

Tips & Tricks RODENTS

Bell Laboratories

By Patrick Lynch, ACE

*Chief Commercial Officer,
Bell Laboratories, and President,
Bell Sensing Technologies*



Rodent control requires a robust knowledge of rodent biology, habits and the ability to observe rodent activity keenly.

Many signs point to the presence of rodents. Droppings, rub marks, consumed bait, and harborage are all visual cues of a rodent infestation.

The introduction of rodent monitoring technology provides pest management professionals (PMPs) with never-before-available, concrete evidence of where rodents have been active. Smart bait stations, multiple-catch traps and snap traps automatically collect rodent activity data, showing recorded timestamps of when rodent activity occurs. This information allows PMPs to track activity, establish thresholds, evaluate how their service is performing and ultimately, provide their customer with a superior rodent control service.

Better, faster, more highly reviewed rodent control fosters revenue and profitability growth for pest control firms and a happier and more loyal workforce.

BASF

By Sylvia Kenmuir, BCE

*Senior Technical Services
Representative, Professional
& Specialty Solutions*



In an integrated pest management (IPM) program, one of the most important steps is setting an action threshold, or “the tipping point.” The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines an action threshold as “the point at which pest populations or environmental conditions indicate that pest control action is necessary.” (Source: [Bit.ly/4fpjVTA](https://bit.ly/4fpjVTA))

Farmers use specific metrics in agriculture to decide when pests or weather pose an economic threat, often defined by numbers. Once the threshold is reached, action is taken to protect crops.

Establishing an action threshold in structural settings can be more complex and depends on the account. Commercial establishments may be subject to audits defining that threshold, while personal tolerance plays a key role in residential settings.

Monitoring is crucial in all cases to identify pests and estimate their populations. Tools such as game cameras, smart devices, non-active monitoring baits, and visual signs (such as rodent droppings) can help.

Neogen

By Andrew Fisher, BCE, PHE

*Professional Pest Business
Unit Specialist*



Regardless of species, managing rat infestations can be more complex than addressing mouse problems. One key reason is a rat’s neophobia — its inherent fear of unfamiliar objects in its surroundings. To boost your chances of successful trapping, it is essential to prebait.

Prebaiting involves setting out traps without activating them at first. This process helps familiarize rats with the devices and diminishes their hesitation, allowing them to feel more at ease. Ideally, you should prebait for at least two weeks because the longer you can sustain this phase, the more effectively you can control the entire rat population.

Setting the traps during the initial treatment doesn’t allow rats to acclimate to the devices you’re using. Rats possess excellent memories and can easily recognize traps they have seen in their past. If they encounter a trap or witness another rat being captured, they will likely avoid that device style in the future. This is why prebaiting is essential at the start; it is the best chance to familiarize the rats with your traps before they become wary.

Syngenta

By Dr. Chris Keefer, BCE

*Technical Services Manager,
Professional Pest Management*



For effective rodent control, it’s important to be meticulous and calculated. For example:

- ▶ Know the differences among the three common commensal rodents: house mice (*Mus musculus*), roof rats (*Rattus rattus*) and Norway rats (*R. norvegicus*).
- ▶ Be familiar with all types of construction used in your markets. Visit with a builder to learn more, visit structures in various construction phases, and build a teaching reference — a notebook with pictures — on construction for your company. This is important for accurately identifying areas and harborages prone to rodent infestation in different structure types.
- ▶ During inspections, make diagrams, take pictures and use technology such as thermal imaging cameras to help document conducive conditions.
- ▶ Determine what rodents feed on within the account and use that as a trap lure. If unsuccessful, use the opposite as a lure — sugar vs. protein, for example.
- ▶ If possible, approximate a commercial structure

model within your facility for training. Set up zones of storage and non-storage, inspection aisles with widths between 18 and 24 inches, airflow issues and food spills. Remember, constant airflow causes rodents to lose body heat, which they do not like. Areas full of debris and congestion are more rodent-friendly because they decrease airflow.

J.T. Eaton

By Isabelle Lucero

Education and Compliance Officer



The once “known” range and behavior of commensal rodents can no longer be a go-to resource. With climate change causing rodent species to expand their range, we now see a wider distribution of commensal rodents and an increase in rodent-borne diseases.

Start each inspection by identifying the pest species present — there may be more than one — and what behaviors you observe at *that specific location*. Treat each location as a unique situation. This extends to the tools you use as well. Different issues result in different treatments.

Next, identify your legal constraints for product usage at that location. You are liable for misuse of products, so check local restrictions and the product label. For rodenticides, you must look at state restrictions and always use a bait station that is weighted or secured, with the rodenticide baits secured safely inside the station.

Finally, remember that your tools, traps and baits are not magic. They require the skill and know-how of a trained technician. If they are failing, change your strategy.

