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Rat poison maker agrees to stop selling formula that harmed kids, pet



Kian Schulman checks the label on a rat trap by a business in Malibu. (Anne Cusack / Los Angeles Times)

By Martha Groves

Maker of d-Con will introduce a new rat-poison formula to the consumer market. Rat poison that accidentally harmed children, pets is being taken off the market.

After years of challenges to federal environmental officials, the maker of d-Con rat traps has agreed to discontinue a consumer line of poison-laced baits that have accidentally harmed children, wildlife and pets.

The rodent-control products will be replaced next year with a new line of baits that the federal Environmental Protection Agency has approved for use in every state.

The state of California earlier this year banned the sale of such products to consumers after July 1. Reckitt Benckiser, the maker of d-Con, sued the state to halt the ban.

“This is a significant victory for environmental protection and corporate responsibility,” said Jonathan Evans of the Center for Biological Diversity in San Francisco. “While the fight isn’t over until all of these hazardous products are off the market, this decision keeps the worst of the worst products from residential consumers.”

Licensed, trained professionals will still be able to purchase and use the products.

In a statement, d-Con’s manufacturer said the new bait products would continue to use effective ingredients for which an antidote is readily available. The products would not contain neurotoxins.

During nearly two decades of research in and around the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, National Park Service scientists have documented widespread exposure in carnivores to common household poisons.

Of 140 bobcats, coyotes and mountain lions evaluated, 88% tested positive for one or more anticoagulant compounds. Scores of animals are known to have died from internal bleeding, researchers said.

The poisons also affect protected or endangered species, including golden eagles, northern spotted owls and San Joaquin kit foxes.

In wide use in parks, schools and homes, rat poisons are designed to kill rodents by thinning the blood and preventing clotting. Many people who set bait traps do not realize the poisons work their way up the food chain, researchers say.

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