

Edited letter from Bell to UK distributors on the use of rodent glue traps

There has been some negative publicity in the UK recently surrounding the use of rodent glue traps. As Bell is the leading manufacturer supplying the Trapper brand, we feel obliged to state our position and also to clear up some misconceptions which we hear and which have appeared in print.

Glue traps are part of an IPM approach to rodent control and are useful in the following circumstances: where non-toxic control means are prudent, where rodents do not take baits, where it is imperative that carcasses be recovered and where a fast knockdown is desirable, particularly in circumstances wherein the infestation is causing an immediate public health threat. As a good example, consider the great difficulties currently experienced in controlling mice in large UK cities. In these cases, mice often refuse to take any baits and refuse to enter bait stations. These infestations are often in restaurants where the use of non-toxic control methods is desirable, where mice are an immediate threat to public health and where carcass recovery is also advisable for health reasons. We are certain that those of you currently struggling in these circumstances would concur that you cannot afford to lose any of the relatively few tools you have available.

On the issue of humaneness, we first must state that our research indicates that rodents caught on glue traps die from shock, in most cases within a few hours. They certainly do not starve to death, as any mammal will die of thirst much more quickly than it will die of hunger.

In the case of small mammals such as rodents, with high metabolic rates, this occurs much more quickly than with a larger animal. We are not attempting to say that glue traps are humane, however, one may subjectively define it. However, one can certainly argue that getting partially caught in a snap trap, dying from poison over a period of days, or indeed being consumed by a predator, as commonly occurs in nature, is also inhumane. In an ideal world, pest control would always be inarguably humane, however the world is not ideal and one would hope that public health concerns would prevail over those of supposed cruelty to rodents.

Regarding non-target hazards, while there has been an unfortunately highly publicised event recently, the data is clear in that there are far more non-target incidences with poison baits than with glue traps. In summary, we concur with world rodent expert Dr Robert Corrigan, who states that rodents do not 'apologise' to us for spreading disease, consuming and contaminating our food and destroying our property, so we should not feel obligated to apologise to them for our methods to control them.

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