

United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Wildlife Services Directive

WS 2.345
3/15/2023

URBAN RODENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

1. PURPOSE

To provide guidance for Wildlife Services' (WS) establishment of cooperative programs to resolve damage resulting from urban rodents.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This Directive replaces WS Directive 2.345 Urban Rodent Management Programs, dated August 23, 2013.

3. AUTHORITY

- a. The Act of March 2, 1931, as amended (7 U.S.C. § 8351 – Predatory and other wild animals and § 8352 – Authorization of expenditures for the eradication and control of predatory and other wildlife animals), authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a program of wildlife services with respect to injurious animal species and take any action the Secretary deems necessary in conducting the program. The Secretary of Agriculture has delegated this authority to WS.
- b. Under the Act of December 22, 1987 (7 U.S.C. 8353), APHIS-WS is authorized, except for urban rodent control, to conduct activities and enter agreements to control nuisance mammal and bird species and those bird and mammal species that are reservoirs for zoonotic diseases.

4. BACKGROUND

In the August 14, 2013 edition of the Federal Register, USDA APHIS published the notice, "Wildlife Services Policy on Wildlife Damage Management in Urban Areas." APHIS clarified when WS may or may not conduct activities and enter into agreements in order to control nuisance rodent species or those rodent species that are reservoirs for zoonotic diseases.

5. POLICY

Although APHIS WS has authorization to enter into agreements (i.e., cooperative service agreements, interagency agreements, etc.) to provide wildlife damage management (WDM) services, WS programs must refer requests for “urban rodent control” to private sector pest control companies except that APHIS WS will continue to consider operational requests for assistance from:

- a. Federal agencies (e.g. Interagency Agreements, Memorandums of Understanding, Work Plans, etc.);
- b. Government entities (State, county and local departments, transportation authorities, etc.) engaged in a reimbursable agreement with APHIS WS to provide direct control of rodents as of October 1, 2013;
- c. A State in which direct control of the rodent species has been expressly authorized by State law, rulemaking, or a local jurisdiction’s ordinance promulgated by public notice and an opportunity for public comment, or as otherwise promulgated as required and authorized by the respective State or local law; and,
- d. Railways and airport operation areas.

6. DEFINITIONS

- a. Cooperative Program: The broad category of activities that encompass agreements whereby WS establishes a relationship with another party (either Federal or non-Federal) to carry out projects of mutual interest.
- b. Cooperative Service Agreement: A reimbursable agreement in which WS provides technical or operational assistance, goods, or services to a non-federal entity on an annual or greater timeframe (generally from one to five years). These reimbursable agreements are identified by individual financial accounts in the USDA accounting system on a full cost recovery basis.
- c. Cooperator: Government, public or private agency, organization, institution, corporation, individual, or other entity with which WS programs enter into a reimbursable agreement.
- d. Interagency Agreement: A reimbursable agreement made in accordance with the Economy Act, 31 USC 1535, in which WS provides technical or operational assistance, goods or services to another federal entity (generally from one to five years). These reimbursable agreements are identified by individual financial accounts in the USDA accounting system.

- e. Memoranda of Understanding: A Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) is a written agreement between two or more parties cooperating to carry out a project of mutual interest utilizing its own resources, including the expenditure of its own funds. Other parties may use another name for a MOU such as a memorandum of agreement, statement of understanding, use agreement, and support agreement.
- f. Private Sector Service Provider: A non-governmental entity engaged in providing WDM services for profit.
- g. Urban Rodents: Mice, rats, voles, squirrels, chipmunks, gophers, and woodchucks/groundhogs in a city or town with a *human* population greater than 50,000.
- h. Urban Rodent Control: Actions to directly control urban rodents that are a nuisance or reservoirs for zoonotic disease in a city or town with a population greater than 50,000 inhabitants and the urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to such city or town.
- i. Work Plan: Outlines the mission-related goals, objectives, and anticipated accomplishments as well as the approach for conducting a wildlife damage management program and the related roles and responsibilities of the cooperating parties.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

WS must refer all requests for operational assistance with “urban rodent control” from private entities (such as homes and business owners and associations) to private sector pest control companies and advise the requester that WS cannot recommend a specific private sector service provider.

8. SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all WS programs.

9. REFERENCES

- a. 31 U.S.C. 1535 (Economy Act)
- b. Federal Register Notice, Volume 78, No. 157 (August 14, 2013)
- c. Code of Federal Regulations, Title 48, Subpart 17.5 (Federal Acquisition Regulation)
- d. APHIS Budget and Accounting Manual

Deputy Administrator
Janet L. Bucknall