

Myth, dogma and rodent management: good stories ruined by data?

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Abstract. Many beliefs exist on what influences the population dynamics of rodent pests. In some instances, these beliefs get mentioned so often that they become dogma and in too many instances national policies on rodent management are based on dogma. We review five dogmas that have varying degrees of influence on policies for rodent management in Australia and Southeast Asia. Three are associated with regional or local movement patterns of rodents, one with the efficacy of predators as biological control agents, and one with the influence of farming systems on rodent dynamics. We provide results of experimental studies conducted to test the three dogmas associated with movement patterns. Two of these dogmas were rejected and one accepted. We conclude that rodent management requires a scientific approach, and the science of rodent management requires managers to conduct experiments.