

ANIMAL POISONS

The NSPCA is Concerned with the Poisoning of any Mammal, Bird or Reptile

“Death by poisoning is arguably the cruellest and inhumane way to kill an animal.”

These substances cause suffering and are not target-specific. That is, there is no guarantee that the animal the poison is intended for will take the bait. Poisoning is an outdated and lazy method of killing so-called ‘problem animals’ or as a method of rodent control.

A variety of agricultural insecticide products are utilised daily to control insects in crops as well as in our homes and gardens. Various products are also registered for the control of external parasites on dogs, cats, horses and livestock. Misuse and overexposure result in animals and humans being poisoned.

The most common product being misused for malicious poisoning contains the active ingredient aldicarb, which is formulated as small black granules that resemble poppy seeds. Aldicarb is commercially available under two registered trade names, i.e. Temic and Sanacarb. It is widely used by farmers as a pesticide for the control of insects, mites and nematodes on a variety of crops. Temic and Sanacarb are sold under licence. Strict control by the licenced dealer/distributor is enforced by the Registrar of Act 36 of 1947, the Fertilizers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act, as well as the Hazardous Substance Act 15 of 1973 when it is sold to the end user – farmers. Despite the legal requirements for the strict control of these two products, Aldicarb is readily available on the ‘black market’. The number of animals poisoned with illegally obtained poisons in South Africa has increased steadily in recent years. A wide range of illegally obtained and packaged poisons are sold by informal traders as “rat poison” at most taxi ranks and train stations and is, therefore, readily available to criminals.

Criminals often use these illegal poisons to maliciously kill dogs before committing another crime such as breaking and entering or motor vehicle theft. Our wildlife does not escape unharmed either and many wild animals fall victim to mass poisonings as a result of poisoned bait.

A poisoning incident is a crime and should always be reported into your local police station as such. Without accurate statistics on how widespread the problem is, the police force and other enforcement agencies are unable to dedicate time or resources into combating this issue. All poison cases investigated by the SPCA must be reported to the local SAPS with a request for them to investigate the case and remove any suspected poison residues/bait.

Rodenticides

The control of rats and mice is prevalent in and around human and animal dwellings, factories, food processing facilities, warehouses and other storage premises. The most common rodenticides come in the form of an active anti-coagulant feed bait. The poison results in internal bleeding and severe pain from bleeding into muscles and joints.

For humane rodent control please contact the National Council of SPCAs on nspca@nspca.co.za

