

# Rats Outrank Guinea Pigs In I Q Tests

BY KEITH FREDRICKSON

One of the features of the new foods and nutrition building on ag campus is the addition of several new laboratories in nutritional research. Girls who work for Home Economics degrees are continually conducting research experiments to determine the effect of removing various vitamins from the human diet. The innocent victim of the girls' whim and fancy is not the guinea pig, though it constantly receives credit for being a "martyr to civilization." A smooth haired cousin of the aforementioned "glory robbing" rodent provides the girls with their stooges.

The common white rat has firmly established itself in the intertwinings of complicated science and has been influential in the development of beneficial foods and in the field of anatomical research. The guinea pig served very well as a comparison with man in the way of anatomy—as does the dog, cow, pig, fish, even elephants. But, it was another field of development that favored the white furred animal. Research workers in psychology discovered that the guinea pig was, who would have guessed it? Stupid! Yes, it seemed that the rat came down from the brainy side of the family, for it possessed a remarkable amount of gray matter in such a small cavity.

### Living Cost

Of course, the rat does not equal the dog, cow and the elephant in brains, but herein enters another factor. That of subsistence. Any GI will tell you its importance. A rat can live for a year on slightly less than a dollar—even in days like these! Comparatively, a dog requires about \$30 in foodstuffs yearly and an elephant about \$800. And of course, the eternal question of living space—and who doesn't recognize this one?—several hundred mice can be accommodated in the same space as one elephant. Maybe we'd better forget about that darned elephant. He just wouldn't be practical!

Another factor in favor of the rat is its high rate of reproduction. The guinea pig is also over-rated here. Rats are much more prolific than their cousins, each female rat producing from three to four hundred offspring per year.

But as the white rat strives to build up the population and increase man's chances for survival, its brown brother does its best to be as welcome as your mother-in-law—and twice as expensive! Figures from Dr. Sooter of the Entomology department here reveal that rats cost the average Nebraska farmer \$30 every year or a total loss of \$3,750,000 to Nebraska farmers—a figure which ranks with the state budget.

### Appetite

To show the enormous appetite of these animals—as compared to their economy for laboratory experiments—one family of rats, three generations of nine young each, will consume as much grain as three steers on full fattening rations. Please observe, Mr. Truman! I wonder if the rats in this country are considering their European friends?

Rats are also very influential in the life cycle of the Trichinae, a parasite responsible for trichinosis. These small organisms, known as roundworms by some, are found in the muscle of rats, humans, and other carnivorants. Pigs usually acquire them by eating rats which have been infested with the parasite. The pigs pass the parasite and its complementary disease on to the human race in raw or under-cooked pork—"I'll take my chops well done, please!"

Thus do the tiny rodents have a considerable effect on the ebb and flow of the human tide, the friendly helpful—though it is because he has no choice in the matter—white rat and its contribution to science; the unsanitary, sneaking, enemy of man and animal alike, brown rat.

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