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Greater Bandicoot Rat, *Bandicota indica* Infestation in Oil Palm Plantation and Its Management

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Greater bandicoot rat (*Bandicota indica*) is a mammalian pest from the family Muridae. It is mainly found in the field or crop area. This species can weigh between 330–875 g. They exhibit aggressive behaviour by grunting and “puffing up” their fur when threatened. Studies in India showed *Bandicota* attacked crops such as wheat, rice, groundnut and sugarcane. A study in an oil palm plantation converted from sugarcane plantation in Chuping, Perlis, Malaysia recorded heavy infestations of *B. indica*. The damage symptoms include prominent feeding marks on fruitlets, inflorescences and even premature palms. To date, there is no control programme on *B. indica* infestation in oil palm plantation. In this light a study was conducted to find a suitable programme to control the population. Morphological measurements revealed a skull length ranging from 50–70 mm; the largest among *Bandicota* species. They have 12 mammae. Diet preference study showed they preferred sugarcane with an average consumption of 78.99 g per day, followed by oil palm fruitlets of young fruit bunch (67.65 g) and young oil palm meristem (61.05 g). This provides an indication they can potentially shift their diet to oil palm and cause high damage. Laboratory study on *B. indica* mortality showed that 0.005 per cent bromadiolone had the highest efficacy because it resulted in a high mortality rate of 80 per cent at one bait per rat, 90 per cent at two baits per rat and 100 per cent at three baits per rat (10 g per bait). The result suggest a control method on *B. indica* by applying three baits per palm at 0.005 per cent w/w bromadiolone with campaigns and rounds adjusted for different stages of palm.

Keywords: *Bandicota indica*, bromadiolone, morphology, diet preference, oil palm.

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