Woolies, there's a mouse in my chicken...

By [Danette Breitenbach](#)   5 May 2023

Last weekend a video circulated on social media showing a mouse inside a packet of chicken at the Woolworths Garden Centre store in Cape Town.

Source © Gardens Shopping Centre [Gardens Shopping Centre](#) Woolies has responded to the video of a live mouse in the chicken section at its Gardens Centre branch in Cape Town

In response to this Woolworths has said that the store immediately underwent a forensic deep clean and was closed early to allow for a thorough investigation.

"With the help of an independent auditor and our pest control partner various immediate actions were taken. These include a deep clean of the affected areas and enhancements to the perimeter of the store. We are also working closely with centre management and our landlord," says the statement.

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♬ Le Festin (From "Ratatouille") - Movie Sounds Unlimited

The retailer added that "all food environments are natural attractions to pests, particularly in high-density areas like the CBD, and management thereof is a crucial part of retail operations".

It further says: "We remain committed to ensuring our policies are of the highest standard and we have confidence in the measures now in place which we will apply nationally," and that "Woolies is deeply committed to the highest standards of hygiene and food safety across our entire operation. Our values underpin our commitment to the wellbeing of our customers and people".

It ends saying: "We recognise that we have let our customers down on this occasion and would like to express our sincere apology. We are taking every measure to ensure this never happens again.

> " *Our values underpin our commitment to the wellbeing of our customers and people. Your trust in Woolies is supremely important and we are taking every measure to ensure this never happens again. (4)— Woolworths SA (@WOOLWORTHS_SA)* [April 29, 2023](#) "

The incident

The incident happened when Tebo Shale, a TikToker visited the branch and saw the mouse and made a recoding of it. The mouse was sitting on chicken in the frozen food section. In her TikTok video, she added *Ratatouiile's* , the animated movie, theme song.

She says that the mouse ran all over the chicken as a Woolies employee tried to throw it out.

The video quickly went viral. While Woolies has apologised to her, she says it is still shocking as they (the retailer) use ec-labs. She stated: "… this is so shocking. And I said it's shocking to me too."

Pest control in retail

A well-known pest control company states on their website that rodents are the number one of the top five pests that affect the retail sector.

In South Africa, hygiene and pest control is ligulated by three laws:

- Act 36 of 1947 (Fertiliser and Farm Act)
- National Health Act R918 (HACCP)
- The Occupational Health and Safety Act

Other laws include:

- SANS 10133:1997 (the application of pesticides in food environments)
- SANS 10049:2012 (food safety management requirements for prerequisite programmes)
- Prerequisite Programmes (PRPs: the foundations for food safety, hygiene and quality to allow your business to comply with HACCP)
- SANS 10156:2007 (the handling of chilled and frozen food); and the Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act 54 of 1972

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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