

Rat Infestation Management: A Checklist

Essential Steps for Detection, Monitoring, and Control

Checklist: How to Spot and Control Rat Infestations

Types of Damage to Look For - *Early detection is critical—act quickly at the first signs.*

Please note that several other rodents can cause this damage as well.

- Drip line chewing
- Tree girdling
- Equipment damage – includes wiring, pumps, tractors and vehicles
- Crop loss

Early Warning Signs:

- In Almonds, rats consume all mummy nuts overwinter
- Feeding activity during flowering and early set
- Increased nighttime activity since rats are exclusively nocturnal

Monitoring Practices:

- Remove mummies promptly
- Night shaking to detect populations
- Identify infestation hotspots within the orchard

Initial Infestation Response:

- Use rodenticides (e.g., diphacinone) as appropriate following recommendations for pre-baiting, bait station placement and PPE. Always read the label!
- Apply treatments directly where needed
- Following bait application, implement a follow-up approach, such as long-term trapping, to keep populations from rebounding.
- Identify and target burrow and tree nest locations
- Reduce habitat by removing burn piles, cleaning ditches and edges, and eliminating surrounding cover
- Use a combination of approaches; labor-intensive but helps prevent rapid population growth
- Manage other pests that amplify the issue (e.g., gophers)
- Leverage natural predators including adding owl boxes
- Contact your crop insurance provider to clarify reporting requirements and documentation needed in case of crop claim

Protect and Monitor Critical Areas:

- Pumps and filters
- Irrigation system repairs. Water availability influences rat behavior; monitor irrigation closely and repair promptly.
- Assess risk factors regularly

After Initial Infestation:

- Support tree recovery with selective pruning
- Monitor damage and test for disease
- Maintain efforts to keep populations low
- Engage with neighbors and the local community to coordinate efforts

Stay vigilant and proactive. Consistent monitoring and a combination of control methods are the foundation for successful rat management on your farm.