



## Media Release

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Mr Nick Goldie           02 6276 6478  
Mobile                    0417 299 586  
Fax                         02 6276 6821

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## MANAGING MICE WITH A MOUSE

For Australian farmers plagued by mice, help is only a mouse click away.

CSIRO has released a new and user-friendly CD called *Mouser* that gives farmers access to years of scientific expertise through a home computer.

"We've been working with farmers in plague-affected areas for around 20 years," says Peter Brown of the CSIRO Rodent Group, who developed the CD.

"The mouse damage we've seen and the stories we've heard are enough to make your hair curl," he says.

The interactive CD uses a range of video footage, photos, graphics and text to provide information, science and advice on ways to monitor and manage one of the country's biggest economic pests.

"With *Mouser*, we wanted to present our scientific data to the people who need it in the most useful way possible," says Mr Brown. "We want farmers to be able to make informed decisions about mouse control using the best and most up-to-date information available.

"There's very little about mice that isn't on the CD. From general biology through to when and how mouse plagues happen, what sort of damage mice are likely to cause and how to monitor mice on your farm and in your house," he says.

"We built a decision support key and a simulation model into the CD. These allow the user to 'roadtest' different mouse control practices to see how effective they'd be – both in terms of mouse numbers and dollars spent.

"We've designed *Mouser* to be easy to use: all you have to do is point your computer mouse and click," he says.

Originally designed for use by farmers, farmer groups and extension officers, Mr Brown has discovered that the *Mouser* prototype is being used by librarians and school teachers as a teaching aid and as a source of general information.

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"We hope the CD is a resource that will appeal to a wide range of people – and that the information we've captured will be both of practical use and interesting."

The CD was developed in conjunction with the Centre for Pest Information Technology and Transfer, the University of Queensland and the Centre for Agricultural and Regional Economics. Funding for the CD came from the Natural Heritage Trust (through the Bureau of Rural Sciences) and CSIRO. Other assistance was provided by the Pest Animal Control CRC and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research.

***More information, images, from:***

***Peter Brown, CSIRO***

***02 6242 1562***

***Peter.Brown@csiro.au***

***Monica van Wensveen, CSIRO***

***02 6242 1651***

***0418 168 535***

***Monica.VanWensveen@csiro.au***

***CSIRO Rodent Research Group: [www.cse.csiro.au/research/progv/rodents](http://www.cse.csiro.au/research/progv/rodents)***

***Centre for Pest Information Technology and Transfer: [www.cpitt.uq.edu.au](http://www.cpitt.uq.edu.au)***