Use of Expired Medical Materials in Animals

The USDA’s Animal Care Policy #3 states that the “use of expired medical materials such as drugs, fluids, or sutures on regulated animals is not considered to be acceptable veterinary practice and does not constitute adequate veterinary care as required by the regulations promulgated under the Animal Welfare Act. All expired medical materials found in a licensed or registered facility are to be brought to the attention of the responsible official. The facility must either dispose of all such materials or segregate them in an appropriately labeled, physically separate location from non-expired medical materials.” The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) recommendations agree with Animal Care Policy #3.

The University’s Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee concurs with these policies and finds the use of expired drugs and materials in research animals an unacceptable threat to animal welfare. Therefore, research staff should check their inventory of drugs and supplies on a monthly basis and discard all items upon their expiration date. If an expired item can be used in experiments not involving animals, the item must be marked clearly “FOR IN-VITRO USE ONLY- NOT FOR USE IN ANIMALS” and stored in a physically separate location in the laboratory. If expired items are not clearly marked, the IACUC will assume they are being used in animals and find the laboratory not in compliance with this policy.