

NARA BAIT TRIAL

ALPECO pest control kindly gave the Trust a sample of their non toxic bait to try. The bait is a special plastic with the lure incorporated into the plastic. I have found it to be moisture resistant (it has not gone mouldy) and it has not been touched by insects, invertebrates or rodents with the exception of one bait that disappeared from a trap that had caught a rat.

Possums

I cut NARA BLOCs in half and wired them to the Trapinator's bait blocks. Every second trap on all or part of 4 lines was baited with half a NARA BLOC. A total of 114 traps were involved in the trial. When the traps were serviced every 4 weeks (approximately) those with the NARA bait were also baited with smooth-in-a-tube and a smear was applied to the tree as normal. We know that in most cases smooth-in-a-tube is eaten by insects, invertebrates and/or rats and mice in one or two nights so it was hoped that the NARA would keep working between services. Because pigs often remove the whole possum from the trap I recorded any traps that were sprung as there is a good chance they had caught a possum.

The results are in Table 1.

P1 was re-baited 4 days after I attached the NARA bait and 4 possums were found in traps baited with NARA and 2 more were sprung. The result was the same when it was next serviced.

T7 and W6 both caught more with the NARA bait.

S7 had a result that is hard to explain

Table 1. NARA BAIT TRIAL - POSSUMS								
P1 (24 Traps)								
Baited	28.9.15	2.10.15	22.11.15	17.12.15	11.1.16		Total	Total
Checked	2.10.15	22.11.15	17.12.15	11.1.16	8.2.16			(including Sprung)
Control	0	0	3	2	0		5	5
NARA	4	4	1	3	0		12	17
T7 (19 Traps)								
Baited	30.9.15	14.10.15	11.11.15	9.12.15	4.1.16		Total	Total
Checked	14.10.15	11.11.15	9.12.15	4.1.16	2.2.16			(including Sprung)
Control	0	1	0	1	0		2	2
NARA	0	1	2	2	0		5	5
W6 (7 Traps)								
Baited	26.10.15	15.11.15	13.12.15	11.1.16			Total	Total
Checked	15.11.15	13.12.15	11.1.16	6.2.16				(including Sprung)

Control	0	1	1	0			2	2
NARA	1	0	1	1			3	3
S7 (64 Traps)								
Baited	6.10.15	19.11.15	29.11.15	15.12.15	31.12.15	13.1.16	Total	Total
Checked	19.11.15	29.11.15	15.12.15	31.12.15	13.1.16	3.2.16		(including Sprung)
Control	7	3	9	7	4	1	31	36
NARA	1	4	8	8	3	0	24	41

Rats

The smaller NARA LURE baits were used in the SnapE rat traps. They are designed to fit into the bait holder and were easy to use. The 52 traps on T7 and W6 were used in the trial with every second trap baited with NARA LURE. When the traps were serviced those with the NARA bait were checked but had no other bait added.

The results are in Table 2.

There are not many rats around so any conclusions must be viewed with caution but it appears there is a strong preference for NARA over the first two months but it is still attracting rats 4 months later but not as well as fresh bait (Connovations 213).

Table 2. NARA BAIT TRIAL - RATS								
T7 (38 Traps)								
Baited	30.9.15	14.10.15	11.11.15	9.12.15	4.1.16		Total	Mice
Checked	14.10.15	11.11.15	9.12.15	4.1.16	2.2.16			
Control	1	0	1	4	4		10	2
NARA	6	3	0	0	2		11	1
W6 (14 Traps)								
Baited	26.10.15	15.11.15	13.12.15	11.1.16			Total	Mice
Checked	15.11.15	13.12.15	11.1.16	6.2.16				
Control	0	0	2	3			5	0
NARA	0	0	1	1			2	0

T8

T8 is serviced by Jill Mortensen every day. If the bait is gone she replaces it. There are 14 possum traps and 28 rat traps included in the trial. Neither the possum traps nor the rat traps had bait applied after the NARA bait was put out but

unlike the other possum traps (where the bait normally goes in a day or two) those in this trial always had smooth-in-a-tube on the bait block.

The results are in Table 3.

The number of rats and mice is too small to reach any conclusions but the number of possums is a bit better. To me this trial suggests that fresh smooth-in-a-tube is slightly more attractive to possums than NARA but NARA remains attractive to quite a large degree even when it is 4 months old.

Table 3. NARA BAIT TRIAL - POSSUMS, RATS and MICE															
T8 (14 Possum Traps, 28 Rat Traps)															
	October			November			December			January			Total		
	Poss	Rats	Mice	Poss	Rats	Mice	Poss	Rats	Mice	Poss	Rats	Mice	Possums	Rats	mice
Control	11	1	1	3	0	0	8	1	0	8	2	3	30	4	4
NARA	8	0	2	4	0	0	5	1	0	6	0	0	23	1	2