

Use of agricultural chemicals: rodenticides

Agricultural chemicals

Agricultural chemicals, including rodenticides, are legitimate and useful tools that support the productivity, quality and safety of Queensland's food and fibre industries. To maximise benefits for the community, agricultural chemicals must be used in a legal, safe and efficient manner. Misuse of chemical products can cause harm to humans, off-target animals, trade and the environment.

Using rodenticides

Rodents are normally only a problem when they have access to a palatable food source. The most effective way to treat rodent problems is with a combined approach of different control methods including chemical, baiting, trapping, barrier fencing, habitat modification, ultrasonic devices, repellents and biological control, integrated with land management practices.

Baits containing rodenticides, like any other agricultural chemical product, should always be used in accordance with approved label instructions or conditions of permits issued by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA).

The APVMA will only register products or grant permits if assessments demonstrate that the product works as intended and the scientific data confirms that when used in accordance with instruction that it will have no harmful or unintended effects on people, animals, the environment or international trade. Approved labels provide the necessary information on safety, use and disposal of rodenticides.

Rodenticides include acute poisons, anticoagulants and bioagents. Many of these are potentially dangerous to humans, domestic animals and wildlife if misused.

A wide range of rodenticides are approved for use in or around industrial, commercial agricultural and domestic buildings. The majority of these products are not approved for use in crops and the labels contain the strict instruction - DO NOT apply bait to crops.

Other common instructions on labels for these types of rodenticides can include:

- This bait is hazardous to pigs, cats, dogs, poultry, birds and wildlife.
- DO NOT place bait stations in the open.
- DO NOT place or store baits in locations which are accessible to domestic animals, livestock, birds or other animals.
- DO NOT allow baits to contaminate foodstuffs or food intended for human or animal consumption.

Providing these rodenticides are applied in accordance with label instructions, it should not lead to direct application to food or crops that could be used for food or stock feed. The most common application method for the control of rodents is the laying of baits and bait stations containing a

rodenticide. The baits provide little chance of contamination of food or food producing areas in commercial or domestic buildings.

Use in cropping situations

There are only a limited range of rodenticies which are currently approved for use in cropping situations. These include:

Active	Crops / situations	Comments
Coumatetralyl (specific products)	Macadamia, sugarcane and pineapples	Ensure products with relevant crop instructions on the approved label are used
Zinc Phosphide (various products)	Grain, legume, canola, safflower, nuts and sugarcane	Ensure products with relevant crop instructions on the approved label are used
Zinc Phosphide (specific products)	Sugarcane	Ensure products with relevant crop instructions on the approved label are used
Zinc Phosphide (APVMA Permit)	Sweet potato	Must be applied in strict accordance with permit conditions
Zinc Phosphide (APVMA Permit)	Banana plantations	Must be applied in strict accordance with permit conditions

Strict adherence to instructions for use on product labels or under the conditions of a permit is a legal requirement and penalties of up to \$66 000 apply to persons who apply a chemical contrary to label instructions. Misuse of chemical product in contravention of label instructions is an offence under the *Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Act 1988*.

More information

For more information on using agricultural and veterinary chemicals, visit www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au or call 13 25 23.

Visit the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority website at www.apvma.gov.au for more information about rodenticides.

