

## WHEN THE INSPECTOR CALLS

Can dropping size indicate the age of rats?



**NEW BENEFIT!**



**BPCA LAUNCHES 24/7 'FIND A PEST CONTROLLER' HELPLINE**



**Researching resistance**  
Industry's call to action



**Literacy in pest control**  
If you can't read, is pest control for you?

**Full time pest control officers over**

Authority	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Population
Waltham, London Borough of	28.8	287,000
Wokingham City Council	267.7	1,016,800
Manchester City Council	115.6	498,800
Wolverhampton City Council	109.6	441,300
Liverpool City Council	111.8	434,900
Edinburgh, City of	264	486,120

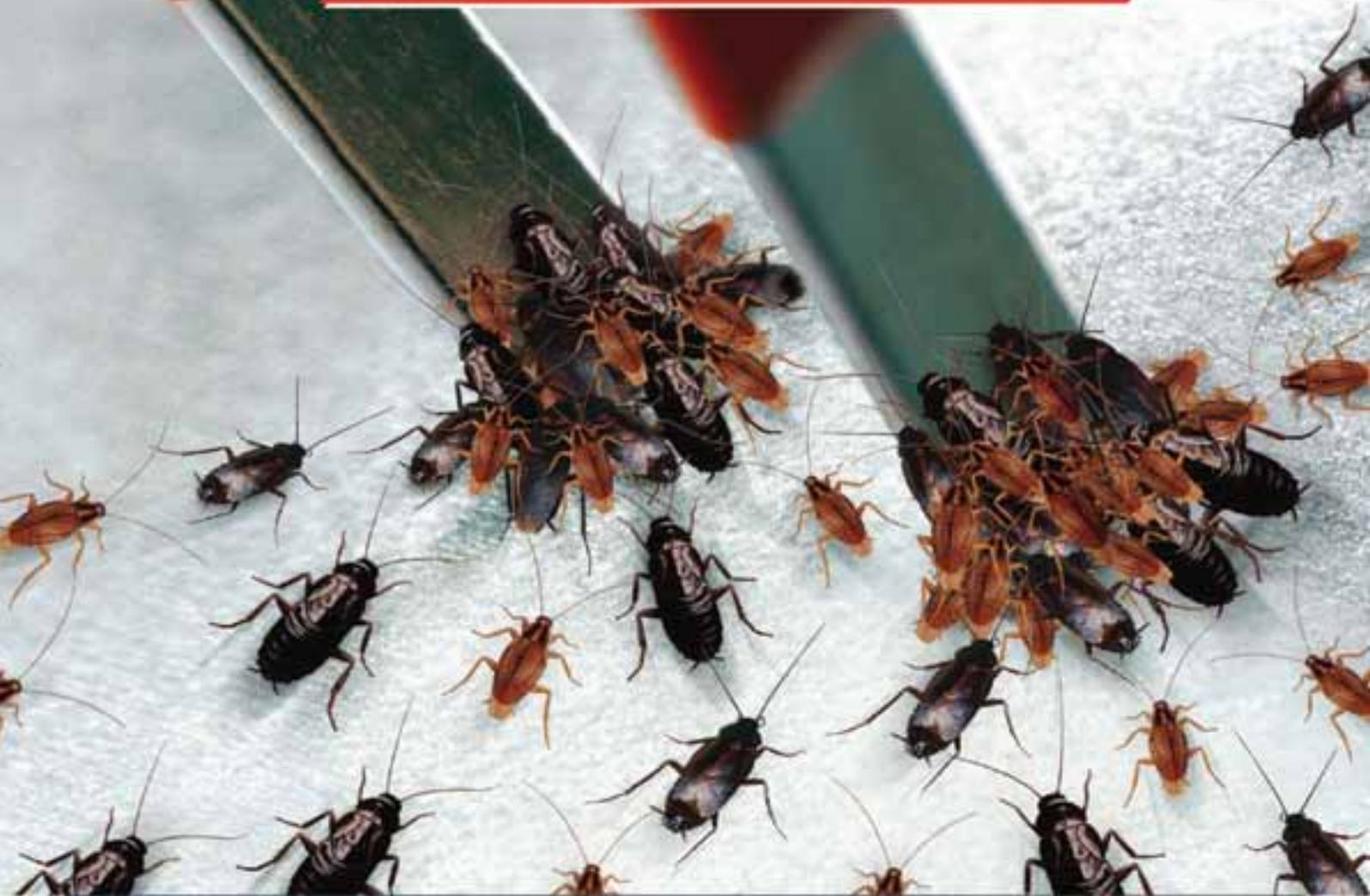
**National Survey 2012**  
BPCA launches survey of local authority activity



**Pest in show**  
How innovation in pest control happens

# NEW

Astounding attraction. Remarkable results.



