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Pest control can help reduce risk Bayer advises

Rodents carry out often expensive damage from rodents to farm machinery sitting in storage over the winter months but an integrated management approach can help to reduce the risk.

More than 50% of farm fires are caused by rodents chewing electrical cables and recent reports show that farm fire damage cost £44 million in 2016.

Ken Black, Bayer rural hygiene manager, said: "It is natural behaviour for rodent's to gnaw, whether it be the fabric of a building or stored machinery, including live electric cables, hydraulics, control panels

and even cab fittings, and therefore all are at risk of damage.

"Prevention is always better than cure when it comes to rodent management. So the first thing to ensure is that the perimeter of the buildings, where machinery is stored, is clear of harbourage opportunities and food sources, by tidying the area and removing any signs of remaining grain.

"Combines and other stored machinery are particularly susceptible to damage, so it's essential to be vigilant and ensure regular checks are made."

Following implementation of these preventative measures, monitoring for rodent activity is the next step and is also a key element of stewardship. A non-toxic bait can highlight pest presence, which is an important measure in advance of progressing to rodenticide application. This will indicate if baiting is required and bait can be securely placed in areas that have been pin-pointed as runs or feeding areas during the monitoring process.

"Once the infestation has been controlled it's important to remove bait and replace it with the monitoring bait again, which will highlight whether there is still rodent activity and whether the bait needs to be re-applied, or if the problem needs further thought. This will also indicate if the rodenticide can be removed from the area, which is another important aspect of stewardship," said Mr Black.

Bayer Pest Solutions will be at stand number 787 at LAMMA on January 17 and 18 2018.