



trapping is probably the easiest method of getting rid of them. From 12 to 20 traps to an acre may often be set with advantage in the mouse runs. Where the mice are abundant or the areas large, poisoning is a quicker means of extermination. The following formula is recommended in Farmers' Bulletin 670 of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Dry grain formula: Mix thoroughly 1 ounce powdered strychnine (alkaloid), 1 ounce powdered bicarbonate of soda, and 1/8 ounce (or less) of saccharine. Put the mixture in a tin pepper box and sift it gradually over 50 pounds of crushed wheat or 40 pounds of crushed oats in a metal tub, mixing the grain constantly so that the poison will be evenly distributed.

Dry mixing, as above described, has the advantage that the grain may be kept any length of time without fermentation. If it is desired to moisten the grain to facilitate thorough mixing, it would be well to use a thin starch paste (as described below, but without strychnine) before applying the poison. The starch soon hardens and fermentation is not likely to follow.

If crushed oats or wheat can not be obtained whole oats may be used, but they should be of good quality. As mice hull the oats before eating them, it is desirable to have the poison penetrate the kernels. A very thin starch paste is recommended as a medium for applying poison to the grain. Prepare as follows:

Wet grain formula: Dissolve 1 ounce of strychnia sulphate in 2 quarts of boiling water. Dissolve 2 tablespoonfuls of laundry starch in 1/2 pint of cold water. Add the starch to the strychnine

solution and boil for a few minutes until the starch is clear. A little saccharine may be added if desired, but it is not essential. Pour the hot starch over 1 bushel of oats in a metal tub and stir thoroughly. Let the grain stand overnight to absorb the poison.

The poisoned grain prepared by either of the above formulas is to be distributed over the infested area, not more than a teaspoonful at a place, care being taken to put it in mouse runs and at the entrances of burrows. Small drain tiles, 1 1/2 inches in diameter have sometimes been used to advantage to hold poisoned grain, but old tin cans with the edges bent nearly together will serve the same purpose.

Field mice may also be driven away by thorough cultivation of fields and the elimination of fence rows. In the case of trees, clean tillage and the removal from the neighborhood of weeds and grass will prove an effective precaution.

Finally, the farmer should remember that there are many animals, birds and snakes around the farm which do little or no harm and are most useful in keeping down the numbers of field mice. Among these owls deserve special notice. Mice are the chief diet both of the short-eared and the barn owl. The common screech owl destroys English sparrows as well as mice. It stays close to orchards and farm buildings and is, therefore, a useful assistant.