- Controls all major cockroach species
- Exceptionally attractive gel bait
- Consistent high performance



**Maxforce**  
PRIME

## Networking events

### BPCA AGM

27 June / Derby

[www.bpca.org.uk/news.html](http://www.bpca.org.uk/news.html)

### FAOPMA

11-13 July / Adelaide Convention Centre, Australia

[www.faopma.com](http://www.faopma.com)

### Total Workplace Management

11-12 October / Olympia, London

[www.twmexpo.com](http://www.twmexpo.com)

### PestWorld

17-20 October / Boston, USA

[www.npmapestworld.org](http://www.npmapestworld.org)

### PestTech

7 November / Solihull, West Midlands

[www.npta.org.uk](http://www.npta.org.uk)

[www.pesttech.org.uk](http://www.pesttech.org.uk)

### Parasitec

14-16 November / Paris

[www.parasitec.org](http://www.parasitec.org)



**PestEx 2013**

10-11 April / ExCeL Centre, London

**thepestworld2012  
experience**

MAKING CONNECTIONS + FINDING  
ANSWERS + INCREASING PROFITS

Pestworld 2012 / October 17-20  
/ Sheraton Boston Hotel

John B. Hynes Veterans'  
Memorial Convention Center

## Training

BPCA's training courses and examinations are run throughout the year at venues all around the UK.

Full 2012 training calendar

[www.bpct.org.uk](http://www.bpct.org.uk)

...and in PPC68!

Examinations	2012 dates	Venue	Member cost (exc. VAT)	Non-member (exc. VAT)
RSPH/BPCA Level 2 Award in Pest Management <small>Exams can be arranged to suit other requirements at the discretion of the BPCA, minimum of six candidates, there may be an additional cost.</small>	13 July	BPCA offices, Derby		
	17 August	BPCA offices, Derby		
	14 September	Warwick University, Coventry		
	28 September	West London - TBC	£130	£145
	12 October	Leeds - TBC		
	16 November	Essex - TBC		
	14 December	Warwick University, Coventry		
BPCA Accredited Technician in Pest Control	20 September	BPCA offices, Derby	£225	£305
BPCA Certificate in Bird Management	20 June 26 October	BPCA offices, Derby	£90	£105
BPCA Fumigation Diploma	20 June 26 October	BPCA offices, Derby	£125	£145
BPCA Fumigation Certificate of Proficiency	20 June 26 October	BPCA offices, Derby	£210	£265
BPCA Certificated Field Biologist	17 October	BPCA offices, Derby	£285	£390

Courses	PROMPT CPD	2012 dates	Venue	Member cost (exc. VAT)	Non-member (exc. VAT)
<b>NEW</b> General Pest Control (modular)	TBC	Call for info	BPCA offices, Derby	TBC	TBC
General Pest Control (residential)	24	9-14 September 9-14 December	Warwick University, Coventry Warwick University, Coventry	£875*	£1045*
Pest Control Awareness for Administrators	8	11 September	Hilton Newbury North, Newbury	£165	£195
Insect Classification and Identification	10	12 September 12 December	Warwick University, Coventry Warwick University, Coventry	£165	£195
5 day Fumigation Course	30	Call for info	BPCA offices, Derby	£875	£1075
Urban Bird Control and Management	20	13-14 November	BPCA offices, Derby	£300	£365
Stored Product Inspection and Control	10	9 October	Hilton Newbury North, Newbury	£165	£195
So you want to be a Field Biologist?	8	11 October	Hilton Newbury North, Newbury	£165	£195
Heat Treatment Technicians Course	22	23-24 October	BPCA offices, Derby	£300	£365

\* includes full-board accommodation, BPCA/RSPH Level 2 Award in Pest Management exam fee and access to the BPCA Online Learning programme for six weeks prior to the course.

Book by calling 01332 225 113 or via [www.bpca.org.uk/training.html](http://www.bpca.org.uk/training.html)

Every effort is made to ensure all events run to plan, but BPCA reserves the right to cancel events. A full refund will be given for a booking that is removed by the Association.

## Regional forums

BPCA is running a series of events round the UK designed to help your business compete, and your staff stay safe. Book your place by calling 01332 225 111 or via [www.bpca.org.uk/news.html](http://www.bpca.org.uk/news.html)

19 September / North East

26 September / South

10 October / Scotland

17 October / Home Counties

24 October / East Midlands

14 November / Northern Ireland

21 November / Essex/Kent Border

## Online learning

The flexible approach to pest control training, learn at your own pace at times to suit you.

[www.bpca.skillgate.com](http://www.bpca.skillgate.com)

Online learning	Member cost (exc. VAT)	Non-member (exc. VAT)	
<b>Individual modules</b>	Principles of pest control		
	Birds	£100 per module per year	£100 per module per year
	Insects		
	Mammals		
	Rodents		
<b>All modules</b>	£300 per year	£500 per year	

# Vote early, vote often

The Fast Show used to have a character who said “this month I have mostly been...” and finished the sentence off with some weird phrase. I have to sympathise. This month I have been working on revising the BPCA Articles of Association, manning an exhibition stand alongside a bed bug dog, interviewed by the press about local authorities, and working out the rate of exchange for the Bahraini Dinar. Why the Dinar, you may ask? Sadly it’s not my holiday destination: BPCA has been asked to carry out training in the Middle East, and we’ve started planning for the end of the year.

