

BIOLOGY, DAMAGE, AND CONTROL OF FIELD RODENTS

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ABSTRACT: Many crops grown in the Midwest are vulnerable to damage caused by a variety of field rodents, literally from the time of planting thru growth, harvest, and storage. Problem species include voles, especially the meadow vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*), ground squirrels, especially the 13-lined ground squirrel (*Spermophilus tridecemlineatus*), pocket gophers (*Geomys bursarius*), rats and mice (genus *Rattus*, *Mus*, and *Peromyscus*), and woodchucks (*Marmota monax*). Although widely distributed and abundant, these animals are not found in all agricultural areas in the Midwest and observed damage in a given field is usually the work of a single species. Successful control depends on a strategy of integrated pest management with emphasis on population reduction and cultural practices, especially tillage. Unlike control programs for larger animals like deer, repellents and exclusion tactics are generally not practical in field rodent control. However, an array of rodenticides is available for seasonal use in and around crop fields and storage facilities. For more detailed information refer to University of Wisconsin Extension publications A2148-voles, G3238-ground squirrels, and G3505-woodchucks, and the many excellent chapters, including rats, mice, and pocket gophers in the Handbook of Wildlife Damage Management published by the University of Nebraska.

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