

Rodent control

Black rat control

Fact sheet 2 of 4



The black rat (*Rattus rattus*) is a common pest of poultry farms. It is located across most of Australia, mainly in urbanised areas. Rats are attracted to poultry farms as they are a good source of food, water and shelter.

Understanding the feeding and nesting patterns of the different rodent types can help with designing appropriate control and management strategies.

Diet and feeding patterns

Black rats are shy animals that are reluctant to investigate new and different objects. This can include bait stations and traps, or even try new food, like bait. If given a choice, black rats will eat animal feed instead of bait.

Their diet is mainly fruits, nuts, grains and vegetables, but they also eat food scraps, human waste, insects and bird eggs. Black rats do get water from their food, but still need fresh water to survive. They will travel up to 30 metres from their nest in search for food.

As black rats mostly feed at night, seeing them during the day can be a sign of a rodent problem.

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Housing and nesting patterns

Black rats will often nest in rafters and ceilings. Signs of rodent activity in the rafters and ceiling cavities of buildings, such as visible droppings, means you are likely to have black rats.

Control and management strategies

Look for signs of rodent activity in roof cavities of buildings.

Place bait stations in areas where rats are active, such as roof cavities and areas where rodent activity is observed. Secure bait inside the station to prevent rats from removing the bait. Monitor bait intake and replenish as required.

Second-generation anticoagulants rodenticides are the most suitable, such as brodifacoum, bromadiolone, difethialone and flocoumafen.



A key feature of the black rat is that its tail is longer than its body.

If unsure which rodent you have, refer to 'Know your rodent' fact sheet.

You can find more information about rodenticides and rodent control in the Rodent Control Manual.

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