

Building a better mouse trap

I'm not a fanatical environmentalist, but I do have some 'green' feelings about looking after Mother Earth.

I like to see as few chemicals as possible used in the production of foods and livestock, but I also accept that in some cases, the use of chemicals is a necessity to make some crops viable.

One place I'm adamant about the 'no chemical' rule is in the barn.

Okay, occasionally we have to vaccinate, just like the family Fido needs a rabies shot each year. But that's where I draw the line.

And, since every barn has 'em, pests like mice and rats are the most annoying vermin in the world, causing great damage, wasting feed and carrying disease. They are also the main cause of barn fires from chewing electrical wires.

Last week I filled one of the grain barrels which I use to feed the sheep, using a big Rubbermaid container. I had some grain left over in one container, so I set it on the floor and snapped the plastic lid on it so nothing could get into it.

The next time I was in the granary, there was a gaping two-inch hole in the lid. A rat had chewed right through, to get at a few inches of grain in the container.

I declared war on rats.

There are several poisons on the market to kill rats, but I'm always leery as they can infect the livestock or the cats and dog.

In the past I've used traditional traps to try to eradicate them- with marginal success. However, The Sidekick and I recently stumbled across a novel way to catch rats.

We have basically built a better mouse-trap... okay a better rat trap (since no mice have been harmed in the writing of this column).

Actually, we didn't 'build' it either— just discovered it.

In one pen in the barn are four yearling rams, which are watered in a five-gallon pail in the corner of the pen. Every morning and night, we fill the pail with a hose.

About two weeks ago, The Sidekick was about to fill the pail, but stopped and called me to look inside. In the bottom of the pail

Ted Brown



was a drowned rat.

Now, since one of the conditions of our prenuptial agreement plainly states, "I don't do rats,"— from The Sidekick's side of the agreement— well, I took the pail out and disposed of the rat.

I figured it was a one-time thing.

But the next morning, The Sidekick called me for another rat disposal— this time two young 'uns in the bottom of the pail. And so it's continued, with one of us finding a dead rat or two in the bottom of the pail almost every day. One day we actually found three.

I inspected where the pail sits, and found it's situated in a 'rat crossing' where they run along a narrow ledge, to sneak from one side of the stable to the other.

And it seems, regrettably (and that's sarcasm for those who didn't pick up on it) many rats have indiscriminately lost their lives, falling into the abyss, while passing over that treacherous ledge.

I'm kinda annoyed we didn't keep score but we estimate the number to be more than 20 in two weeks. Most are younger rats who are simply reckless and have tumbled into the drink.

The sobering thought is, if we've caught 20-plus in that pail, how many hundreds are running around in their tunnels in the barn?

But we're doing our bit in the war against rats. We're doing it without chemicals or dangerous traps— simply a half pail of water. And not only is it a safe trap for every other animal in the barn, but it's always 'set'.

Best of all, it's a 'green' trap— 'cuz after all, we're still looking out for Mother Earth.



Stag and Doe
Come celebrate the engagement of
Whitney Carroll
to **Michael Kosziwka**
on Saturday June 16th 2012
at the Acton Arena.
Doors open at 7pm, tickets available for \$10 at the door or call 905-703-7380



United Way of Halton Hills

Change starts here.

The United Way of Halton Hills will hold its **Annual General Meeting** on Wednesday, June 27, 2012 at 7:30 pm at the Roxy Coffee House, 6 Mill Street, Acton.

Join us as we review our past year, thank our supporters and elect our Board of Directors for 2012/2013.

Lighthouse Program for Grieving Children, one of our funded agencies, will be making a presentation about their program.

For more information, please contact the United Way of Halton Hills office at 905-877-3066.



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Grand Opening
Free Loot Bags for the First 100 purchasers | Discounts
Enjoy 30% off with this ad
Balloons for the kids and Canada Day specials on Flags!



Saturday and Sunday
June 23rd & 24th, 2012
9am - 4pm
120 Main Street, Erin

Ryan Andrew Putnam
Congratulations on receiving your Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) Degree from the University of Ottawa.
Good luck with your future endeavors.
We are proud of you!
FORE!!
Mom, Dad, Adam & Grannie

Stag 'n Doe
Melissa Williams & Nick Murphy
Saturday, June 16, 2012
8 pm - 12:30 am
Gellert Community Centre
Tickets \$10
Games • Prizes • Food

After 29+ years with RBC
PAT WALKER
Customer Assistance Officer - Guelph/Mountainview
Has elected to retire Effective June 30th, 2012
Please join us in wishing her all the best as she transitions into her new "envious" routines!!

Happy 65th Birthday Jan!
Love Jane, Steph, Scott, Kim, Dave, Griffin and Delaney

Happy 60th Wedding Anniversary Win & Ted Cardinell
1952 ~ June 14th ~ 2012
Lots of love from your family and friends