



# FACT SHEET

## PREVENTION & MINIMISATION OF RODENT ACTIVITY IN FOOD PREPARATION AREAS

Rodent activity has been identified as an increased concern within the Riverina area in the past couple of months. This may be a result from the increase of locust plagues identified within our agricultural areas.

Food businesses are therefore being asked to take additional preventative measures to ensure the prevention of entry of pests into food areas.

### GENERAL MICE FACTS

- ◆ Mice consume between 3-5g of food daily;
- ◆ Diet can include cereals, grains, vegetables, meat, fish, nuts and cheese;
- ◆ Believed to be particularly attracted to foods such as oats, peanut butter, vegetable oils, molasses and pumpkin seeds;
- ◆ Most active at night;
- ◆ Paths are often confined to walls, pipes or natural barriers.

### BREEDING FACTS

- ◆ Mice can start breeding at 6-10 weeks of age, with a life span of 1-2yrs;
- ◆ Mice can produce 10-12 litters a year;
- ◆ Females give birth to 5-6 young per litter, but can be up to 10 young per litter;
- ◆ One breeding pair of mice can produce up to 500 mice within 21days.

### RODENT CONTAMINATION

Mice and their mouse droppings can transmit a number of diseases to humans such as:

- ◆ Salmonella;
- ◆ Tapeworms and Roundworms;
- ◆ Bacterial poisoning.

Mice are notorious for squeezing through holes. They are capable of flattening their whole body to help squeeze through gaps as small as 6mm.



### NSW LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Food Standards Code 3.2.2 – Food Safety Practices and General Requirements states that: *food businesses must:*

- take all practicable measures to prevent pests entering the food premises; and
- take all practicable measures to eradicate and prevent the harbourage of pests on the food premises.

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO FOOD BUSINESSES?

- ✗ Evidence of rodent activity may lead to a critical non-conformance, therefore resulting in immediate failure of food inspection; and
- ✗ A Penalty Infringement Notice and/or Prohibition Order may be issued due to non-compliance. This could result in your food business being placed on the Name and Shame register on the NSW Food Authority website.

### WHAT MEASURES CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT RODENT ENTRY?

- ✓ Ensure that all food is stored off the floor and sealed in tight fitting food grade plastic containers. (Mice can eat through flour bags and plastic);
- ✓ Fill any exposed gaps near pipes, conduits and openings;
- ✓ Ensure that all food preparation areas are cleaned thoroughly after each shift and prior to closure of business;
- ✓ Maintain floors in a clean and sanitary condition after each shift and prior to closure of businesses to ensure all food particles are removed;
- ✓ Repair all water leaks, including outside of building to reduce water sources; and
- ✓ Ensure that an adequate food safety pest control program is in place to reduce activity of pests.

For any further queries or concerns regarding these matters, please contact Griffith City Council's Environment & Health Department on (02) 6962 8100.

December 2010

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