

BEST PRACTICES: RODENTICIDE USE IN BLUEBERRY FIELDS

Key Factors to Consider

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vole activity • Rodenticide application | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-target poisoning • Rodenticide products |
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Vole Activity

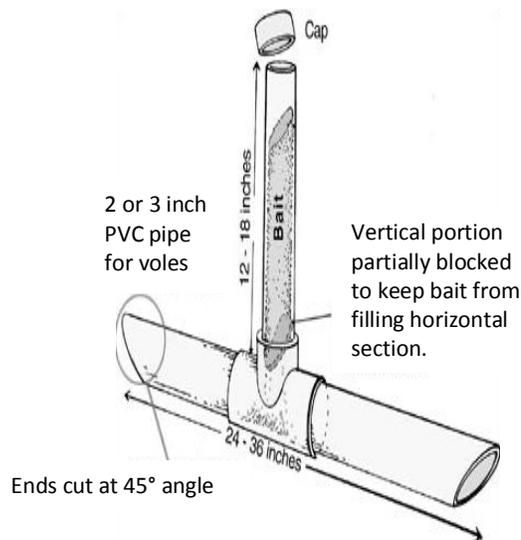


- There are several different ways to reduce the number of field voles in your berry field. Grasslands are the voles' favoured habitat. Mowing and keeping the grass short between the rows has been shown to reduce vole numbers in berry fields. Ensure that it is indeed voles that are doing the damage and not weevils. If vole damage persists even after reducing grass vegetation, there are rodenticide products available that are specifically designed to be used in agricultural fields.

Rodenticide application



- Vole damage occurs typically in the late fall and winter when grass has low nutritional value and voles are looking for alternate food sources. Good field monitoring done regularly is important and will help identify potential problem areas. In spring, cover up existing vole tunnels and runways in the blueberry beds. In early fall, monitor the number of new vole tunnels and runways in the beds. This will give you an indication of the relative vole abundance in your field. Voles 'stay close to home', so rodenticides should only be applied to the problem area where you find continued vole damage. Application should carefully follow the instructions on the product label. Place the bait inside **securely fastened** PVC bait stations to reduce the risk of other non-target species and pets eating the bait. With good field monitoring you can identify the problem area, eliminate the infestation **and reduce your costs**.



Vole tunnel in blueberry bed



Non-target poisoning



- Rodenticides should only be used as a last resort to reduce vole damage in berry fields. Research is showing us that predators hunting field voles are at risk of secondary poisoning from voles that have eaten rodenticides. Many cases of secondary poisoning of raptors are documented in the Fraser Valley each year. Barn owls and other raptors are great allies in combating your vole problem as voles are their main prey.



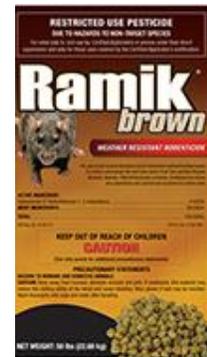
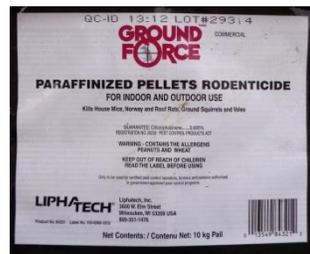
Northern harriers are often seen hunting berry fields for voles.

Barn owls are easy to attract to your field: nest boxes can be installed on or close to fields, and hunting perches in your field helps them to capture field voles. If you have barn owls or other raptors such as hawks hunting your fields, please avoid using rodenticides or reduce your use to an absolute minimum. They will perform rodent control for you.

Rodenticide products



- If you must use rodenticides, be aware that only certain types are permitted in fields. Rodenticide products where the active ingredient is either **chlorophacinone**, **diphacinone** or **zinc phosphide** are the only products that can be placed in berry fields to control voles in Canada. Example of approved rodenticide product names: **Ground Force**, **Ramik green**, and **Ramik brown**.



For up to date information on where rodenticides can be applied see **the Health Canada - Pest Management Regulatory Agency website - www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pest/index-eng.php**

For information on best management practices for berry farmers see **Berry production guide <http://productionguide.agrifoodbc.ca/guides/14>**

For information on how barn owls can be a part of an IPM program in berry fields: www.barnowlsbc.ca

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