

Farmers' perceptions and practices in rat management in Vinh Phuc province, northern Vietnam

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Abstract. A survey of farmers was conducted in Vinh Phuc province, Vietnam, to examine the knowledge, attitudes and practices for rodent management near the beginning of a village-level study to examine the impacts of a range of rodent management practices. Thirty farmers were interviewed from four study sites. There are three main crop seasons during the year, two rice crops and a winter crop. Over 20 different vegetable crops were grown throughout the year. Most farmers believed that rats caused the most damage to their crops and that rats were the most important pest species to control. Most farmers identified kohlrabi then rice as the crops that suffered most damage. Most farmers identified crop damage through damage to plants and fruits rather than tracks, droppings or burrows. Trapping was the most common method used to control rats in the fields, followed by use of chemicals and plastic barrier fences. An average of 16 days labour was spent controlling rats in the previous season, and Vietnamese dong (VND)16,000–18,000 (~US\$1.2) was spent per day of labour. On average, farmers spent VND130,000–170,000 (~UD\$10) in the previous season on controlling rats. The farmers estimated a loss of about 40% of their rice yield if they were not to implement any rat control practice. Nearly all farmers stated that rat control must be carried out and that it is very important. Many farmers believed rats can severely reduce their rice yield and that rats can be controlled if all farmers work together and throughout all stages of the growing season. A follow-up survey will be conducted towards the end of the project to examine changes in farmers' perceptions and practices.