Speaking of training, we’ve listened to our UK members, who have concerns about sending staff on week-long courses, and so we are introducing modular training around the BPCA/RSPH Level 2 Award in Pest Management. This uses our unique online learning package, supported by our British Pest Manual, which this month is undergoing a full overhaul.

On the research front, May saw the launch of BPCA’s first National Survey of Pest Species, based on responses from all 393 UK local authorities, and this got us a lot of press attention. We spoke to hundreds of your potential customers at the Facilities Show, and I was very pleased with the response from them to our request to only use professionals.

The recent prosecution of a pest controller over use and storage of metallic phosphide fumigants shows how the powers-that-be take the issue of old stocks and poor stewardship very seriously.

Finally I am very pleased and proud to see that **alexo** magazine has been shortlisted for the Trade Association Forum ‘Magazine of the Year’ Award. I think this reflects well on the whole sector, showing we can deliver a polished and professional magazine of interest to clients,



demonstrating the need for FMs to use trained and competent companies. The results are announced at the end of June, which seems to be a busy time for voting. BPCA’s forthcoming AGM is on Wednesday 27 June, and I am pleased to note that there has been a lot of interest in joining the Executive Board – a sure sign of a healthy association. The papers are now out asking for your votes so please take a few minutes to respond.

The AGM also sees the launch of the consultation process for Version 2 of the European Code of Practice for Bed Bug Management, so make sure you get your hands on a copy and send in your comments to make it the best it can be. This is our chance to write a strong document that will be used by clients, pest controllers, everyone, so please do have your say.



**Simon Forrester**  
BPCA chief executive  
[simon@bpca.org.uk](mailto:simon@bpca.org.uk)



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**CPD** for 2012: 2 points



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[@britpestcontrol](https://twitter.com/britpestcontrol)



## TINO TAKES OVER

Following Rupert Broome's departure to become MD at Killgerm, Agostino 'Tino' Panetta has been promoted to European Business Manager for Bell Laboratories, managing sales of Bell's rodent control products in Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA). Prior to joining Bell, Panetta gained sales and managerial experience as a key account manager for Messer France SA and, prior to that, as sales representative for Kayserberg Packaging. For the past

decade he has been Bell's regional manager for Southern Europe, and is a regular sighting at industry conferences.

Commenting on the promotion, Mark Westover, Bell's Vice President of Global Sales said "Tino's knowledge of Bell's customer base and product line will enable him to gather and synthesize market information and to monitor product performance in order to enhance existing customer relationships and to build new ones."

[www.belllabs.com](http://www.belllabs.com)

## alexo FOR THE WIN!

BPCA is proud to have been shortlisted for the Magazine of the Year award in the Trade Association Forum 2012 Best Practice Awards. These awards are run

for all associations across the UK, and are a benchmark for best practice in trade bodies. TAF Manager Linda Cavender said "this year we were overwhelmed with entries, the quality of which was exceptionally high." The winners will be announced at the TAF Annual Networking and Awards Dinner on 28th June 2012 at the Plaisterer's Hall in London. BPCA is up against some big names, including the National Association of Funeral Directors and the Painting & Decorating Association – here's hoping we kill the competition and can then paint the town red! (Sorry, couldn't resist – Ed.)

[www.taforum.org](http://www.taforum.org)



## BPCA: into the future

BPCA is holding our AGM and Open Meeting on Wednesday 27 June from 2.00pm at our Derby HQ – we'd be very pleased to see you there. Apart from the standard AGM items of business, we also have the announcement of the successful candidates to the two positions on our Executive Board, so do come and meet the people representing you on the Board.

The AGM is followed by an open meeting – your chance to see what BPCA is doing, and to give us your views directly. The open meeting features both a presentation from the incoming President Henry Mott of Conquer Pest Control on his vision for BPCA, and also the launch of consultation process on the European Code of Practice for Bed Bugs.



## SX catalogue hits the mat

SX Environmental Supplies (now part of BPCA Member P+L Systems) has released a new product catalogue, available by post or online.

[www.pestcontrolonline.com](http://www.pestcontrolonline.com)

## Letters to the editor

Hello Simon,

We would like to take the time to send you this short email to ask if you would forward to all relevant parties concerned with PPC66 March 2012.

The edition of March PPC66 dated 2012 was, without doubt, one of the best we have read for some considerable time, it did cause some of the most interesting debates on the various contents on a Friday afternoon in our office for as long as I can remember. Our staff were glued to the one copy we receive to the point we thought a friendly fight may erupt over the issues and, may I say, they even stayed way beyond finishing time to make and win their point on the various contents.

Well done to all, as we know it's not easy to please all members but that was a great issue.

Kind regards,  
Richard Bone  
Des Bone Ltd.

Hi Simon,

I would like to comment on an article that you wrote way back for **alexo** issue one. I have to admit that I didn't like the title of the magazine and thought that I probably wouldn't like the contents either!

How wrong I was!! The article 'Punching above their weight' was perfect reading for me at the time as I was in the latter stages of planning my own pest control business. I found the article provided much food for thought and there was a lot of material that I found to be encouraging to someone in the same situation as me!

I'm not a BPCA member just yet; that's to be addressed in the future!

Yours,  
Elliot Lowe  
Cavalry Pest Solutions

Hi Simon

Great National Survey pest report, well done to the team who put it all together!

