Ground Squirrel Control in Beaver County

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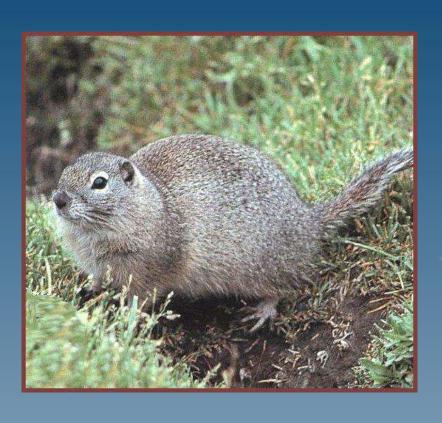
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Townsend Ground Squirrel



- Is a small gray squirrel found in Nevada and Western Utah.
- alfalfa and other agronomic crops.
- Representation of the They breed in March and have litters of 8-10 babies in April.

Hundreds of acres of alfalfa ground in western Beaver County are currently infested.

The problem has gotten much worse the last two years.







The squirrels are costing farmers over \$100,000 each year.

They started out just infesting the fence lines but now are covering the whole fields.

Current control programs are not taking care of the problem.







- Once the alfalfa greens up it is hard to get the squirrels to eat the bait.
- Shooting is fun but very time consuming.
- R Flooding and fumigating are effective but very time consuming



I applied for and received an Integrated Pest Management grant for \$1200 to conduct a study on the best way to control ground squirrels on the Milford Flat.







We held a public meeting in January to educate land owners on the best way to control the squirrels.

Dr. Terry Mesmer, USU
Extension Wildlife
Specialist, came and
explained a new baiting
program where we could get
better control by applying a
pre-bait and then a bait
before the alfalfa greens up.



To demonstrate the effectiveness of the prebaiting program we set up a trail where we compared the effects of no baiting, baiting and prebaiting.









We selected 12 plots, 3 each in 4 different farmers fields. Each plot was 50 X 50 m and at least 400 meters from each other.





Each treatment consisted of a plot that was prebaited and then baited with zinc phosphide,

1 plot baited with zinc phosphide with out prebaiting

1 control plot that received no treatment.



Squirrel Observations

- Each plot was observed for 10 minutes each day for 3 days before any baiting took place
- The plots were observed for another 3 days after the treatments were applied.



Results of the ground squirrel control trial - 2009

	Before baiting	After Baiting	% Change
Control	5.4 squirrels	3.6 squirrels	33%
Bait Only	8.3 squirrels	3.4 squirrels	59%
Prebait and Bait	10.7 squirrels	2.7 squirrels	75%



Farmers were able to use 4 wheelers to spread the bait quickly and effectively







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Follow up survey of farmers on the Milford Flat

- The 29 farmers who returned surveys estimated that they spent over \$17,000 this year controlling squirrels.
- Representation Farmers spent over 2200 hours trying to control the squirrels in 2009
- 52% of the farmers tried the pre-baiting, baiting program.
- The majority of the farmers feel like this new baiting program really lowered the number of squirrels this past year.



Questions

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