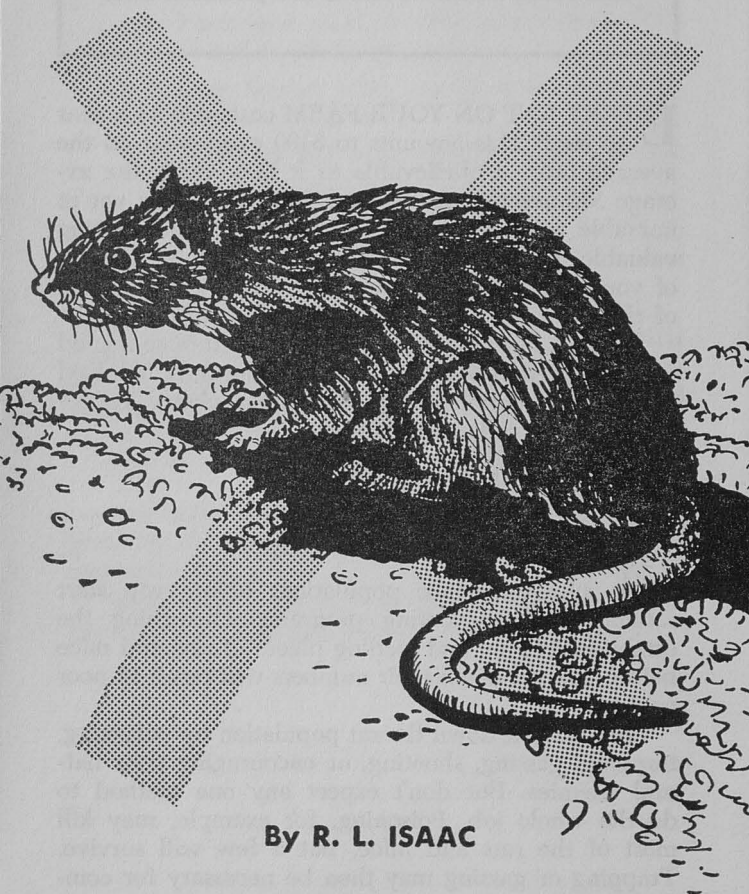


RAT Control



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The damage rats do to stored grain may be the most obvious reason why you should control them on your farm. But never forget that rats are also notorious carriers of disease. Remember that any rat can become a menace to the health of your family or your livestock.

In the United States, there are perhaps twenty diseases of humans that are rat-borne. Some of them are plague, murine typhus, hemorrhagic jaundice, and rat-bite fever.

In livestock, poultry, pets, and other animals, there are at least twelve rat-borne diseases. Among those are contagious abortion, distemper, rabies, trichinosis, and tuberculosis.

So from any viewpoint, good management of your farm should include rat control on a permanent basis.

EVERY RAT ON YOUR FARM costs you \$4 a year to feed! This amounts to \$400 every year on the average farm. Unbelievable as it may seem, the average Minnesota farm harbors 100 rats. Often you're not able to spot them—yet they're on hand, eating valuable grain, perhaps even threatening the health of your family and livestock. This folder gives some of the main methods you can use to control rats.

When a farm is infested with rats and mice a good control program becomes a "must." The work involved is just as essential as any other farm chore. To get good control, it is necessary to:

1. Reduce the rodent population.
2. Maintain sanitary conditions.
3. Ratproof your farm buildings.

Be sure to reduce populations *before* you start sanitary and ratproofing programs. Disturbing the established living and feeding places of rats and mice before you cut down their numbers will result in poor control.

You can cut down the rat population by poisoning, trapping, gassing, shooting, or encouraging their natural enemies. But don't expect any one method to do the whole job. Poisoning, for example, may kill most of the rats and mice, but a few will survive. Trapping or gassing may then be necessary for complete control.

Remember, too, that you may kill off all the rats and mice, but they'll come back if you don't eliminate their eating and nesting places.

POISONING

Use the anti-coagulant poisons (warfarine, fumarin, pivalyl, etc.) for good control and less danger to pets, other farm animals, and humans. Anti-coagulants or red squill are the safest poisons, give good results when handled properly, and are available in ready-to-use baits or concentrated forms for home-mixed baits.