Pelsis

By Anna Iversen, BCE

U.S. Technical Director



In commensal rodent control, choosing the right lure is key. Having patience with the process is, too. Although certain foods are

more accepted than others, your best chance for quick control is to use lures that are appropriate for the population. For commensal rodent snap traps, consider the following when choosing a lure:

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Tips & Tricks

RODENTS

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- 1. What is attracting the rodents?** If they are feeding on something specific, such as dog food or candy bars, use more of that same food on the lure. Conversely, if there's a lot of food in the area, consider putting out something different that may be more attractive to them, such as moisture or nesting materials.
- 2. Is water available?** In some environments, food may be plentiful, but water is not. Rats particularly need access to water. Choose a high-moisture lure like a tomato or cucumber.
- 3. Is nesting material available?** If food is plentiful, the rodents will be less likely to be attracted to a food lure. A female may be more drawn to cotton, insulation, newspaper or other nesting supplies as a lure.
- 4. Are there customer restrictions?** Some commercial facilities will have strict rules regarding allergens, for example. In residences, there may be someone with a peanut allergy. Always ask customers whether there are any concerns with the lure choice.
- 5. Is prebaiting an option?** Prebaiting an unset trap with a lure for several days will offer insight into what foods the rodents are looking for and get them used to the lures and traps.

Sometimes, we get lucky and immediately choose the right lure for the right population and put it in all the right places for quick success. But generally speaking, a rodent management plan takes time. Be patient and keep re-evaluating the strategy.

PelGar USA

By Andrej Branc
Americas Business Manager



When addressing rodent control in accounts with children and pets, try a six-step approach:

- 1. Identify potential entry points.** Mice can fit through holes as small as a dime, while rats can squeeze through openings the size of a quarter. Seal all gaps as appropriate.
- 2. Encourage clients to tidy up before your inspection.** While not always possible, a clean environment makes it easier to spot entry points, especially around doors, windows and areas where water pipes, sewer pipes and other utilities enter the building.
- 3. Address water sources.** Repair any leaking taps or pipes, as rodents are attracted to water sources. Consider pest-proofing drainage systems with wire mesh.
- 4. Prioritize proper food habits.** Advise clients to store food in rodent-proof containers and clean up spills immediately to minimize attractants.

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5. Maintain communication. Educate your clients about the importance of ongoing maintenance and good housekeeping practices to prevent future infestations.

6. Strategize treatment. If you're dealing with an active infestation, consider leaving a well-used entry point accessible for a specific period. This will help you succeed in baiting and trapping as you cut off all other entry points.

VM Products

By Dawnery Vargo

Chief Operating Officer

Mice like small, dark areas. They stick to edges and corners where their body is against something solid.

In addition, they aren't as curious as many people believe. This makes trapping difficult, especially if sanitation issues are unresolved. Inspect for sanitation, exclusion points and other evidence of where they live and feed.

Putting traps in the pathway of mice means better success. Look for droppings, rub marks and gnawing



damage. Placing traps inside stations makes it more likely they will go to them. A station provides a dark, small space that mice see as safe. As they venture out to find food, a dark box provides a stopping point along the way. Trap efficacy can be improved even more if small bits of food are added.

If using bait indoors for mice, use a mouse bait station. Its smaller size and openings are generally more appealing to mice than a rat-sized station.

Pest Control Insulation

By Chris White

Vice President of Sales

Rodents, particularly mice and rats, are common inhabitants of attics, often causing significant damage and posing health risks. These pests are adept at finding their way into structures for warmth and food. Understanding their behaviors and habitats is crucial for effective detection and management. During attic inspections, you and your customers should be on the lookout for the following signs:



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This trap photo is from a residential account, taken by Jeff McGovern, The Pest Coach. We call this kind of catch a **Raging Success!!**

- ▶ Small, dark **droppings** are often found near food sources or nesting areas.
- ▶ Rodents have continuously growing teeth, so look for **gnaw marks** on wood, insulation and electrical wires.
- ▶ Rodent **nests** are typically made from shredded paper, insulation or fabric and can be found in hidden corners.
- ▶ Scratching or scurrying **noises**, especially at night, indicate rodent activity.

Rodents typically seek shelter in areas offering concealment and proximity to food sources. Common locations include:

- ▶ **Insulation** materials allow rodents to burrow in for warmth and nesting.
- ▶ **Rafters and beams** as travel routes provide rodents height for security and access to various areas.
- ▶ **Wall and ceiling voids and gaps** can become entry points and nesting sites.
- ▶ **Vents and ductwork** provide easy entry for rodents, often leading to extensive infestations.

Rodents in attics can lead to significant damage to property and pose health risks to occupants. Regular inspections and maintenance can help identify potential entry points and signs of infestation early.

Wildlife Control Supplies

By Gregg Schumaker

Director of Business and Product Development



Properly excluding rodents from structures is a skill all PMPs should learn.

There have been many advancements in exclusion products, such as fabricated vent covers, door sweeps and hybrid sealants. Whole home exclusion is becoming an increasingly common — and profitable — add-on service in professional pest management.

The first step in performing a successful exclusion is conducting a thorough inspection. Move around the structure systematically, using the same method each time to ensure you don't miss anything.

Be sure to check all vents on the roof, including plumbing vents. Using a telescoping mirror to inspect hard-to-reach areas, such as along the foundation, is very helpful. Document everything you find, both in writing and with photos, as this will help customers acknowledge and realize the amount of work needed to solve the problem.

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