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STRETCHING THE MOUSE CONTROL DOLLAR

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One of the biggest problems in our mouse control program at H. F. and T. B. Byrd, Inc. in Timberville, Virginia is keeping a palatable bait before the voles until the bait can be accepted. For years we used labor needed for pruning to place an expensive bait only to be impeded by wet weather that molded the bait.

This year an effort is being made to keep the bait in good condition and before the target animal for a longer time. We cut old car tires (not steel belted) given to us by a local distributor and rented his tire splitting machine. The half tire was placed under a tree where it would least likely be in the way of mowing, brush removal, etc. The half tire placed with the arched side up makes a desirable habitat for the vole and also keeps the bait dry from falling weather.

The second part of this year's program was putting the bait under the tire in 3½ ounce plastic cups (used in hospitals and nursing homes). This 1½¢ cup keeps the bait from absorbing moisture from the ground.

In large population areas the tires are inhabited and the bait is taken in a matter of days. Areas that have less voles the tire may not be visited for a month or so. The exciting part of this program is that even after two months and several wet periods the bait is still in good condition and still available.

We feel we have "hit on" something as long as the tires in the orchard will not be more trouble than they are worth.