Kind regards,  
Richard Lunn  
SX Environmental Supplies Ltd

[editor@ppconline.org](mailto:editor@ppconline.org)

## New faces at BPCA

In April BPCA welcomed two new people...



**Emily Wills**  
**Administration**  
**Assistant**

I manage BPCA HQ reception and any associated administration work, such as enquiry handling, answering phones, greeting guests and preparing materials for meetings. I also provide administration support to all areas within BPCA, including training, events, membership and finance.

Before joining BPCA I was in full time education, studying business at a local college. It was there I undertook some admin work and decided to look for a local apprenticeship.

BPCA will offer me good opportunity to learn on the job, and teach me some valuable skills that will carry me forward throughout my life.

**Laurence Barnard**  
**Marketing and**  
**Communications**  
**Officer**

I am responsible for the marketing and communications of the association. This includes the development and maintenance of our websites, presence on external websites, social media, online and email marketing, and the management and advertising of PPC and **alexo** magazines.

Before joining BPCA I worked in Higher Education in Marketing at the University of Derby, with similar responsibilities to my current role. Prior to working for the University I was responsible for marketing at the Students Union (similar membership organisation), in which I managed and edited a monthly student magazine with a readership of 20,000.

I joined BPCA as the pest control industry seemed like an interesting sector to get involved in, and it hasn't disappointed.



## The British Pest Management Manual has been updated!



The British Pest Management Manual is *the* reference manual for the management of public health pests.

The level of expertise of pest control technicians has changed over the years, and whilst the basic skills such as the recognition of animal signs and the correct setting of traps still need to be learnt and developed in the field, there is a requirement to be technically competent in legislation, pesticide use, resistance to pesticides and health and safety issues. The responsibility that goes with the use of pesticides is considerable.

The need to protect the environment forms an increasingly important part of the pest technicians' duties. As well as being an essential tool for the basic training of pest control technicians, the manual can also be used effectively for refresher training and by supervisory staff and others for reference purposes. It should be used as an adjunct to training which it is not intended to replace.

Sections:

- Principles of pest management
- Legislation
- Invertebrates
- Commensal rodents
- Mammals

For each species considered in detail there is a description and an account of its biology followed by details of the damage which it may cause, signs of presence, methods of preventing the damage and control measures. There is also a summary of the main relevant legislation and a short list of references.

To order copies (£110 plus postage) call 01332 225 113.

[www.bpca.org.uk/bpmanual.html](http://www.bpca.org.uk/bpmanual.html)

## NOVEL ANT BAIT OFFERS RELIABLE WHOLE COLONY CONTROL

A new bait has been launched by BASF Pest Control Solutions for UK pest controllers requiring ant control. Bringing the proven power of fipronil (best known in cockroach bait, Goliath) to the professional ant control market for the first time, Formidor is primarily recommended for controlling black garden ants (*Lasius niger*), yellow ants (*Lasius flavus*), red lasius ants (*Lasius emarginatus*) and pavement ants (*Tetramorium caespitum*).

Research shows liquid baits are better than gels in worker ant uptake, distribution throughout the colony and overall control. Formidor is formulated as a sugary honeydew liquid. Manufacturer's studies show it to be irresistible to foraging ants, which cannot detect the insecticide active, while maintaining both its attractiveness and activity over an extended period.

The 0.05% concentration of fipronil is carefully balanced so the insecticide only begins to have a lethal effect between 12 and 24 hours after ingestion. This ensures workers have sufficient time to share the bait widely with adults, larvae and queens

throughout the colony before succumbing.

In normal use BASF calculates each 25ml bottle of Formidor should be sufficient to treat around 250 metres of ant runs, making treatment particularly cost-effective. Approved for use both in and around domestic and commercial buildings, the bait is virtually odourless to humans and has a very low toxicity to warm-blooded animals. The new bait goes hand-in-hand with BASF's Ant Control Best Practice Guide.

<http://goo.gl/MZezP>





## Olympic-sized delays?

Up to three million additional journeys are expected to be made in London alone during the busiest days of the Olympics. Information on road, tube and rail 'hot-spots' for this summer and the alternatives are available at a special website. Pest controllers working in London and other Olympic host cities are encouraged to review the information available and make necessary adjustments to their plans.

[www.GetAheadoftheGames.com](http://www.GetAheadoftheGames.com)

## AGRISENSE REBRANDS AS SUTERRA



From 1 June this year AgriSense are to rebrand as Suterra. The AgriSense brand will continue to be used on many existing products. Commenting on the change, Caroline James, Design and Marketing Manager for the company, said: "AgriSense was purchased by Suterra LLC in 2006 and the new name completes the company's integration into its new corporate family."

The company will launch a revamped website in the coming months.

[www.suterra.com](http://www.suterra.com)

## WINNERS

The winners of last issue's competition to win copies of 'IPM for Collections' were Scott Mays of Rokill, and David Watson of VIP Control – well done to you both.



