

## Excluding Rodents From Your Barns

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Rodent exclusion is not something a lot of producers think about when setting up a rodent control program. The truth is, locking the rodents out of the barns should be your number one preventive goal. There are many barns out there that have some age on them, and they are not as sealed up as they once were when originally built. In this quarter's Tailgate Talks, I will discuss tightening up older barns and how to make sure new construction is built correctly.

Older barns have lumber that will shrink over time and that is when gaps can develop. I often mention and recommend stainless steel wool in most applications because it does not rust and deteriorate like other steel wools can over time. When you find gaps or holes in your barns, I find placing stainless steel wool in the gaps and then sealing it off with a good spray foam will deter rodents from gnawing back through, as rodents do not like to gnaw into stainless steel wool.

Another problematic area I have come across in older construction is the outer wall tin. Unfortunately, the bottoms of the tin or even some corners are not trimmed out. The channels in the tin are areas where rodents can gain access into your barns. This also goes for roof tin, but it is difficult to seal up all the channels of the roof tin, because the attics also must be able to breathe. In the case of the roof tin, you have to do the best you can to tighten these areas up and not jeopardize the breathing of the attic space. Door thresholds are another area on both new and old barns that should be an area of focus. Unfortunately, the concrete is oftentimes not flush with the door sweeps. There are companies such as [Xcluder](#) and [RodeXit](#) that manufacture sweeps for doors that will prevent rodent entry, and they are adjustable to create a seal between the uneven concrete. These sweeps are made of rubber that is reinforced with internal steel that rodents despise.

Cool cell pads can be the hardest place to exclude rodents from getting into your barns. If anyone ever designed a cool cell pad that was rodent resistant and would hold up to water, they would be rich! One thing I have seen work well on deterring rodents around a perimeter of a barn is electric fence. It was placed around the perimeter of the barn about 4 to 6 inches off the ground. The area around the cool cells in my opinion needed to be double tiered to eliminate rodents from jumping over the wire.

Another building improvement I always recommend when visiting farms is to eliminate wall voids if possible, whether you have old or new barns. If you can prevent providing rodents a home within the walls of your barns, then you have accomplished more than you know. Constructing the barns with solid lumber walls in areas of the country where insulation is not a big factor is a plus.

With all this being said, you do not want to forget your other true first line of defense and that is the placement and management of your exterior bait stations. The recommended placement for mice is 8 to 12 feet apart and for rats is 15 to 30 feet apart. These recommendations are based on the daily travel distance of each rodent. Including these tactics in your rodent program can help exclude rodents from your barns, which should be your end goal.