

## Update on mice in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, Southern New South Wales – July 2001

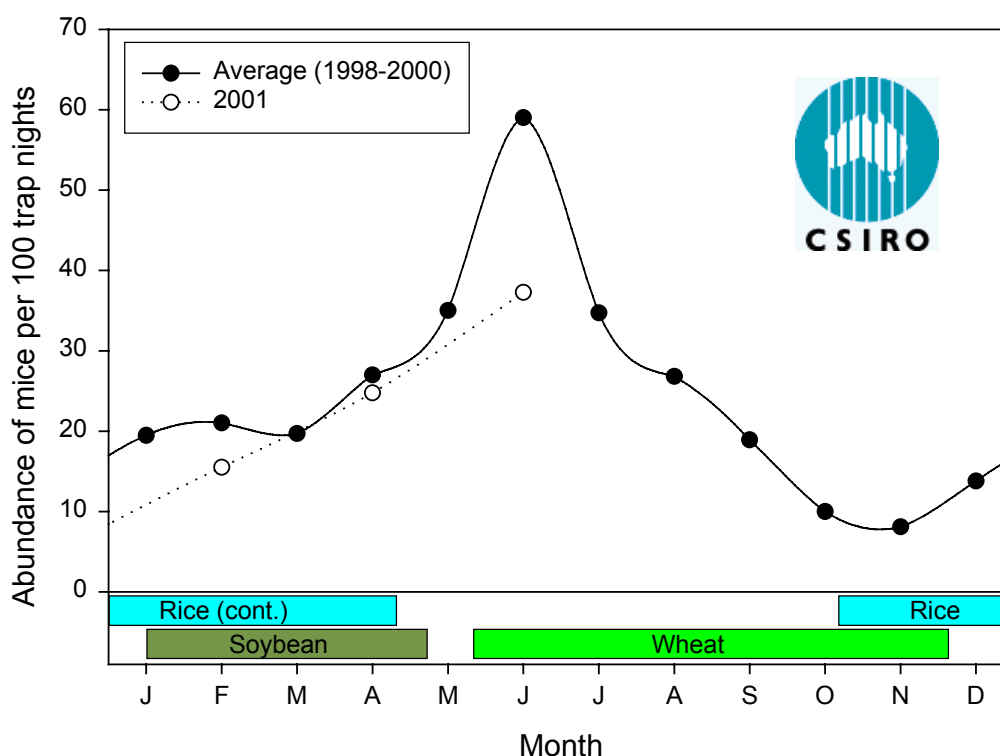
### CSIRO Rodent Research Group

The CSIRO Rodent Research Group conducts regular trapping on eight farms around Coleambally, Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, Southern New South Wales. This is part of an experiment to test the effectiveness of farm management practices on the impact of mice, funded by the Natural Heritage Trust (through the Bureau of Rural Sciences), in collaboration with NSW Agriculture.

#### Abundance of mice

Mice are monitored from live-capture traps set in winter cereal (wheat) paddocks and margins, summer irrigated crops (soybean) and margins, and irrigated rice and margins for two nights, roughly every 2 months. Trapping began in September 1998.

The mouse populations follow a regular pattern of abundance each year (Figure 1). The data collected so far this year (2001) are slightly below average. In our May update the 2001 line was the average mouse abundance from all eight farms trapped. As a result of our June trapping we are seeing a significant difference in mouse abundance between farms where our recommended practices are carried out and farms where normal local management practices apply. Therefore, Figure 1 shows a line for 2001 which is an average (37.25%) from the farms conducting normal management practices.



**Figure 1.** Average abundance of mice in the MIA since September 1998 with current abundance of mice for 2001.

#### Breeding

The breeding season for 2000/2001 began in September and finished in May, which is usual for this area.

#### General comments

Most winter crops are now sown and the likelihood of early damage to them is low. We expect numbers to peak in June. Survival of mice over winter will govern the trajectory of the population growth in 2001/2002.