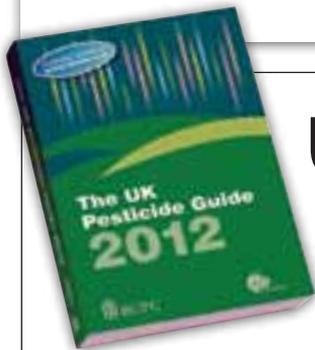
## Aluminium phosphide

The BPCA Servicing Committee has been approached by several servicing members expressing their concerns regarding the quality of Aluminium Phosphide pellets (for vertebrate use). On opening, a limited number of flasks have been found to contain malformed pellets and/or excessive quantities of dust. While a small amount of dust is expected in any flask, this should certainly not exceed 5%.

If you have evidence of these issues, please contact Richard Moseley at BPCA [richard@bpca.org.uk](mailto:richard@bpca.org.uk) so we can find out if this is a widespread issue, and if so, take further action.

We need:

- Product name
  - Name of distributor
  - Date of purchase
  - Batch number
  - Photographic evidence of the problem.
- Please be extremely careful when collecting this evidence, and maintain a safe working environment at all times.



## UK Pesticide Guide

This annual publication, now in its 25th edition, is the only comprehensive printed reference for all products approved for use in agriculture, amenity, forestry and horticulture in the UK and provides the most up-to-date information available for the main spraying season.

Split into six sections the book covers:

- Crop / pest guide index
- Pesticide profiles
- Products also registered – new for 2012
- Adjuvants
- Key information for users of pesticides
- Supplies of pesticides and adjuvants.

New for 2012: new recommendations, products and actives, including updated SOLAs and products as well as the introduction of variety-specific products. The book is available in soft cover with approximately 700pp and costs £44.50. ISBN 978 1 780640 105

The newly-designed UK Pesticide Guide Online database provides a comprehensive, searchable resource on UK pesticides. This unique resource has information on over 1,300 pesticides and adjuvants for use in the UK including agricultural, horticultural, forestry, amenity and pest control use.

The redesigned site has a clearer layout, fresh design and simplified navigation. Being on-line, regular updates can be made to the content through the year.

Employing powerful search technology, the site enables users to:

- Undertake detailed searches
- Access the most comprehensive database on UK pesticides
- Obtain information on mode of action codes, hazard categories, LERAP classifications
- Gain quick access to fact sheets on pesticides, adjuvants, active substances and suppliers.

A 12-month subscription to the site is just £60+VAT. Both the book and online subscription attract BASIS CPD points.



[www.plantprotection.co.uk](http://www.plantprotection.co.uk)  
[www.bcp.org](http://www.bcp.org)

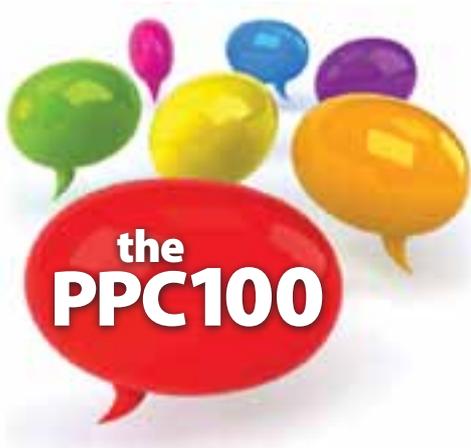
## COMPETITION



For your chance to win a copy of the UK Pesticide Guide (worth £44.50), answer the following question:

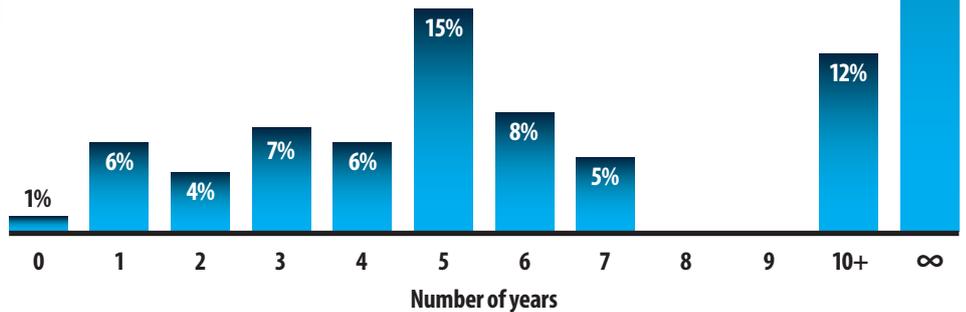
**"Approximately how many pages long is the book?"** Send your answer with your name and postal address to [editor@ppconline.org](mailto:editor@ppconline.org)

One winner will be drawn from all entries received by 2 July 2012.



WE ASKED 100 PEST CONTROLLERS FOR VIEWS ON A TOPIC THAT'S ON THEIR MINDS AT THE MOMENT...

## APPROXIMATELY HOW LONG DO YOU KEEP TREATMENT RECORDS?



The vast majority of pest controllers keep their records safe for at least three years, with a third holding on to them forever – or at least until their next big clear-out! The reasons for keeping records varied, as did the perception of the period for which they should be kept.

