

# Vertebrate pesticide toxicology manual (poisons)

Information on poisons used in New Zealand  
as vertebrate pesticides

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION TECHNICAL SERIES 23

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This is a revised edition of *Vertebrate pest control manual: Toxins and poisons. Information on toxins and poisons used in vertebrate pesticides*, edited by N. Haydock and C.T. Eason, 1997 (commonly referred to as the 'Toxins Manual').

While every care had been taken to ensure its accuracy, the information obtained in this report is not intended as a substitute for specific specialist advice. Landcare Research accepts no liability for any loss or damage suffered as a result of relying on the information, or applying it either directly or indirectly.

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# Contents

Foreword	vii
Introduction	1
<b>1. Acute poisons</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Sodium monofluoroacetate (1080)	3
1.1.1 Physical and chemical properties	3
1.1.2 Historical development, use, and occurrence in nature	3
1.1.3 Fate in the environment	4
1.1.4 Toxicology and pathology	9
1.1.5 Diagnosis and treatment of 1080 poisoning	16
1.1.6 Non-target effects	19
1.1.7 Summary	21
1.2 Cyanide (Feratox®)	22
1.2.1 Physical and chemical properties	23
1.2.2 Historical development, use, and occurrence in nature	23
1.2.3 Fate in the environment	24
1.2.4 Toxicology and pathology	25
1.2.5 Diagnosis and treatment of cyanide poisoning	28
1.2.6 Non-target effects	30
1.2.7 Summary	31
1.3 Cholecalciferol (Campaign®, FeraCol®)	32
1.3.1 Physical and chemical properties	32
1.3.2 Historical development, use, and occurrence in nature	32
1.3.3 Fate in the environment	33
1.3.4 Toxicology and pathology	33
1.3.5 Diagnosis and treatment of cholecalciferol poisoning	36
1.3.6 Non-target effects	38
1.3.7 Summary	39
<b>2. Anticoagulant poisons</b>	<b>41</b>
2.1 Brodifacoum (Talon®, PESTOFF®)	41
2.1.1 Physical and chemical properties	41
2.1.2 Historical development and use	41
2.1.3 Fate in the environment	42
2.1.4 Toxicology and pathology	42
2.1.5 Diagnosis and treatment of anticoagulant poisoning	48
2.1.6 Non-target effects	51
2.1.7 Summary	55
2.2 Flocoumafén (Storm®)	56
2.2.1 Physical and chemical properties	56
2.2.2 Historical development and use	56
2.2.3 Fate in the environment	56
2.2.4 Toxicology and pathology	57
2.2.5 Diagnosis and treatment of poisoning	59
2.2.6 Non-target effects	59
2.2.7 Summary	59

2.3	Bromadiolone (Rid Rat®, Contrac®, Supersqueak®)	60
2.3.1	Physical and chemical properties	60
2.3.2	Historical development and use	60
2.3.3	Fate in the environment	60
2.3.4	Toxicology and pathology	61
2.3.5	Diagnosis and treatment of poisoning	62
2.3.6	Non-target effects	62
2.3.7	Summary	62
2.4	Coumatetralyl (Racumin®, No rats & mice®)	63
2.4.1	Physical and chemical properties	63
2.4.2	Historical development and use	63
2.4.3	Fate in the environment	63
2.4.4	Toxicology and pathology	63
2.4.5	Diagnosis and treatment of poisoning	64
2.4.6	Non-target effects	64
2.4.7	Summary	64
2.5	Diphacinone (Ditrac®, Liquatox®, PESTOFF® (for ferrets))	65
2.5.1	Physical and chemical properties	65
2.5.2	Historical development and use	65
2.5.3	Fate in the environment	65
2.5.4	Toxicology and pathology	65
2.5.5	Diagnosis and treatment of poisoning	67
2.5.6	Non-target effects	67
2.5.7	Summary	68
2.6	Pindone	68
2.6.1	Physical and chemical properties	68
2.6.2	Historical development and use	68
2.6.3	Fate in the environment	69
2.6.4	Toxicology and pathology	69
2.6.5	Diagnosis and treatment of poisoning	71
2.6.6	Non-target effects	71
2.6.7	Summary	71
2.7	Warfarin	72
2.7.1	Physical and chemical properties	72
2.7.2	Historical development and use	72
2.7.3	Fate in the environment	72
2.7.4	Toxicology and pathology	72
2.7.5	Diagnosis and treatment of poisoning	74
2.7.6	Non-target effects	74
2.7.7	Summary	74
3.	Toxins no longer used by the Department of Conservation	75
3.1	Phosphorus	75
3.1.1	Physical and chemical properties	75
3.1.2	Historical development and use	75
3.1.3	Fate in the environment	75
3.1.4	Toxicology and pathology	76
3.1.5	Current use	77

