USDA Pain Categories

B – Animals bred, conditioned, or held for use in teaching, testing, experiments, research, or surgery, but not yet used for such purposes. Examples include animal holding protocols which do not include research procedures and breeding protocols that do not require genotyping or tattooing.

C – Teaching, research, experiments, or tests conducted involving either no pain or distress, or no more than momentary or slight pain or distress without use of pain-relieving drugs. Examples include breeding protocols that require genotyping or tattooing, and research with only minor routine procedures such as injections, blood sampling, or tissue collection following AVMA approved euthanasia methods.

D – Teaching, research, surgery, or tests involving accompanying pain or distress for which appropriate anesthetic, analgesic, or tranquilizing drugs are used. Examples include research that involves survival or non-survival surgeries or other procedures performed with appropriate anesthetics and analgesics.

E – Teaching, experiments, research, surgery, or tests involve accompanying pain or distress to the animals that is not relieved by anesthetic, analgesic, or tranquilizing drugs.