### Why keep records?

Many respondents gave specific reasons for storing records. These were summed up nicely by Paul Rodman of Monitor Pest Control, who said “We archive all records created by staff. These are primarily kept for health and safety records (health surveillance e.g. chemical exposure or asbestos); clients; statistics; and legal reasons.”

Many replies indicated a ‘belt and braces’ approach, such as Andy Law from Andy Law Pest Control. “Keeping the records means you’ve got the information to hand if any problems pop up, no matter when!” A fair point echoed by one respondent: “I would not dispose of records – you never know.”

Records are also a valuable tool when pricing contracts. A three-year contract pricing review must take into account the average frequency of visits, and without historical data you may not be cost effective.

### Why dispose of records?

Those who gave a reason for disposal of paper records cited space limitations. Richard Bone from Des Bone Ltd said “We have been down the route of keeping our treatment records for over six years at one stage. We had to review this practice due to space and practicability! After consulting BPCA who were great, they suggested six months. This now works fine for us. We have a turnaround of this paperwork as it very sensible, any issues would have been raised by then and our ISO9001 and

ISO14001 audit team is very satisfied with our practice on this issue. It is without doubt very important for all professional pest control companies to record all data reports generated on every job completed for both your company and your clients’ safety. This ensures that you have a clear recorded and documented path of products used, and your reasons for using pesticides to control pests.”

### Use of IT and storage online

It is clear many people are disposing of paper records completely, scanning and storing documents on PCs or ‘in the cloud’ to save physical space and keep data secure. Henry Mott from Conquer Pest Control gave the following advice: “Over the last decade the cost implication of data storage has dropped to the point where it is not beyond the financial capabilities of even the smallest business to store reports electronically. There are numerous ways to do this from the digital pen systems to handheld Psions and laptops. Given the litigious society we operate in these days I would counsel all members to keep their records indefinitely, as you just don’t know when they might save you a lot of heartache and cost!”

Most have a simple system to archive old paper and electronic files, using PDF format – a universal standard for documents. For some it’s the possibility of winning back a contract that spurs them to store data long term, with one pest controller citing “I would hope that should I not visit a contract site for over five years or so, that I could recover their

records from years gone by from digital backup which will give me a very detailed history of hygiene standards, hinting at future infestation issues, history of environmental health and a general feel for the site over the years.”

Pest Protection Services (Scotland) Ltd noted systems may change – a point worth remembering, because if twenty years ago your records were stored on eight inch floppy disks, you may have trouble accessing that data now, or may have to pay a specialist to retrieve it.

### How long should they be kept?

There appears to be lots of conflicting opinions among pest controllers as to the correct length of time to store records. Julie Little from Pro-Pest Environmental Services Ltd links treatment records with accounting data: “Historically we have kept the paper copies for six years in line with the requirements for retaining financial documentation. We are now looking to dispose of them sooner based on advice from BPCA. However a summary of every visit, including the prep used, is input to our computer system and these records are kept forever.”

Ahmet Baletti from Pestline Ltd agrees: “If we go by the taxman, they go back six years. I believe that should be adequate enough for us pesties as well.” Martin Rose-King of Bounty Pest Control in Ashford, Kent is more cautious, saying “We keep all treatment records and safety sheets. We have been informed that 40 years is the requirement for safety sheets so it’s logical to store the treatment reports and safety sheets together.”

BPCA's advice has always been that paper records aren't needed themselves, except for a short period should an issue arise. Far better to summarise any records online, and keep such files safe and sound with a regular back-up. Recent legal cases over mesothelioma from asbestos inhalation many years ago have shown the importance of keeping accurate records of acute or prolonged low-level exposure to specific issues (e.g. pesticides, asbestos or similar). The providers of BPCA's BusinessShield, Stallard Kane, advise "the legal requirement for medical surveillance records is 40 years, so BPCA members should have systems in place to store data for at least this long".

BPCA's Richard Moseley commented "Medical surveillance may not be legally required – seek BPCA advice if unsure, and always carry the free leptospirosis/ornithosis card."

Many pest controllers will remember the old 'Blue Code' (Approved Code of Practice for the Safe Use of Pesticides for Non-Agricultural Purposes), which stated investigating bodies expect to see records for at least three years without delay. This document became part of the new 'Green Code' covering many fields of usage, with agricultural use dominant. One point which is frequently missed out under health surveillance is the requirement to keep records of the checking of respiratory protective equipment (for five years).

So it's clear that it's unclear. Different documents need to be kept for different lengths of time. Our summary (below) sets out the situation as we understand it – if you know more please get in touch. If you have a question to put to the industry, contact [editor@ppconline.org](mailto:editor@ppconline.org)

TYPE OF RECORD	MINIMUM TIME TO KEEP (YEARS)
Pesticide store records	Until updated
COSHH assessment / environmental risk assessment	Until revised (annual review common)
Paper records	6 months (stored electronically thereafter)
General waste transfer notes and disposal records	3
Hazardous waste consignment notes and disposal records	3
Local Environment Risk Assessment for Pesticides (LERAPs)	5
Supply and distribution of plant protection products	5
Monitoring of exposure in the workplace (general samples)	5
Maintenance, inspection and testing of exposure control (e.g. RPE)	5
Tax records	6
Treatment records	As long as possible
Monitoring of exposure to individual, identifiable people	40 years
Health surveillance records	40 years

## Record keeping: Natural England's view

Dr Ed Blane, Senior Specialist, Wildlife Management, Natural England

The need to make and maintain records of pesticide applications is now well established. As well as addressing both the health and safety and environmental protection issues, it is also a standard bearer for professionalism.

