

Mouse Surveillance Project

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KEY MESSAGES

- No mouse activity was recorded across six surveillance sites from Dalwallinu to Bunjil in both April and September 2025.
- All chew cards remained untouched, confirming ongoing low mouse populations across the region.
- Continued monitoring remains essential to detect early changes and protect crops.

AIM

To improve understanding of mouse behaviour and optimise baiting strategies for effective management.

BACKGROUND

After several good seasons, the potential for mice to increase in numbers remains a concern across much of Western Australia. Even when populations are low, consistent monitoring is essential to ensure small changes are picked up before they escalate.

The Liebe Group contributes to this effort by conducting monitoring across the central wheatbelt, using chew cards as a simple and reliable indicator of mouse presence. This proactive approach means that any early signs of activity can be detected before damage occurs, supporting local decision-making.

The Farmanco Mouse Surveillance project, funded by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), is focused on monitoring mouse activity across Australia. The project, running from December 2021 to December 2025, has aimed to equip growers with the knowledge necessary to manage any rise in mouse populations, including potential plagues.

RESULTS

In 2025, six sites between Dalwallinu and Bunjil were monitored using a total of 120 chew cards across two rounds in April and September. None of the cards were chewed in either round, confirming that mouse activity remained very low in the region.

COMMENTS

The 2025 results mirror the findings from 2024 and continue a consistent trend of low populations despite two favourable seasons. The outcome suggests that environmental conditions, including limited summer rainfall, have contributed to maintaining unfavourable breeding conditions for mice.

The lack of mouse activity in 2025 is a reassuring result for local growers and continues to reflect the broader pattern of low mouse numbers across much of Western Australia. It highlights the value of regular surveillance, particularly after back-to-back productive seasons where food and cover could support population growth.

While there is no current indication of risk, maintaining monitoring efforts ensures that the region remains prepared if conditions shift. Local data collected through this project helps track changes over time and supports a proactive approach to managing potential pest pressure in future seasons.

In years of low activity, GRDC guidance highlights the importance of maintaining mouse management as a year-round consideration rather than a response triggered only by outbreaks. Ongoing monitoring using tools such as chew cards and burrow inspections provides an early indication of population changes and supports timely decision-making if activity increases. Where mice are detected, early baiting with registered zinc phosphide products is most effective before populations build. Conditions that favour population increases include adequate

food supply, ground cover and mild weather, reinforcing the role of stubble and harvest loss management, as well as summer rainfall, in influencing risk. Maintaining awareness of mouse numbers and management options ensures growers are well positioned to respond quickly should conditions change.

FURTHER READING

Tackling Australia's persistent mouse problem - CSIRO. Scan QR code to view.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This is part of a national GRDC investment into improved mouse management, led by CSIRO in Collaboration with Farmanco and WA grower groups.

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