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**ACCEPTANCE AND RELATIVE INTAKE OF DIFFERENT FOODS BY
TWO SPECIES OF RATS, *RATTUS RATTUS* LINN. AND *BANDIGOTA
BENGALENSIS* GRAY. IN KERALA**

Rats eat a variety of foods of both plants and animal origin. Apart from availability, factors like energy value, water contents, special physiological effects and flavour also govern the feeding habits of rats (Barnett and Prakash, 1975). The foods available in the different regions will vary in these attributes. It is advantageous to know the local food preferences to enable choice of appropriate bait bases for their rodenticidal control. The present paper reports results of food preference trials conducted at the College of Agriculture, Vellayani, Kerala State, with the two major rat pests viz. *Rattus rattus* and *Bandicota bengalensis*.

The rats required for the experiment were trapped from the field. Five animals of each species of approximately the same size and age were kept in captivity individually for a period of one month in cages of size 60 x 40 X 30 cm

Table 1

**Mean quantities of different food materials eaten by two species of rats
over 22 days (g/100g body weight)**

Food material	<i>R. rattus</i>	<i>B. bengalensis</i>
Fresh tapioca	5.09	2.94
Rice flour	1.65	2.20
Paddy grains	1.38	0.78
Wheat flour	1.06	3.64
Dried fish	0.74	0.80
Sweet potato	0.73	—
Coconut oil cake	0.21	—
Polished rice	—	1.23
Whole wheat	—	0.40
Total	10.86	11.99

for making them used to the caged conditions. Weighed quantities of the different food materials (see Table) were supplied together to the rats in separate flat plastic

containers in the morning and allowed to feed till the next morning. The food materials consumed were found out by weighments. Feeding was continued in this way for 22 days. Water was supplied to each rat in the cage. Results are given in Table 1. It may be seen that *R. rattus* prefers fresh tapioca for feeding to cereals.

The daily intake under the caged conditions in this species is 10.86 g/100 g body weight or per rat (on an average *R. rattus* weighs 99.4 g). In the case of *B. bengalensis* the animal prefers wheat flour the most, closely followed by fresh tapioca and rice flour. The daily intake by this rat is 11.99 g/100 g body weight i. e. 13.17g per rat per day (average weight of the rat is 109.8 g).

സംഗ്രഹം

എലിവിഷം ചേർക്കുവാൻ പഠിച്ച ആഹാര പദാർത്ഥങ്ങൾ ഏതെന്നറിയുവാൻ റാറ്റസ് റാറ്റസ്, ബൻഡിക്കോട്ട ബെങ്കളെൻസിസ് എന്നീ *rasnS* സ്ത്രീഷീസ് എലികളുടെ ആഹാരവസ്തുക്കളോടുള്ള മുൻഗണനപരീക്ഷിച്ചു. റാ. റാറ്റസിസ് ധാന്യങ്ങളെക്കാൾ പ്രിയം പച്ചക്കുപ്പുമാണെന്നും, ബ. ബെങ്കളെൻസിസിസ് പ്രിയം ഗോതമ്പുമാവും അതോടൊപ്പം പച്ചക്കുപ്പുവും അരിമാവുമാണെന്നും തെളിഞ്ഞു. ഈ രണ്ടു സ്ത്രീഷീസുകൾ എലിയൊന്നിന് യഥാക്രമം ശരാശരി 99.4 ഗ്രാമം, 13.17 ഗ്രാമം *rai'-voaranroococDsoBOo* നിത്യേന കഴിക്കും.

REFERENCE

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