However, the length of time that these records should be kept varies with the nature of the record. The 'Green Code' states that: "Enforcement officers should be able to consult records for at least the past three years without delay." There is also EU guidance given in Article 67 of regulation 1107/2009 – which again states that professional users of plant protection products must keep records for at least three years (five years for those supplying and distributing the products). So keeping for three years should be taken as a good starting point but there is a legal requirement to keep some records for longer (see table).

There are other reasons why some records should be kept for longer, although not readily at hand for inspection. Past treatment records can be useful in planning rodent control work where resistance to anticoagulants has been found. They can also be a useful reminder of site-specific features, e.g. why a particular treatment worked well at a certain location.

Records relating to actions taken at the end of a treatment are also useful to show that all your bait points and bait were removed. Some sites still have forgotten bait points with remains of bait going back years. These can still cause poisoning incidents. The subsequent investigation will be asking who placed the bait. Do you have records to show that you removed all your bait points?"

## Cleankill buys Premium Pest Control

Surrey-based Cleankill Environmental Services purchased Premium Pest Control to help expand its customer base across London, focusing in particular on government agencies, local authorities, housing associations, and letting agencies.



Cleankill Managing Director Paul Bates said: "Premium Pest Control has built a strong reputation for excellent customer service which is why the company was such a good fit with our brand."

The purchase of Premium, which had offices in North London, increases Cleankill's team to 22 strong.

Cleankill recently won the Best for Customer Service category in the Croydon Business Awards and has been put forward for the same category in the South London Business Awards.

[www.cleankill.co.uk](http://www.cleankill.co.uk)

## TENOPA: THE CLOCK IS TICKING

**Pest controllers in the UK will only be able to continue using insect treatment Tenopa until 31st July 2012 under national arrangements following last autumn's European Commission decision not to include insect growth regulator, flufenoxuron on Annex 1 of the Biocidal Products Directive. At this date the product loses its approval for sale, supply, storage, use and disposal.**

<http://goo.gl/lfG7f>



## Exosect begins trials of biopesticide for grain store insect control

Exosect has started full scale trials of a product to control insects in grain stores. The technology has been developed as a result of a UK government funded project to develop a sustainable technology to replace pesticides and key fumigants which were being removed from the market such as methyl bromide.

Exosect's CEO, Martin Brown commented "Recent figures estimate global post-harvest grain losses due to insect pest damage to be upwards of 30%. With the importance of global food security, finding ways to reduce the amount of food wasted is as important as finding ways to grow more. These trials mark another significant step towards reducing post-harvest losses in grain storage and this has the potential to be applied to other stored commodities."

The new product comprises Exosect's platform technology, Entostat powder, (a unique food grade wax powder which acts as a delivery mechanism for a range of active ingredients), and the entomopathogenic fungi, *Beauveria bassiana*. Exosect has exclusive rights to an isolate of this particular fungi which kills grain beetles, weevils and other stored grain insects. Its use in the control of malaria-transmitting mosquitoes is also under investigation.

*Beauveria bassiana* is a fungus which causes white muscadine disease in insects. When spores of this fungus come in contact with the skin of susceptible insects, they germinate and grow directly through to the inner body of their host. Here the fungus proliferates throughout the insect's body, producing toxins and draining the insect of nutrients, eventually killing it. Therefore, unlike bacterial and viral pathogens of insects, *Beauveria* and other fungal pathogens infect the insect with contact and do not need to be consumed by their host to cause infection.

Lewis Jenkins from Check Services said "The lab results look very promising and we wanted to be involved in the initial field trial. Check Services Ltd has been advising on application equipment and treatment procedures from an 'end user' perspective."

The trials are being carried out in the UK, in full size grain stores along with three of the projects collaborators, CABI, FERA and BPCA member Check Services. Realistic application tools will be used and the data obtained from the trials will be used for the first ever regulatory dossier for this type of product.

[www.exosect.com](http://www.exosect.com)

[www.checkservices.co.uk](http://www.checkservices.co.uk)

## Pest control combats gang warfare

Killgerm has helped a group of teens set up a pest control business as part of an innovative new project which aims to combat extremism and gang culture among young people.

The Active Change Foundation (ACF) charity in Leyton is overseeing the young enterprise scheme in response to rising unemployment in the borough.

Projects Director Hanif Qadir said: "We had the idea of helping a few young people at our youth centre set up a business to give them

responsibility and jobs. I thought pest control was a good idea as I often hear about restaurants who have problems with mice and I think there is a gap in the market."

The 'Xterminators' - made up of a team of six young people from troubled backgrounds - have undergone training from Killgerm and have prepared a marketing strategy before they launched in Waltham Forest recently.

