



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
EXTENSION

# MSU DAWG TRACKS

I recently bought a few cheap moving blankets to cover a project part that was sitting outside under an open shed. One week later when I pulled it off, something had already chewed a hole in the new blanket ... dang mouse! While this was not a huge deal, mice and rats can cause big and expensive-to-fix problems if left uncontrolled.

**Whether it's at your home, work, shop or barn, these rodents create safety concerns.** Not only do they damage most soft materials to use for their nesting, but they can also damage foundations & sidewalks by burrowing under concrete. They will gnaw on wiring of any kind, in vehicles, equipment or buildings causing shorts and electrical hazards. When mice and rats eat on these things, they also leave behind droppings and urine stains. This is known to contaminate food sources meant for humans, pets, and livestock, and has led to respiratory issues including the spread of 35 different disease for humans and pets around the world.

If rodents are seen repeatedly during the day, it is estimated that for each you see there are 20 to 50 more you don't see.

Signs of a mouse or rat problem:

- Squeaking, gnawing or scratching noises in walls, cupboards, ceilings and under floors
- Added debris such as shells or fruits with the sides eaten out
- Burrow holes around buildings
- Holes chewed through walls and floors that create entry points into the building
- Stale smells coming from hidden areas

For more info contact:  
**Leslie Woolington**  
MAFES/MSU-Extension  
Risk Mgmt./Loss Control  
662.325.3204

Completely eradicating mice and rats is almost impossible in barns and other open storage spaces. However, there are steps you can take to maintain control of the situation in any area.

## 1. Block all entry points

This seems to be the most difficult, as these little creatures are talented – they can squeeze through holes you can barely see, jump high and long, and even climb wires.

- ✓ Openings must be sealed with mortar, concrete, sheet metal, or hardware cloth (19 gauge or heavier with no openings more than ¼ inch) around anywhere they enter structures.
- ✓ Corrugated metal siding should be sealed, and corner seams made tight.

## 2. Good housekeeping

- ✓ Dispose of garbage on a frequent basis and pick up or eliminate clutter.
- ✓ Store all food, animal feed, & grains in airtight or metal containers.
- ✓ Dry up water sources such as dripping faucets or leaking pipes.
- ✓ Clean up spilled food right away and wash dishes soon after use. Keep outside cooking areas and grills clean.
- ✓ Keep woodpiles & outside garbage cans farther away from the house.
- ✓ Keep grass cut short and shrubbery well-trimmed.

## 3. Population reduction

Trapping is a way to quickly get rid of mice and rats. They have a small home range; rats travel no more than 100 feet and mice less than 30 feet from their nesting site.

- ✓ Traps should be placed along walls, near holes, or at right angles along beams, rafters, or other travel ways.
- ✓ For those that are too small or big for the snap traps, glue boards or poison pellets may be another solution.

## Sources:

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