showing evidence of pain or illness, or that euthanasia may be ordered by the Program Veterinarian for such animals.

1. A good faith effort has been made to search for alternatives to painful procedures in research animals, the literature search has been examined for potential alternatives and a written analysis of the utility of any cited relevant alternatives is provided in the AACUC protocol.
2. The PI is also responsible for:
3. Ensuring maintenance of complete and current animal study records in a secure accessible location. Records must be available at all times for review by the Program Veterinarian and the AACUC.
4. Assuring all animals in the protocol are identified using appropriate identification.
5. Justifying the specific need for the use of animals (species and numbers) in the AACUC approved protocol.
6. Providing information requested by the AACUC during the semi-annual Facility Inspection/Program Review. The PI is also responsible for completing any corrective action(s) assigned to them within the given timeframe.