

## **CHEW CARD INSTRUCTIONS FOR LANDCARE GROUPS, DOMESTIC USERS & SCHOOLS**

Chew Cards are an excellent new simple and effective tool. They are very sensitive to the presence of pests. They have application in many situations, (including lower pest densities), where they can provide similar information as a combination of Tracking Tunnels for rats and RTC leghold traps for possums — all at a much lower cost. TbFree use Chew Cards extensively to identify the presence of target pests.

Many Landcare Groups spend a considerable amount of time and resources controlling possums and rats. Chew Cards have excellent application to:

- a) Identify areas of pest presence to target for control and
- b) Monitoring e.g. as a year by year indicator of the level of pest control being achieved.  
This provides excellent feedback to both the community and funding agencies.

For domestic users & schools, they provide an excellent means of identifying what invasive pests are in your area.

### **LABELLING**

- a) Label Chew Cards with e.g. your name and individual card number.

### **PLACEMENT**

Attach to trees / fences or posts approx. 30cm above ground level using a 50 — 75mm flat head nail. Fold in half and leave the top flap at approx. 45°. (NB: Avoid locating on fence lines with electric wires as some pests avoid electric fences)

### **SPACING**

This depends on the area of control and the number of people / resources available.

1. For total coverage (As with current TbFree practice for presence / absence)
  - a) Locate Chew Cards at 50m spacings and consider less if rats are the main target. Locate where pests are most likely to be. For blocks of bush more than 200m wide more than 1 transects is required no further than 150m from another.
  - b) Along shelter lines use a spacing of 100m
  - c) In scattered bush ensure no bush is more than 100m away from a Chew Card.
  - d) Also, we recommend locate Chew Cards close to rural houses and other rural buildings
2. For sampling large areas of bush with limited resources use the Chew Cards as random transect sample lines. (in much the same way as trend monitoring with leg hold traps with assessing possum RTC's).
  - a) In bush use 1 card every 20 - 50m. Set as a straight line (e.g. 10— 20 cards on a transect line). Chew Cards should be attached to the nearest available site at the pre-determined spacing. Additional lines should be no closer than 200m distant from the first.

### 3. For Domestic Use & Schools

- a) Place Chew Cards where rats or possums are likely to be such as compost bins, fruit or berry trees, by streams and in bushy areas.

There may be variations of these 3 options that are adapted to your specific needs. The key is that if the Chew Cards are intended to be used for pest population trend monitoring then be consistent with your practices. Ideally do not allow livestock access to Chew Cards over the 7 days. Where Livestock interference is likely, Chew Cards should be placed above reach (e.g. 2m above ground level).

#### **TIMING**

Leave Chew Cards in place for 7 days (1 week).

If the CTC's are being used to monitor pest presence on an ongoing basis and comparisons made for instance year to year, then it is important to choose a time of the year when food supply is reasonably consistent. For instance, late winter would be good in most situations as there will generally be very little difference from year to year and food supplies will be relatively low. Late summer in many areas would not be as good as there can be an extreme food shortage in a drought for instance or an abundance of seed, vegetation and berries in a summer with good rainfall.

If the CTC's are primarily being used to monitor rats, then at least in the short-term Groups may consider monitoring more than once per year given the rats breeding capabilities etc.

#### **INTERPRETING & CONFIRMING RESULTS**

We have included an excellent paper prepared by Tom Agnew from Zero Invasive Pests Ltd (refer to same web page for this paper) which illustrates the common bite marks.

#### **RECORDING RESULTS**

Write your pest identification on the card with a permanent marker pen.

The person recovering the Chew Card results in the field should make a permanent note of the result grouping as per the table below. Results should be transferred onto a standard computer record. E.g. record via Google Maps.

R=	Rat	P=	Possum
N=	None	F=	Ferret
H =	Hedgehog	5 =	Stoat
C =	Cat	W =	Weasel
I =	Interference	, U =	Unidentified
B =	Both (Possum & Rat)	L =	Lost

Record location on Google Maps and record results for monitoring trends over time (The key is that the survey can be repeated with similar Chew Card placement at future dates).

*Thanks to Andrew Sinclair from Whakapoko Landcare for these guidelines.*