

Are Barn Owl Boxes Worth It? Let's Run the Numbers

A barn owl box is an upfront cost. The question is what it saves you over the years it sits in your field.

Here are the numbers to weigh against your own operation.

What does a box cost

- Upfront: about \$187 to \$362 per box, depending on materials and install.
- Upkeep: low. Figure one cleaning a year.

What do rodents cost you?

Gophers, voles, and rats hit crops, irrigation, and infrastructure.

- Crop loss: gophers and voles chew roots a

nd girdle young plants. On new vineyards and orchards that run into thousands a year.

- Irrigation repair: replacing a chewed drip line costs hundreds per acre once you add labor and materials.

What owls save

Owls hunt these same rodents at low cost per kill.

A UC study compared the two directly. Trapping ran about \$8.11 per pocket gopher. Rodents taken by barn owls ran about \$0.34 each, according to [UC research published through UC Agriculture and Natural Resources](#).

Some growers who add boxes at about one per ten acres report a steep drop in gopher activity within the first season. Results vary by farm, rodent pressure, and how well owls take to the boxes.

The longer view

- Lower chemical spend. Natural predators ease your reliance on paid rodent control.
- Healthier crop. Less root and vine damage supports yield.
- Better ground. More biodiversity supports soil and water quality over time.

Running the math on your farm

Barn owls will not clear every rodent, and they work alongside trapping and other control, not in place of it.

Put your own numbers in. Weigh the box cost against what you spend now on bait, traps, labor, and irrigation repair. For many farms, the per-rodent cost of owls is hard to beat once the boxes are up.

Want help sizing this for your acreage? A short site review works out how many boxes your ground needs and what they replace in your current pest budget.

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