

Changes in Rodent Controls for Berry Growers

In recent years there have been changes to registered pest control chemicals used to treat infestations of rodents. This is very important for two significant reasons. First, most perennial small fruit plantations face problem levels of rodents, of various kinds, that damage roots and stems. Second, predators that consume rodents, such as owls, are in decline. There is a possibility that this is due to owls and other predators eating carcasses of rodents that have been killed with poison (rodenticides) and thereby ingesting the poison in concentrated amounts¹. Whatever the reason, the industry faces change to the registered products, the methods by which these products may be applied, and certification of who may apply them.

Here is the biggest change: we can no longer use the “T” bait stations made from PVC pipe and staked around the field. Except for Rodent Pellets (zinc phosphide) and Ground Force, specifically applied for pocket gophers, meadow voles and deer mice, all rodenticide applied outdoors must now be placed in tamper-proof locked bait stations.

Other rodenticides must only be used under more restrictive conditions, such as indoor use only, and/or by persons holding the appropriate Pesticide Applicator Certificate. See the following chart for the currently registered products, within the context of small fruit operations, with their conditions of use.



Rodenticide Product	Active Ingredient	Registered Use	Applicator Certificate
Ground Force	chlorophacinone	Can be used for Meadow Voles in berries	Required, and farmers OK
Rodent Pellets	zinc phosphide	Can be used for Meadow Voles in berries	Required, and farmers OK
Terminator AWB	bromethalin	Must be used indoors only	Required for ALL users
Hombre AWB & pellets	difethialone	Must be used indoors and adjacent to	Required for ALL users
Ramik Green	difacinone	Must be used indoors only	Required, and farmers OK
Ratak AWB & pellets	brodifacoum	Must be used indoors only	Required, and farmers OK

NOTE: This chart refers to rodent control in berries ONLY.

Reference:

¹Maclure, R. “Highly toxic rat poisons killing owls, other wildlife”, updated Dec 21, 2010, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/40721227/ns/us_news-environment/

