

## **EKOMILLE IN RODENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS: TWO CASES STUDIED IN CENTRAL ITALY**

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**Abstract** Ekomille trap is an electromechanical and ecological system for the capture of mice and rats. The trap is baited with natural foods without any type of toxic bait and it is able to capture over 80 rodents. In the present work are reported results of field trials carried out to evaluate the Ekomille use in rodent management. We selected two houses, one in Benevento and one in Pescara both representatives of periurban environment of Central Italy. Initially in both cases, rodent control was done with chemical rodenticides. From the end of September 2011, 5 Ekomille traps baited with natural foods were positioned in critical points outside in Benevento. During the first 15 days the devices were maintained inactive, in order to reduce rodents neophobia, after that, we switched the Ekomille on and then checked it monthly. As results from the beginning of October 2011 until the end of December 2013, we caught 266 Norway rats (10 in 2011, 145 in 2012 and 111 in 2013). From early January 2009 6 baited Ekomille were allocated in Pescara house, along the outer perimeter of the property. Traps were checked every two months. In this case from the beginning of January 2009 to the end of December 2013 were captured 491 Norway rats (99 in 2009, 96 in 2010, 99 in 2011, 105 in 2012 and 92 in 2013). After Ekomille trap disposal, a drastic reduction of damage by rodents activity was observed. These positive results indicate that the use of Ekomille trap for the control of rodents is a valid component of an integrated pest management (IPM)-based control strategy. In IPM programs, the use of these traps can lead to drastic reductions of chemical treatments, resulting in economic benefits and improvements for environment safety and quality.