

Caution.—As strychnine is a deadly poison, great care should be taken with all utensils used, and while mixing and handling poisoned grain, so that accidental poisoning of farm animals, children, and others may be prevented.

Cost.—The cost is not great. The four gallons prepared as indicated above should be enough to treat half a section of land and also to a distance of a quarter of a mile or more on the outside of the same. The ordinary retail price of strychnine sulphate is about \$1 to \$1.25 an ounce.

When to apply.—The first application should be made as soon as the snow is off the ground in the early spring. The gophers are then hungry, other food is scarce, and their numbers are only about one-third of what they would be a few weeks later. If an effective application is made at this time there is practically no more trouble during the season, except from those that come from outside.

Method of Distribution.—A good equipment consists of a pail of the poisoned grain suspended from the shoulder by means of a strap, and a dessert spoon with a long handle. The operator walks from end to end of the farm, each time covering a strip of not more than twenty-five yards on either side of the line he is following. In this way he is able to see every hole. He drops a spoonful of the poisoned grain well down each hole, thereby keeping it out of the reach of prairie chickens, and at the same time causing the gophers to die in their holes, where they are not a menace to anything else. After the farm has been thus covered, it is usually well to distribute the poison on a strip at least a hundred yards wide round the outside of the farm, in order to lessen the danger of inroads by gophers from adjacent land.

Dangers and Precautions.—The unfortunate point in the using of poisoned grain is that it kills many of our native birds, and it is needless to say that in distributing the poison care should be taken to prevent domestic animals getting enough to hurt them. The amount that would kill a gopher would not be enough to kill a domestic hen, but one scarcely cares to take chances. This risk can be minimized by placing the poisoned bait, as indicated above, as far down the entrance to the holes as possible with the long-handled spoon mentioned.

Grain, poisoned and put out as indicated, has been distributed by us in fields where horses, cattle, sheep and swine have been pasturing at the time and no loss due to poison has resulted up to the present. We have not tested the advisability of distributing poisoned grain in poultry yards, but believe the practice would be dangerous to the poultry.

Another method of poisoning that has been used with very good results in North Dakota is as follows:—

(1) Mix thoroughly one ounce strychnine alkaloid, (powdered), and one ounce baking soda.

(2) Sift this into three quarters pint of thin, hot starch paste, and stir to a creamy mass. The starch paste is made by dissolving one heaping tablespoonful of dry gloss starch in a little cold water, which is then added to three quarters pint of boiling water. Boil and stir constantly until a clear thin paste is formed.