



Finlay Carson MSP
Convener, Rural Affairs & Islands Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

c/o Scottish Animal Welfare Commission Secretariat
SAWC.Secretariat@gov.scot

7 July 2023

Dear Convener

ALTERNATIVES TO GLUE TRAPS FOR RODENT CONTROL

Thank you for inviting SAWC to give evidence on the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill on 14 June. It was an interesting session and I hope the Committee found it useful.

One question where I felt I could have given a fuller answer concerned alternative methods available to the pest control industry, in the event that glue traps for rodents are banned outright in Scotland.

The SAWC report on the use of rodent glue traps in Scotland ¹, published in 2021, referenced the risk hierarchy approach followed by members of the British Pest Control Association (BPCA), ranging from proofing of premises to exclude rats and mice, through traps and rodenticides, to glue boards, which were described as the last resort. This appears to us to indicate that other methods are generally preferred, and we hope that will continue to be the case.

Our report predated the publication of an important research paper by Dr Sandra Baker and others ², which evaluated the welfare consequences of six lethal rat management methods. The greatest welfare impacts were associated with three baiting methods - anticoagulants, cholecalciferol and non-toxic cellulose baits (causing severe to extreme impact for days) - and with capture on a glue trap (extreme for hours) with concussive killing (mild to moderate for seconds to minutes). Lower impacts were associated with cage trapping (moderate to severe for hours) with concussive killing (moderate for minutes). The impact of snap trapping was highly variable (no impact to extreme for seconds to minutes). One of the conclusions was that regulated and tested snap traps causing rapid

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-animal-welfare-commission-report-use-rodent-glue-traps-scotland/>

² <https://www.ingentaconnect.com/contentone/ufaw/aw/2022/00000031/00000001/art00005>

unconsciousness might represent the most welfare-friendly of the options assessed for killing rats.

SAWC does not discount the concerns associated with other rodent control methods such as rodenticides and agrees that both methods should be considered last resorts from a welfare perspective. We have been encouraged, therefore, to read of further developments in rodent management, including reproductive control³. It appears that some communities in the United States have found this a practical option, often allied with other methods and used on a community scale. One product claiming success in reducing rat populations in premises in the United States is ContraPest, marketed for use on an ongoing basis by pest controllers^{4 5}.

While SAWC has not yet reviewed the welfare and ethical issues surrounding reproductive control, it is an illustration of the sort of innovation that may be expected in the short to medium term, subject to relevant UK health and safety approval.

As mentioned during the evidence session, it may be that legislation to ban the use of glue traps outright will provide an incentive for the pest control industry and the scientific community to progress the development of methods that are both efficacious and humane, albeit possibly requiring a different overall approach to rodent control. The options mentioned above give us reason to believe that this is a realistic prospect.

Yours sincerely



Libby Anderson
SAWC Member

³ <https://rethinkpriorities.org/publications/the-rodent-birth-control-landscape>

⁴ <https://contrapestore.com/pages/about>

⁵ https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0255/4986/5032/files/SNT-101_Agribusiness_Poultry_Case_Study_LR_96349e0f-1ad0-4ae9-b4ab-01fd85ef2644.pdf?v=1653689936