

## Report for RM News Letter

### RATS AND GRAIN BAGS

During the Pest Control Officer's convention in Prince Albert this year we discussed the growing problem being experienced by some Saskatchewan RM's concerning rats and grain bags. Storing grain in grain bags is becoming popular and the practice is growing however the empty grain bags are becoming ideal habitat for rats. There is no place to properly dispose or even recycle empty grain bags and they are being left in ditches, bushes, rock piles etc. Some PCO's have found rats drawn to these grain bags finding left over grain for an adequate food supply and a very comfortable, warm and dry place to live and breed. During the fall inspection for rats I checked all empty grain bags wherever I could find them. Of the many bags I checked, both full and empty, I found rats under one empty grain bag in a lentil field. I had to pull the grain bag using my truck and found at least 6 adult rats under it and two nests with a total of 11 baby rats in them. In this instance 4 adult rats escaped but the remainder was killed. There was no indication of rats under the empty grain bag prior to my moving it therefore it took me by surprise that there were any rats under it. Disposing of rats under empty grain bags poses many new obstacles not experienced before and poisoning these rats is a lot more difficult.

Of all my inspection of empty grain bags the best method I witnessed for disposal was to pile them up in a slough which usually contains water. Water under the grain bags discourages colonies of rats and deer mice from using them as habitat. This method although effective is not the best and attempts should be made to recycle these empty grain bags. At the convention in PA we heard that one person from one of the other RMs was making waterproof tarps using empty grain bags however no other information about the method of construction was given.

**Please note: We have not yet found any rats under full grain bags. They do not seem to be able to detect the grain inside the plastic however we will continue these preventive inspections.**

“Efforts continue to try and do something with grain bags in Saskatchewan. At present, Crown Shred of Regina is accepting grain bags at their 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue East location in Regina. Owner Jack Shaw is taking the grain bags, mixing them with household plastics and turning them into fence posts designed for horse and cattle operations. A recent study found that between 15,000 and 20,000 grain bags are used in Saskatchewan each year.” *SARM Update May, 2010.*