

Wildlife, pets, and people deserve to be poison free

Ban Rodenticides

Background

Rodenticides, also known as “rat poisons,” are ingestible pesticides used to kill rats, mice, and other target rodents. These products are inhumane, pose serious threats to animals, including family pets and wildlife species, the environment, and to human health, while at the same time failing to control rodent populations over the long-term.

Chemicals classified as rodenticides vary in the active ingredients they include, but generally aim to kill unwanted pests by preventing normal blood clotting, causing internal hemorrhaging, or disturbing nervous system functions. These compounds, enhanced with attractive flavors and colors, are commonly placed in and around homes and commercial areas to attract unwanted wildlife, leading to death.

Animal Impacts



A broad spectrum of animals beyond targeted pests, including wildlife and family pets, are affected through direct or secondary ingestion of rodenticides. Animals that ingest rodenticides experience great pain and suffering over a period of days or weeks, most often leading to death.

In addition to rats, small animals including songbirds, shrews, voles, and other non-target mammals and invertebrates are known to access bait boxes containing these poisons. This direct feeding is contaminating the food-chain and wider ecosystem. Birds of prey, coyotes, bobcats, foxes, skunks and other mammalian predators that feed on small animals have been found to have rodenticides in their systems.

Owls and other raptors are at a particularly high risk of secondary poisoning because of their dependence on rodents as a food source. Between 1988 and 2003, 70% of dead owls from BC had residues of at least one rat poison, and the numbers only escalated in recent years.

Human Health Risks



Rodenticides bioaccumulate and persist in the environment posing human health risks. Recently, researchers in the United States have even measured traceable levels of ingestible rodenticides in the milk supply. The American Association of Poison Control Centers receives approximately 10,000 reports of rodenticide exposures in children annually in the U.S.

More Humane, More Effective Solutions Exist

Clearing a resident rodent population simply makes space for new groups to move in by distracting from the root cause of the problem (i.e., accessible food and shelter). Furthermore, poisoned rodents mate faster to compensate for their thinning numbers.



Rodent predators are critically important for keeping rodent populations in check. For example, a single barn owl consumes an average of 1,000 rodents per year. Rodenticides upset this crucial balance by slowly killing rodents making them easy prey, then secondarily poisoning the predators that ingest the poisoned rodent.



A transition to chemical-free pest management solutions can be done with relative ease and has proven to be cost effective in the long run.

Preventative resource management and exclusion (rodent-proofing) is the best long term strategy. That is, preventing access to food and shelter on the property thereby removing attractants, locating and closing off all entry points, and maintaining these measures. Pest management providers that utilize these methods have begun to emerge in BC and are in high demand. For example, Vancouver based Humane Solutions, guarantees their work and is internationally recognized for their expertise (not sponsored).

RODENTICIDE LAW AND POLICY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

In response to the growing awareness of rodenticide-abundance in the ecosystem, the pain and suffering they inflict on animals, and the availability of better solutions, municipalities across BC have prohibited the use of rodenticides on city-owned properties and have formally demanded that the provincial government take action.

Acknowledging these demands and serious threats to wildlife, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy recently introduced new restrictions on some Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides ("SGAR's"). However, the changes only reduce the use of products containing the active ingredients brodifacoum, bromadiolone, and/or difethialone: just 3 of 27 active [toxic] ingredients found in rodenticides currently registered in Canada. Additionally, overly-broad and unnecessary exemptions and complexities further frustrate compliance issues and enforcement impossibilities.

Conclusion

While the recent changes to BC's Integrated Pest Management Regulations are a step forward, the restrictions fail to adequately protect wildlife, pets, and people from unreasonable adverse effects caused by rodenticide products

No rodenticide is safe, humane, or eco-friendly. The only sure way to mitigate risk to humans, animals, and the environment from the toxic effects of poisons is to discontinue their use. Please help us spread the word that better alternatives exist. Together, we can make BC truly rodenticide free.



Please sign the
Rodenticide Free BC
Petition.

