



Rat bait stored with tack: Will the horse think it's a snack?

Leroy ran a small horse ranch from his home on the edge of town. His horses were housed in a barn with a spacious tack room, where he stored his feed, medications, tack and pesticides. One day he brought home a bucket of rat & mouse bait. He used only five of the baits that day, leaving the bucket mostly full. He left the bucket in the tack room and closed the simple latch that kept his horses out of the room.

The next morning he went into the barn and found two of his horses showing signs of colic and abdominal pain. They were also panting and struggling to stand. Leroy quickly noticed that the door to the tack room was wide open. Several bottles of medicine were scattered and crushed around the tack room floor. Then he noticed that he had left off the lid to the bucket of rat & mouse bait.

Leroy called his veterinarian. With the veterinarian on her way, he dialed the emergency number listed on the rat & mouse bait, reaching the [National Pesticide Information Center \(NPIC\)](#). He needed to know if the bait made the horses sick.

[Click here](#) to find out what Leroy learned when he called NPIC...



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Leroy explained his situation and provided the NPIC specialist with information about the [rat & mouse bait](#). The specialist explained the types of symptoms that would be expected for a horse that ate the product. Leroy thought it sounded like the horses had eaten the bait.

The specialist asked Leroy to look closely at the medications on the floor to see what exactly was broken, open, and missing. It seemed to Leroy like they were knocked off the shelf, then trampled. However, there didn't appear to be much of the medicine missing.

Leroy looked at the bait bucket and noticed it was more than half empty. The specialist explained that rodent baits are often made by mixing the rodent poison with foods like oats or other grains, and flavors such as peanut butter and molasses. That way, rodents are more attracted to the bait. Also, the horses were used to receiving food that came out of the tack room. Leroy realized how easy it would be for a horse to mistake the rat & mouse bait for food.

When his [veterinarian](#) arrived, Leroy had more information to share, and she was able to provide emergency treatment quickly.

After that frightening day, Leroy took measures to [store](#) pesticides more carefully. He mounted a heavy-duty latch and padlock on the tack room door. He was very strict about who carried a padlock key. He made sure the room was always secure so that even a clever horse could not get inside.