3.2	Arsenic	78
3.2.1	Physical and chemical properties	78
3.2.2	Historical development and use	78
3.2.3	Fate in the environment	78
3.2.4	Toxicology and pathology	78
3.2.5	Current use	79
3.3	Strychnine	79
3.3.1	Physical and chemical properties	79
3.3.2	Historical development and use	79
3.3.3	Fate in the environment	80
3.3.4	Toxicology and pathology	80
3.3.5	Current use	81
4.	Comparative risk assessment for commonly used vertebrate pesticides	82
4.1	What and where are the exposure and non-target risks?	82
4.1.1	Persistence in water, soil, and plants	82
4.1.2	Persistence of residues in animal tissues	84
4.1.3	Susceptibility and risk reduction for pets and livestock	85
4.1.4	Risk of exposure and toxicity to non-target vertebrates (wildlife)	86
4.1.5	Risk of exposure and toxicity to invertebrates	89
4.1.6	Risk of exposure to humans	90
4.1.7	Toxic effects and humaneness in non-target species	92
4.1.8	Humaneness in target species	95
4.1.9	Summary of characteristics of poisons used for possum control in New Zealand	96
5.	Acknowledgements	97
6.	References	98
<hr/>		
Appendix 1		
<hr/>		
	Quality specifications for 1080 pellet baits for possum control in New Zealand	115
<hr/>		
Appendix 2		
<hr/>		
	Quality specifications for 1080 carrot baits for possum control in New Zealand	117
<hr/>		
Appendix 3		
<hr/>		
	Possum baits per lethal dose (LD)	118
<hr/>		
	Glossary of terms	120
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# Foreword

This manual was first compiled in 1997 and published by the Department of Conservation as a scientific reference document designed to assist all those involved in the planning, and use of, registered poisons for the control of animal pests in New Zealand. It is appropriate that a new edition has been produced as the use of pest control products for conservation is a rapidly evolving field with numerous publications relating to their efficacy, advantages, and disadvantages appearing in the last 3 years. Please note that other documents will need to be referred to for details of the Health and Safety aspects of working with toxic substances.

The Department recognises that the use of vertebrate pesticides to control animal pests will always be difficult for some members of the wider community to accept, especially the concept that the benefits of their use may outweigh any perceived or real deleterious environmental effects.

New Zealand's animal pest problems are unique. Unlike in Australia, where many native plants contain natural toxins (including monofluoroacetate, the active chemical for 1080) as defence against browsing animals, the New Zealand forests evolved in the absence of mammals and without a need for such chemical defences. Our forests are, therefore, extremely vulnerable to mammalian browsers. The application of toxic baits has been developed as one effective means of controlling animal pests. Continued access to, and acceptability of, poisons is essential if we are to maintain our economic health and meet our international obligations for biodiversity protection, to say nothing of maintaining the natural heritage of our forest landscapes. The maintenance of this access depends upon the continued responsible use of poisons by all who are required to use them. It must be appreciated that all poisons have advantages and disadvantages, which make them more or less appropriate for different use patterns.

The information included in this manual is specifically relevant to the use of toxic baits for pest control as part of the management of conservation lands and protected species. It is, however, likely to be useful to all land managers who currently use or would consider the use of toxic baits to deal with animal pests; the Department expects, and welcomes its use by a wide range of agencies and individuals who have similar pest problems, or a need to understand the toxicology and safety issues associated with the use of vertebrate pesticides.

The 'Vertebrate pesticide toxicology manual (poisons)' contains details from the most recently published scientific data on the effects and impacts of specific poisons on the environment, target, and non-target species. This document should be used in conjunction with other documents such as the Department of Conservation's 'National possum control plan'. We urge all users to acknowledge, however, that it can only be their personal responsibility to remain up-to-date in all aspects of law and current best practice in the use of these tools. If in any doubt, seek advice!

Please note that this manual has been compiled independently of the Department of Conservation's Quality Conservation Management (QCM) process, but should be used in conjunction with the proposed Animal Pest QCM. The emphasis in this edition is similar to that in the first edition. Those poisons used widely are reviewed in considerable depth, e.g. 1080, cyanide, brodifacoum, and cholecalciferol. Some, but less complete, information is provided on other poisons and those no longer used in New Zealand.

We trust that this manual when used in conjunction with the Animal Pest QCM will provide clear and concise information on the planning, use, and effects of poisons for animal pest control. Suggestions for the improvement of this manual are welcome.

Murray Hosking  
General Manager, Conservation Policy

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