

Nolte, D. 1995. ABSTRACT. Rodent Problems in Mongolia. In: WRCC-95 annual meeting; 14-16 November 1995; Reno, NV. p. 2.

Rodent Problems in Mongolia

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Rodent infestations are a major hinderance to forage production on the rangelands of Mongolia. Mongolian scientists have estimated that the Brandt's vole (Lasiopodomys brandti) infests over 90 million ha of grassland and that vole populations exceed 2000 per ha on 19 million of these ha. The Mongolian Plant Protection Service (PPS) has minimal resources to combat this problem. The Denver Wildlife Research Center, at the request of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, initiated a proposed 2 year project during 1994 to identify methods to reduce vole populations and to increase the research capabilities of the PPS. Recent laboratory and field trials indicate that voles are sensitive to zinc phosphate treatment. The concentrations (5 - 6%) currently applied by the PPS, however, are probably too high and may inhibit intake which subsequently reduces treatment efficacy. An overview of the rodent impact on Mongolian rangeland will be given along with a review of the DWRC project.