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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Immediate Release FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1947.

### RAT-CONTROL-TO--SAVE-GRAIN CONFERENCE OPENS IN WASHINGTON

The opening guns in a nation-wide campaign to exterminate rats as a grain-saving measure are being fired today (December 12) in Washington when rat control agents of the Fish and Wildlife Service from all the large grain production areas of the United States east of the Rocky Mountains convene for a two-day conference with Service officials and representatives of the Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture.

The present "blitzkrieg" on rats is a cooperative project of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Extension Service under which 12,000 field workers throughout the United States will join forces in a war-on-rats in all the principal grain and food production areas. Also, agents of the Fish and Wildlife Service will carry the campaign into other strategic centers where grain is milled or stored. By means of this intensified campaign Federal officials of the two agencies hope that a large proportion of the 200 million bushels of grain which are destroyed annually by rats can be saved for human consumption or for feeding to poultry and meat animals.

At the joint conference plans will be worked out whereby County Agricultural Agents and Home Demonstration Agents will cooperate with District Rat Control Agents of the Fish and Wildlife Service to organize county and community groups of farmers and townspeople in the campaign to rid the country of as many rats as possible during the winter months. Information on the latest methods of killing rats will be available in all campaign offices.

The veteran rat campaigners of the Fish and Wildlife Service's field staff now attending the Washington conference are Edward J. Barker of Oklahoma City, Okla.; Nobel Buell, San Antonio, Texas; Robert S. Deen, State College, Miss.; Walter W. Dykstra, Boston, Mass.; Adolph S. Hamm, Mitchell, S. Dak.; Roy C. Moore, Atlanta, Ga.; Galen C. Oderkirk, Lafayette, Ind.; and L. C. Whitehead of Raleigh, N. C. Each of these men will return to his district prepared to carry the cooperative community campaign down to the last rat burrow.

Community action is the only effective way to fight rats, according to Dorr D. Green, Chief of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Predator and Rodent Control. "Controlling rats on only one farm in a community is somewhat like trying to sweep back the ocean with a broom. Even if a farmer succeeds in ridding his

premises of rats, more will come in from surrounding areas where rat control is not practiced. Community action should include not only farms but feed mills and other food establishments in towns and villages."

Another advantage in working through cooperative community organizations, Mr. Green pointed out, is the possibility of utilizing latest techniques involving highly dangerous poisons. Outstanding results may be obtained from some of the new poisons, but they are safe only when handled by experts. A county or village cooperative rat control project may enable communities to obtain the services of experts qualified to use these highly toxic chemicals with adequate safeguards to humans and domestic animals.

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