



RODENTS: MICE AND RATS

I remember the first time I saw a real mouse. It didn't look anything like Mickey.....

Aside from doing millions of dollars in damage in contamination of feeds, rodents also carry disease. As of 1999, there were 7 different types of hantaviruses identified in the United States, all carried by rodents.

Rodents such as mice or rats carry diseases which emus as well as people can catch. They can also do a lot of damage to the pocketbook when you are feeding them instead of your emus.

Rodent Elimination

In order for your rodent control program to be effective (as well as efficient) on a long-term basis there are four steps you must take.

1. Inspection: There are 10 signs of rodent infestation

- Droppings
- Tracks
- Gnaw marks
- Burrowing
- Runways
- Grease marks
- Urine stains
- Live or dead rodents
- Rodent sounds (squeaking, rustling)
- Rodent odors



2. Sanitation: In order for rodents to flourish, they must have access to food, water and nesting sites. You can reduce the rodent population through:

- Proper storage of emu feed in rodent proof containers or in a secure building.
- Frequent mowing of pens and removal of rubbish, lumber piles or old equipment.
- Removal of outside pet food after pet has eaten.
- Mulch piles must be properly maintained.
- If you are feeding wild birds, make sure feeders are inaccessible to rodents and store unused feed in rodent proof containers.

3. Rodent Proofing: If you are using a room in a barn or shed that was not especially built for feed, it may not be possible to do extensive rodent proofing. In fact, even if you ARE using a building especially built to store feed, you may find rodent proofing difficult!

- Eliminate all openings larger than ¼” for mice, ½” for rats.
- Use steel wool around plumbing and other utility lines.
- Repair doors and windows that do not shut securely.
- Check air vents for rodent access (see the 10 signs).
- If you are unable to rodent proof your feed shed or barn, and are not storing large amounts of feed, consider using an old chest style freezer for feed storage.
- Mix Chili Peppers with the feed - yep, according to the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum they have done field research on wild peppers and rodent control. The peppers don't bother the birds, but the rodents can't stand it.
- A word about feed - if you are buying feed in bags, and there is a choice of bags with or without a plastic liner, take the one with the liner. The mice cannot smell the feed through the liner and don't gnaw at the bags. Also, it provides some protection from dampness.

4. Population Reduction: In addition to sanitation and rodent proofing, you must also reduce the rodent population. We use a combination of traps and baits to do this. When setting baits, you have to consider non-target animals (emus, cats, dogs) and children.

We use a PVC bait station. Take a ¾” T, attach 2” of pipe to each of the 3 ends. On the end that is “up” we put a 1” cap (slides on and off easily). These are attached around the emu pens every 10 feet. The cap can be raised and the bait inspected and replaced as needed. When a rodent is found, it is easily removed from the fence and the rodent is dumped out. These cannot be placed inside the pens as the birds will not leave them alone.

When baiting any kind of trap in a feed room, place the trap in an area inaccessible to pets. Having trouble getting the rodents to pay attention to your feed room traps? He has plenty to eat, so consider using a liquid bait to help him wash down all he’s consumed.