



1
500g of base mix and eggs in the blender ready to go



2
Add any liquid attractors to the eggs



3
Add the base mix a little at a time...

Winter price freeze!



Last time I wrote about the benefits of a bulk bait deal, but there are other options available if you can't afford to take advantage of a bulk offer. One such option would be to roll your own bait at home

“What?” I hear you say, “Roll bait at home? You’re having a laugh!”

Actually, no! I cannot recall any companies selling fresh rolled boilies back in the ‘good old days’ of the 80s and early 90s. I don’t think anyone rolled fresh frozen bait and only a handful of companies produced shelf life readymades. All of the bait companies around back then

produced a variety of base mixes and flavours, oils, sweeteners and other additives, but that was about it. The only way to have fresh bait was to roll it yourself at home or on the bank. When I lived at home I spent countless hours in my mum’s kitchen, getting my ear bent for stinking the house out, hand rolling batches of fishmeal boilies.

Time has moved on, of course, and everything has

become a lot easier when it comes to sorting out your bait. It’s extremely easy to walk into a tackle shop, grab a kilo of fresh bait from the freezer and off to the lake you go. Maybe the ‘average’ angler out there, who might go fishing for a night each weekend or a weekend’s fishing each month, will probably be the one who buys bait in this way. It’s the most convenient, but certainly not the best value

for money! A kilo of bait costs over a tenner when purchased in this way. Here is a way to cut that cost down, and not by a bit either – by nearly half! When the lake is frozen, get in the kitchen and roll some up for when it does thaw, saving yourself a few bob at the same time!

Getting started

Mainline supplies all its base mixes in kilo bags or 10-kilo



...to produce a more consistent mix



Knead the mix by hand...



...until it forms a malleable paste which is ready to roll



Kit by Gardner, bait by Mainline

for home bait making, and that's Gardner tackle. Gardner supplies sausage guns and rolling tables of all sizes to make the job as easy as possible, from as small as 8mm all the way up to the large sizes. I like the 8mm table for making very small pop-ups to use with a snowman rig, and also for free offerings on waters with no nuisance species. The best bit about the 8mm table is it's cheap as chips to buy and doubles up as a sausage maker, so no need for a gun when using this table. The other Longbase rolling tables are also cheap to purchase and spot on for making smaller batches of bait, say anything up to a few kilos.

Obviously the rolling kit is a one-off purchase, so will push the initial outlay of getting started up a little, but once acquired, and a couple of batches down the

line this kit will have paid for itself and you would reap the rewards and save from then on in. My suggested start-up kit would consist of:

- Sausage gun £14.99, or sausage rolling table £6.50.
- Longbase rolling table £10.99.
- Air-Dry Tray £14.99.
- Air-Dry Bag £4.99.

Bait requirements are simple:

- 10kg Mainline Cell £65
- 1kilo £8.99.
- Cell Liquid Activator £11.50.
- Eggs 75p per mix.
- Polaris Pop-Up mix £7.15.
- Flavour and colour (optional) £10-ish.

Rolling the bait

Keep things clean and organised. I use a blender on a low speed to mix the eggs, flavour and base mix (which is pre-weighed and ready to

go). Use a little vegetable oil (cooking oil is okay) to lubricate the rolling table from time to time; this will produce perfectly formed boilies and prevents them from sticking together too much. After each sausage is rolled into baits, transfer them on to a tray of some sort along with a little dry base mix, again to help stop them sticking to each other.

I like to roll different sizes and also different shapes, sometimes just cutting the sausage into dumbbell shapes before boiling, rather than cutting and rolling – keeps 'em guessing! After the bait is boiled for 90 seconds (refer to manufacturer's guidelines for boiling times) use the Air-Dry Tray to dry the baits off. Once dried transfer to the Air-Dry Bag for 48 hours prior to freezing. In the case of pop-ups and hookbaits,



Approximately half the mix will fully load a Sausage Gun



Alternatively, a Sausage Rolling Table will do the same job



Gun the mix out in sausages to suit the Rolaball



Use a little dry base mix to keep the rolled baits separate

buckets. Effectively, the base mix should produce twice the weight (there or thereabouts) in rolled bait; i.e. a kilo of base mix should produce two kilos of rolled boilies. That's value for money, but then of course you have to take into account your time, eggs, electricity, mess and the start-up cost for kit.

There really is only one company out there which provides all the kit needed



Transfer to an Air-Dry Tray after boiling



Leave the bait to dry for 24 hours



Transfer to Air-Dry Bags for a couple of days before freezing

leave in the Air-Dry Bag for at least a week.

Putting it to the test

I made up a 500g batch of Cell base mix into 14mm baits, and compared it to a kilo of readymade freezer baits to show the difference in the amount of boilies you get for your money. The 500g batch produced just under a kilo of boilies. Depending on the amount you buy, 500g of Cell base mix will cost you about £4 – tops, 70p-worth of Cell Liquid, and the eggs were 60p. If you purchased a 10-kilo bucket of base mix the costs would be reduced even more – sounds good to me! In short, a kilo of freezer baits is around £11 in the tackle shops, whereas rolling the mix at home to produce the same amount of bait is £5.30 – half price in effect!

Pop-ups and hookbaits

Once you have purchased the kit to roll your own baits, take full advantage and also make your own pop-ups and hookbaits at home, again making savings as you go.

I use Polaris Pop Up mix along with other Mainline ingredients for my pop-ups. A one-egg pop-up mix will

make approximately 70 baits, depending on size, and will work out a lot cheaper than buying tubs of readymade pop-ups. The other massive advantage of rolling your own is the mass of flavours and other attractors you can use to totally personalise your hookbaits into something no one else could ever copy. If you hit on a combo that takes the lake apart, it's yours and yours alone!

Recession busting

The recession has hit most of us hard this past year or so, and bait is probably the biggest drain on our pockets, so it really does pay to invest in some rolling kit. Of course, the initial cost of buying the kit may make it seem as expensive as buying bait from the freezer, but not too far down the road it will pay for itself.

There is no one way of buying bait that is better than all the rest; this is just another option. If you are one of the anglers that purchases bait a kilo or two at a time because of freezer room, budget or you only fish one night a fortnight, this could be the best option for you. For anglers who fish more regularly and use more bait Gardner also produce

professional rolling kit that will cope with kilos and kilos of base mix, or I could recommend a bulk deal rolled by Kent Particles.

The 500g batch along

with the pop-ups took me just over an hour to produce, is it worth the time? I would definitely say so, so why not freeze the price of your bait this winter!



The 8mm Rolaball – perfect for making high-visibility/ attractor pop-ups for snowman hookbaits



A big winter common taken on a home-made hookbait