

How We Tested

To test the guns, we equipped each rifle with a Pentax 6-24 MC AO Lightseeker scope mounted in Millett rings and bases. This model represents about the top end in magnification that can be used in this type of test. Anything higher becomes difficult to use as the rifle warms up and heat mirage distorts the sight picture. By equipping all four rifles with the same riflescope model, we were able to level the playing field on sighting equipment and eliminate one variable. All shooting was done at the 24X setting when possible and with the AO parallax adjustment set for 100 yards. There were times late in an ammo string when, due to heat mirage, a lower setting was required. The scope was then turned down enough to give a sharp view of the target, usually to about 18 or 20 power, and the test shooting continued from there.

All four rifles were chambered in .22-550 Remington, a popular varmint caliber. We tested them with four brands of ammunition: The Hornady Varmint Express label, which features the new 55-grain V-Max plastic-tipped bullet; Remington 55-grain Power-Lokt Hollow Points; Winchester 52-grain Hollow Point Boattails; and Federal Premium 55-grain Boattail Hollow Points.

All accuracy and chronograph testing was conducted from a bench rest using Uncle Bud's bench bag with a heel bag. The temperature was in the mid-nineties with high humidity. There was a mild left to right breeze blowing consistently throughout the test. The sky was overcast and bright. All groups were fired at 100 yards and measured center to center of the widest holes.

Before starting the test each rifle was cleaned using Shooter's Choice Firearms Bore Cleaner on a patch, followed with a clean patch. Then a bronze brush saturated with Shooter's Choice Firearms Bore Cleaner was passed through the bore several times. This was followed by several clean patches and then with a couple of patches soaked with Birchwood Casey Gun Scrubber. Then the gun was cleaned with the Outers Foul Out Electronic bore cleaner and again given the patch-and-solvent treatment. This was repeated until each bore was completely clean of any fouling, as indicated by clean patches with no black marks from powder fouling or green stains from copper fouling.



Above: We equipped each rifle with a Pentax 6-24 MC AO Lightseeker scope mounted in Millett rings and bases. By equipping all four rifles with the same riflescope model, we were able to eliminate one variable.



Above: Dave Brown shoots at a South Dakota prairie dog with the Remington 700 VS SF. The portable shooting bench and sand bag is by Uncle Bud's.



Above: We tested our .22-550 Remington rifles using Hornady's 55-grain V-Max plastic-tipped Varmint Express load along with rounds from Remington, Winchester, and Federal.

After firing a couple of fouling shots to ensure that the actions were well seated in the stocks, testing began. Each rifle was used to fire four five-shot groups with each of the ammo selections. The groups were fired in sequence with the full 20 shots fired before the rifle was allowed to cool. This not only allowed evaluation of the accuracy of the rifle with this ammo, but by firing twenty shots in a short time span, we could see the rifle's reaction to heat generated by the ammo.

After each 20-shot segment of the test, each rifle's bore was again cleaned following the wet patch, dry patch, brush, dry patch sequence until clean. Before starting testing again one fouling shot was fired.