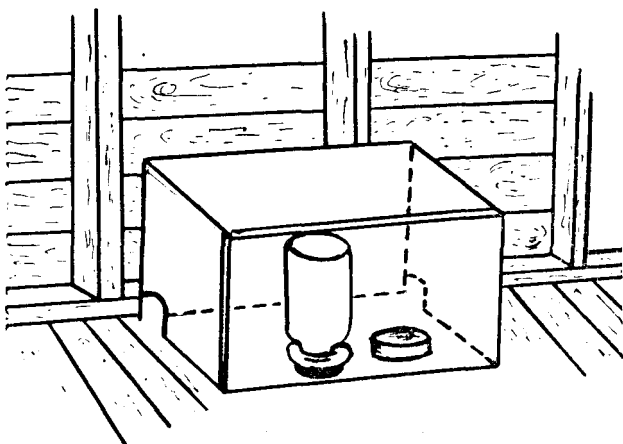
For home prepared baits use the following (20 pounds of bait):

	Pounds	Percent
Fresh, clean, ground yellow cornmeal.....	12	60
Rolled oats	5	25
Powdered sugar	1	5
Cooking oil	1	5
Anti-coagulant concentrate	1	5
Charcoal (activated USP) (1½ oz.)—safety factor only		

You can also prepare baits from chopped lean meat, sausage, fish, liver, bacon, egg, apple, tomato, melon rind, sweet potato, banana, cheese, cereals, peanut butter, sweet corn, fresh blood, milk, and strawberry jam.

When you do use fresh baits you usually have to make daily replacements.

The anti-coagulants are also available in water-soluble crystalline form. Good control measures will include water baits side-by-side with dry baits, particularly during the summer when water is scarce.



Bait station with poisoned water and dry bait.

PLACING THE BAITS

Place the baits in runways, near burrows, or wherever the rats and mice are feeding and living.

For permanent control use bait stations made of boxes, baskets, or boards with openings just large enough for the rats and mice to enter. The stations should be large enough to hold dry bait and poisoned water; they should be fastened down and baffled inside.

Bait stations protect the baits from pets, other farm animals, and children and give the rats and mice a secure place to feed. Placed properly they will also attract the rodents and can be kept supplied with fresh bait at all times.



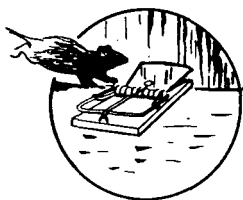
Do not allow the baits to become old and moldy. Use plenty of bait. It will take from 8 to 10 pounds of material for the average infestation. It takes 7 to 10 feedings by the rat and more by mice, to kill them.

(CAUTION: Anti-coagulants are poison. Label containers, keeping them out of reach of children, pets, and other farm animals. Destroy dead rats and mice.)

OTHER CONTROLS

Trapping

Use traps along with poison bait or to get the rats and mice that have survived the baiting. Use the wood base snap trap. Enlarge the bait pan or trigger with cardboard or wire mesh. Fix the bait to the trap.



Place the traps in dark corners, runways, and near burrows or even tack them to walls and rafters. Tend the traps regularly and remove the dead rats. Bait with some of the fresh baits mentioned earlier.

Gassing

The use of gases as cyanide and carbon monoxide also have a place in rat control. *The gas should be used in the open only and not inside buildings unless in the hands of a trained operator.* Cyanide gas is deadly and should not be used unless you have had a demonstration and thorough instruction in its use.

Shooting

Use a .410 shotgun or .22 but be sure that they are in competent hands.

Natural Enemies

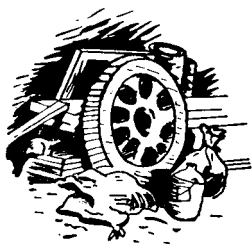
Cats, dogs, hawks, owls, skunks, and snakes can do much to control rats and mice.

Sanitation and Ratproofing

Rats and mice need food and shelter to survive. Remove one or both and you eliminate the rodents.



1. Place feed racks, lumber piles, etc. at least 18 inches off the ground.
2. Keep lumber piles, weeds, trash, etc. away from stored grain.
3. Clean out the straw pile bottoms regularly.
4. Keep farm clear of all junk piles.
5. Keep all foodstuffs away from rats and mice.



RATPROOFING is costly and should be considered on a long-time basis. It involves blocking off all points of entry to rats and mice. Reenforced concrete

construction is best for keeping out rats. Consider ratproofing in your control programs for it is a very important step.

Write your County Agent for information on ratproofing and bait box construction.

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Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics,
University of Minnesota, Agricultural Extension Service and United
States Department of Agriculture Cooperating, Skuli Rutford, Director.
Published in furtherance of Agricultural Extension Acts of May 8 and
June 30, 1914.

10M—3-57