

## NEWS COLUMN

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### **Building Consultation**

Agriculture Producers, if you are considering building a new farm building or remodeling an existing facility and need some free advice from an agriculture engineer, call for an appointment today.

Steve Pohl, SDSU Agriculture Structures Specialist is available for consultations.

Call for an appointment, consultants will be limited on a first come first serve basis. For appointments call the Lincoln County Extension Office at 764-2756.

### **Rodent Control Tips**

Rodent control is an on-going battle for livestock and grain producers, but due to the costs involved, one can't afford to give up. Rats and mice can be rather expensive in terms of feed and grain consumed and wasted, disease carriers and destruction of facilities.

One study conducted found rats and mice eat or destroy over 40 pounds of feed per day. With today's grain prices that can add up to over \$3000 annually.

The cost of disease outbreak though, can be much more devastating. Rats can transmit Bordetella, Lepto, PRV, Salmonella and dysentery. These diseases can cost livestock producers millions annually.

Rodents are also known to destroy building insulation, chew-up wiring and leave holes in buildings and equipment.

Rats and mice are very prolific. A female mouse can have five to ten litters a year with five or six mice per litter. The young are born 19-21 days after mating and reach reproductive maturity in six to ten weeks.

Rodents can be controlled, however. The main areas of rodent control are sanitation, rodent-proof construction and population reduction.

Sanitation involves removing shelter for rodents, especially around grain bins and feed storage areas. Remove old feed sacks and boxes and keep at least a three-foot strip free of weeds around all buildings.

Hay stacks and bales provide a perfect winter home for rodents. Keep hay as far away as possible from livestock facilities and get rid of the old, spoiled hay and straw.

Rodent-proof construction simply consists of designing new barns in the proper manner.

Population reduction involves trapping, poison baits and fumigation. There are a variety of products available so work with the supplier or an exterminator on selecting the right product and using it correctly. A workable plan for your operation may even mean hiring an exterminator. A successful plan will be well worth the time and cost.