



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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NATIONAL WAR ON RATS  
SHOWING RESULTS

Rats are probably decreasing in numbers in the United States, says the United States Department of Agriculture, although their decrease is only beginning to be apparent. The chief factors responsible for any decrease are present-day sanitary requirements and modern building, which make it increasingly difficult for rats to find food and shelter; a national urge against all unnecessary waste; and a better understanding generally of the relation of rats to human economy.

Furthermore, as facts relating to the spread of communicable disease have become better known, more general interest in rat control has been stimulated, more effective means of destroying rats have been developed, and information regarding these methods has been widely distributed. Farmers' Bulletin 1533-F, "Rat Control," prepared by James Silver, of the Biological Survey, and just issued by the department, contains many suggestions for the control of rats on the farm and in the city.

Permanent exclusion of rats may be brought about by rat-proofing buildings and other structures commonly inhabited by the rodents; by removing any possible shelter; and by cutting off their food supply. Details on methods of accomplishing these objectives are discussed in the bulletin, as well as such control methods as poisoning, fumigating, trapping, and use of deterrents.

Although getting rid of rats is largely an individual problem, rat infestation has a serious effect on the whole community, and organized control effort is highly desirable. A person who allows rats to increase on his property until they menace the entire neighborhood becomes an object of public concern, and a city that permits its refuse dump to serve as a breeding place for hordes of these pests is committing a grave injustice to its population. Ridding a whole community of rats can best be accomplished by organized efforts of all the citizens. The department will gladly assist such organizations through the Biological Survey in planning, organizing, and prosecuting antirat campaigns by furnishing preliminary plans, general instructions, sample copies of posters, and other publicity material and, where possible, the personal services of a leader.

A copy of the bulletin may be obtained by writing to the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

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