

MR. EDITOR, RATS!

"Rats in the granary, rats in the barn, rats in the chicken house, rats all over the farm." There is no pest that can equal the long-tailed rodent for malicious meanness here on Puget Sound—no, not even the heathen Chinese, for the Chinaman takes only what he can make use of, while I have had rats gnaw into my brooders and kill fifty fine broilers of a night, and they did not eat half of one. I formerly carried on a very extensive chicken business and of course used large quantities of grain and ground feed, the odor of which brought the rats from the woods and from all the neighbors' places to mine, especially during a cold snap in the winter or a very dry time, when feed was short in the pastures, for the pests will feed on clover, get fat like so many woodchucks. Then we are fairly overrun with them. They become so bold that they will carry off young chickens in the day time and attack the hens in the coops. But the worst trouble they cause me is by getting into my underdrains. We have no tile here for underdrains, so have to use cedar bolts, which are laid on rails, and answer a very good purpose, as they are very lasting. Now, the rats will enter the drains where they empty on the beach, travel up a distance, gnaw through the planking and dig out to the surface, of course filling the drain with earth and necessitating the opening of it sometimes in a dozen places in 100 yards.

Trapping does no good. Ten men with a dozen traps each would hardly make a showing; it would amount to about as much as trapping rabbits in Australia. "Rough on Rats" the pests won't touch. I have baited them for three or four days with meal and then put "Rough on Rats" in the dish, and it would stand until decayed and not a rat would touch it. Strychnine is the only thing that will fetch the pest every time, and this is the way I use it:

Take four quarts of wheat, put it into a kettle kept for the purpose, and into no other; cover it about an inch with water, set it on the fire to heat. Now take half of a bottle of strychnine, or one-sixteenth of an ounce, put it into a cup with a couple of spoonfuls of vinegar, which will dissolve it; now mix it with the wheat and water and bring it to a boil. (Stay with it; you can't be too careful.) Every little while stir it up, as the wheat swells and softens; keep on stirring until the water is all absorbed by the wheat, then it is ready for business. After taking it off the fire, while it is yet moist, take a large handful of brown sugar and stir it into the mass. This removes the bitter taste of the strychnine and gives it a ginger bread odor that will fetch them from long distances. To feed the wheat and make it safe take a box about the size of a soap box, saw out a hole about the size of a large rat hole on each end and the sides. Now, under the box set a quart pan with the poisoned wheat in it; lay a flat stone on the box, and the thing is done. I put the boxes under the chicken house, barn, pig sty, in fact, anywhere that it will be safe from children, pigs and chickens.

And now, brother farmers, if you are going to poison rats let me tell you, DO IT YOURSELVES. Don't trust it to the hired man, or to the boys, but go right at it yourself and be sure you put the poison where you know it will be safe from "little hands" and all domestic animals.

H. A. MARCH.

Fidalgo, Skagit Co., Washington.

Most of the cattle men have become acquainted with the fact that their stock need no longer be sacrificed. Many are even now unwilling to sell their beef cattle for less than \$3 per hundred pounds. One of these is C. H. Olcott, of Birch creek, who was in the city yesterday. He has 24 steers which he is holding for this figure. He recently refused \$2.85 per hundred pounds.—Pendleton, Or., Tribune.

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