

FACT SHEET

PREVENTION & MINIMISATION OF RODENT ACTIVITY IN FOOD BUSINESSES

CSIRO has recently warned that due to last year's wet Spring, ideal conditions for a mouse plague over the 2017 Autumn and Winter months now prevails. Rodent activity has been identified as an increased concern with a particular focus on the Riverina area in the past couple of months.

Food businesses are now being asked to take additional preventative measures to ensure:

1. The prevention of entry of pests into food areas;
2. The minimisation of cross contamination of food and food contact surfaces; and
3. Adequate sanitation methods are carried out thoroughly on all food contact surfaces.

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 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 Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) Food Standards Code 3.2.2 – Food Safety Practices and General Requirements, Clause 24 (1)(c,d) states that: *A Food Business 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 a food inspection; and
- ✗ An Improvement Notice, Penalty Infringement Notice and/or a 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 & CROSS CONTAMINATION?

1. A FOOD BUSINESS MUST TAKE ALL PRACTICABLE MEASURES TO PREVENT PESTS ENTERING THE FOOD PREMISES

- ✓ Pest-proof doors and entrances into food areas by installing weather strips at the base of doors, self-closing doors and screen doors;



- ✓ Ensure drains, grease traps and ventilation pipes are sealed;
- ✓ Fill any exposed holes and gaps in ceilings, walls and floors near pipes, conduits and openings; and
- ✓ Repair all water leaks, including outside of building to reduce water sources.



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2. MINIMISE CROSS CONTAMINATION OF FOOD AND FOOD CONTACT SURFACES

- ✓ 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);
- ✓ Ensure that all food contact surfaces (e.g. crockery, pots, saucepans, take away containers) are stored appropriately and protected from cross contamination from pest activity;



- ✓ Maintain floors in a clean and sanitary condition after each shift and prior to closure of business to ensure all food waste is removed;
- ✓ Ensure that all food preparation areas are cleaned thoroughly after each shift and prior to closure of business.

3. ADEQUATE SANITATION METHODS ARE CARRIED OUT THOROUGHLY ON ALL FOOD CONTACT SURFACES

- ✓ Ensure a suitable “Food Grade Sanitiser” is used to sanitise all fittings, fixtures and equipment;
- ✓ Ensure that all food contact surfaces such as benches, chopping boards etc are sanitised prior to use; and
- ✓ Ensure Sanitiser dilution quantities are measured accurately according to manufacturer’s directions to ensure sanitation of food contact surfaces is effective.



4. PEST CONTROL WITHIN YOUR FOOD BUSINESS

- ✓ Ensure that an adequate food safety pest control program is in place to reduce activity of pests;
- ✓ If pests cannot be adequately controlled by the food premises, a food business shall employ a licenced Pest Control Contractor to assist with the eradication of pests in your food premises;
- ✓ If you perform pest control treatments yourself, make sure chemicals and baits used are appropriate for a food premises and do not contaminate food or food contact surfaces; and
- ✓ During pest control treatment, if food and food contact surfaces are contaminated, these items shall be cleaned and sanitised before use.

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

Disclaimer

This information is a general summary and cannot cover all situations. Food businesses are required to comply with all of the provisions of the Food Standards Code and the Food Act 2003 (NSW).

