



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures

2156 SIERRA WAY, SUITE A, SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA 93401-4556
MARTIN SETTEVENDEMIE
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER/SEALER
www.slocounty.ca.gov/agcomm
AgCommSLO@co.slo.ca.us

ZINC PHOSPHIDE INFORMATION SHEET

General Information: Zinc phosphide bait is an acute toxicant, which means it takes a single dose for control. Single dose toxicants should be used when the majority of the target vertebrate pests are active and foraging for grains. Bait shyness can occur if the target pest doesn't consume a lethal dose of the acute toxicant. When needed, incorporate other methods to control those pests that survived the initial zinc phosphide baiting or to prevent migrating rodents from becoming established.

Always thoroughly read the pesticide label and follow its directions. Never use a pesticide in a manner inconsistent with the labeled directions. This is a use in conflict with the registered label, and is a violation. All federal and state laws, regulations, and San Luis Obispo County permit conditions must be followed.

Nontarget Concerns: Zinc phosphide presents potential hazards from primary poisoning to seed-eating nontarget species, particularly birds. Zinc phosphide should not be used if nontarget species are likely to feed on the bait; especially seed-eating birds or endangered and threatened species, such as the giant kangaroo rat, Morro Bay kangaroo rat, or the San Joaquin antelope ground squirrel. The pesticide user must survey the treatment area, evaluate potential hazards, and adjust the control plan accordingly.

Prebaiting: Prebaiting (applying placebo, i.e. non-toxic oat groats) two to three days before baiting with zinc phosphide will improve the degree of control. Observations on prebait acceptance provide useful information on grain bait acceptance and whether nontarget seed-eaters might feed on the grain bait.

Formulation: Zinc phosphide is available in different formulations (e.g., oat groat grain, pelletized bait, oat groat/cracked corn mix).

Control: Timing is an important consideration when developing a control strategy, especially when using acute toxicants. It makes good sense to enact a control program when the majority of the target pests are active and will accept grain baits. Know the life cycle and habits of the target pest. Evaluate whether the potential for competing food sources from nearby crops (almonds, fruits, grains, etc.), crop residue (e.g., grain stubble), and surrounding conditions (e.g., oak tree acorn drop in the fall) could interfere with obtaining acceptable control results by affecting the consumption of the bait.