



ADDICTED TO USING TO RODENTICIDES? HELP THEIR GUIDES? S?

BY NICOLE RIVARD

Rebecca Dmytryk compares pest management professionals (PMPs) who use toxic rodenticides to drug dealers.

Instead of offering to do exclusion and sanitation work to ensure mice and rats are not getting into people's homes and solve conflicts long term, they want homeowners hooked on bait stations filled with poisons, she says.

"They want people addicted to the poisons—they want them to have so much fear that they believe they can't live without them," said Dmytryk, founder of California-based Humane Wildlife Control Inc. "Because peddling these poisons is BIG business."

Placing poisoned mice and rat food in bait boxes is not labor intensive, but makes it profitable.

A profitable sham, that is, because they are often used even when there are no rodent issues.

Homeowners are being duped because the bait boxes are attracting rodents to an area because they provide a food source. Since this business model does nothing to address the actual cause of mice or rats entering a home, repeat business is guaranteed.

Tragically, the poison mongers are also guaranteeing that non-target wildlife—from bald eagles, owls and hawks to foxes—are dying for simply eating their prey, which, unbeknownst to them, has been poisoned.

"If you have a closed environment, like a building that is sufficiently rodent-proofed, then there is absolutely no reason to use poison or any other lethal control on the exterior," Dmytryk said.

Adding to the carnage of raptors and other wildlife is the fact that even though the Environmental Protection

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'fast food' pest control companies that we possible can."

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Agency deemed second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) so harmful they pulled them from consumer shelves in 2014, e-commerce sites like Amazon make it simple to avoid the EPA's ban with the click of a mouse.

In 2021, journalist Chris Sweeny wrote an article for the National Audubon Society's magazine exposing the internet's poison problem. And nothing has changed.

If you type the SGARs ingredients brodifacoum, brodifalalone, difenacoum and difethialone into the search bar of Amazon, a plethora of products pop up. In August, for instance, Amazon's "Overall Pick" was Bell Laboratories' Final Blox Rodenticide. For \$127.50, you could have an 18-pound bucket of toxic pellets on my doorstep in two days. More than 300 people had purchased the product during the first few weeks of August.

The only limit—which is positive news—seems to be on shipping these products to California, which in 2020 put a moratorium on their use with a handful of exceptions, such as if a rat infestation posed a threat to public health or water supplies.

Of course, Amazon is just one example of where to buy these non-target wildlife killing poisons. As Friends of Animals works to get a ban on SGARs across the finish line in Connecticut where we are headquartered, we are pressing the people across the U.S. to do their homework if they are experiencing conflicts with mice and rats.

It's paramount they find and use poison-free pest control companies that instead focus on sanitation and exclusion. Demanding poison-free solutions helps reduce the market for poison. And please do not use glue or sticky traps. They are cruel and inhumane and also catch songbirds, small owls and other small animals who often have to be euthanized as a result.

FACES OF CHANGE IN PEST CONTROL

"It's very niche, very specific work, inspecting and sealing a home from the exterior," said Paul Trapp, owner of ATBAY LLC in Connecticut. "But it's rewarding as it's a permanent solution. It puts an end to the 'control' aspect of mice.

"I worked for Terminix for five years. There's a huge gap in business practices; they try to 'control' mice and tell customers that they can never be stopped. Mice are animals; they shouldn't be controlled."

It's beyond frustrating that month to month PMPS are constantly setting traps or using poisons in areas that just need a simple repair or remediation to fix the problem permanently.



Husband and wife team Duane Titus and Rebecca Dmytryk founded Humane Wildlife Control Inc. to offer a non-toxic, humane way of preventing human-wildlife interactions. They also offer remote consulting through FaceTime and Zoom.

"When companies focus solely on 'control' without addressing entry points, they're allowing more rodents to enter the structure, replacing the ones that were eliminated. This cycle can result in an exponential increase in rodent activity over time," Trapp said.

Trapp said it's his dream to change the pest control industry to make it mandatory to have to fill out an inspection report and identify exclusion options.

"If customers aren't willing to do the repairs, then they shouldn't be allowed to just keep poisoning and trapping rodents as the control method," Trapp said.

Five vulnerable place where rodents can sneak in are siding gaps, garage doors, vents and crawl spaces, roof and eaves, and doors and windows.

Like Trapp and Dmytryk, Brian Sweig, founder of Thoroughspect LLC in Connecticut, starts with a top to bottom inspection to locate all potential access points. His team then prepares an exclusion plan showing what they would do to the

home, the cost and the warranty associated with the services they recommend.

"It's a part of the process where the traditional industry is woefully lacking. Most companies will go in and put down mice poison when they don't realize what the house has is bats...so the problem is never even solved," Sweig said.

Thoroughspect has its own custom-made metal mesh to seal openings that critters use to get inside a house.

The beauty of sealing a building from the outside in a permanent, complete fashion without poisons is you can have mice feed on your property. They can't get back inside but they can be a healthy food source for the wildlife you share your yard with.

If any rodents are still inside a house once her work is done, Dmytryk sets live-catch traps where the rodents are most active, like an attic or crawlspace. Sometimes it's necessary to use a one-way device—like a mini-doggy door, which allows the rats and mice to escape safely but not get back inside.

Then she releases the captured rodents back on the property, close to the building.

"This may sound counterproductive, but really it is the only way to confirm the rodent-proofing was sufficient," she explained. "Rats and mice are smart. They know just how to get back in, and we want our repairs to be rodent-tested. If the rodent-proofing was sufficient...there will be no more catches."

Once a structure has been successfully rodent-proofed, it should remain that way for years, if not decades.

Sweig said he's had a successful poison-free business model for 30 years.

"I do this because we don't have to use poisons. We're trying to take away as much business from the general 'fast food' pest control companies that we possibly can," he said.

That's music to our ears.

TAKE ACTION

To find PMPs who use non-toxic solutions Google "integrated pest management" in your area.