U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Division of Publications
Press Service

Release -- Immediate

2/21/21

VARIETY MEANS SUCCESS IN RAT POISONING CAMPAIGNS

--

A starved rat will eat anything from a strip of lead pipe to an old boot, but a well-fed rodent, such as we have in the United States, is often inclined to be finicky in the matter of food. Rat poisoning campaigns often fail because the house owner does not give his intended victims a sufficient variety of edibles. Specialists of the Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture urge a rat-control campaign in America, and they stress the importance of catering to the rodents' tastes.

Rat baits may be divided into three classes: meat foods, vegetable foods, and cereals. In mixing his baits the successful poisoner selects a food from each of the three classes, and combines it with barium carbonate in the proportion of one part poison to four of food. Then he places a teaspoonful of each variety on a strip of paper or bit of board so that the rat, traveling along his runway, finds a three-course meal all laid for him. Usually one of the three baits appeals to him, and the rat population is reduced by one. Poisoned baits should be watched carefully, and uneaten baits replaced by others of the same class on the following evening. In this way a wide selection of foods may be used without departing from the basic combination. All baits must be kept fresh and tempting if the process of extermination is carried to completion. The common practice of smearing a dab of poison on a bit of stale bread which is then placed in some out-of-the-way corner and neglected will not produce satisfactory results.

Barium carbonate is the poisoning agent recommended by the specialists. It is tasteless, odorless, and can be obtained at any drug store. Full directions for its use, and a complete list of the food combinations suitable for a poisoning campaign can be obtained upon request to the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

ooo