Asad Ullah, 18, of Walthamstow spent much of his teenage years in a gang around

Walthamstow Market before being given a second chance by ACF. He said: "Pest control was not something I'd ever thought about doing but I didn't have any opportunities so I thought I'd give it a pop. It's actually worked out quite well, I've learnt a lot and it's great working with other young people, we're one big family. Everything has changed for me."

[www.xterminators.co.uk](http://www.xterminators.co.uk)

Involved in corporate social responsibility? Contact [editor@ppconline.org](mailto:editor@ppconline.org)

# THE PEST ADVENTURE

'Bread and butter pests' was this year's topic of choice at the Pest Ventures technical seminar, but did it deliver 'exactly what it said on the leaflet?' BPCA Marketing Officer Laurence Barnard reports.

Having read the previous issue of PPC magazine when I joined BPCA last month, most notably the regulation update, the permanent baiting debate, and the 'Rodent control in food manufacturing sites' article, I felt well and truly prepared to face the rodent-based technical seminar in Kegworth, Nottinghamshire.



The day began with Killgerm's Jonathan Peck outlining the future of pest control legislation, and impending labelling changes (well, potentially impending). This was swiftly followed by a brief overview of 'The National UK Pest Management Survey'. Personally I felt that, as well as the fairly low response rate of 20%, the research could have delivered more. Forgive the shameless plug, but if are interested in a national survey that truly

delivers, then look no further than page 18 of this issue. However, to give it its due, the survey did show that local authorities are more optimistic about the future, and the figures for percentages of each pest type broadly matched those

of the BPCA survey.

The highlight of the day had to be the session which included an interesting talk from David Oldbury on 'A national strategy for rat control in sewers', followed by a guided discussion from Clive Boase, revisiting the old technique of block control.

Lunch was followed by Professor Robert Smith's research on the anticoagulant resistance in Norway rats in the UK, and John Charlton and colleagues' research on resistance in house mice. I couldn't do justice to a summary of either of these sessions in a mere

few sentences, as their research is both extensive and thought provoking, so I'm not going to. You've missed the boat on those talks I'm afraid. However, don't be upset as I believe a lot for the material they covered is available on the RRAG website, so every cloud...

Pest Ventures concluded with a debate on the end of permanent baiting. Even though this was the last session of the day I don't think any of the delegates left would disagree with me when I say the master of ceremonies Adrian Meyer delivered and managed a thought-provoking and topical debate on this future and prevalent issue.

Having not been in the industry until recently I was pleasantly surprised with how much I found to engage and interest me in the sessions. I'm the first person to admit I have recently been bitten by the 'pest control bug' (forgive the pun), and I can honestly say I thoroughly enjoyed the day. The delivery, structure and overall presentation of 'Pest Ventures' was very palatable.

[www.bpca.org.uk/rrag/index.html](http://www.bpca.org.uk/rrag/index.html)

## Bradshaw Bennett Ltd

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Rising insurance costs? Are you getting value for money? Bradshaw Bennett, the broker with over 30 years' experience, offers an exclusive specialist liability scheme, approved by the British Pest Control Association. The scheme offers wide cover and high claim limits are also available.

[www.pestcontrolinsurance.co.uk](http://www.pestcontrolinsurance.co.uk)



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# CEN PROJECT POWERS UP



A recent meeting of the CEN project on a common European standard for pest management was held at the HQ of the British Standards

Institute. Representatives from standards bodies, which include pest control associations from across Europe attended, including BPCA. The standard is being written not by civil servants, but by pest controllers and their associations, and is designed to focus on the professional pest control company, not the individual technicians within it.

The meeting focused on key issues like what should and should not be included within the definition of 'pest management' as an activity, a review of the work carried out so far on the definitions, the requirements and competences, and the verification process; and finally a run through of the current draft document on a line-by-line basis.

First-time attendee BPCA Chief Executive Simon Forrester said "I was really surprised to see how similar the views are across Europe, and the enthusiasm for a common benchmark for pest controllers everywhere. As expected, definitions such as 'professional user' will be vital in ensuring the success of the project, and may lead to formal regulation for our industry." Simon has been asked to join the CEN project to assist with drafting of parts of the standard.



Rob Fryatt, who is the independent chair of the CEN Project, and previously a BPCA Board member for many years said "The European team is making great progress toward delivering a standard by the end of 2013, the challenges to the industry are common across Europe and the need for a European Standard shared by all".

The standard is voluntary, but it is likely that associations will help their members to achieve it, possibly through the production of guidance documents and a process for measuring them against the standard.

Rob Fryatt reported that associations across the globe have expressed interest in the CEN project, including USA, South Africa, China, Australia and Singapore. The meeting agreed a timescale to produce a draft for consultation by the whole of industry towards the end of the year, following the next CEN meeting in Italy.

[www.cepa-europe.org](http://www.cepa-europe.org)



## Chameleon Vega – now in white

The new 'in' colour for fly traps is white. The Chameleon Vega from PestWest is an energy-efficient, discreet stainless-steel unit with a coverage area of 150m<sup>2</sup>.

Keeping the end user in mind, the design of the Chameleon Vega allows for quick, easy and tool-free service which saves time and money. The front cover stays open through a self-locking mechanism, and the elimination of a catch tray improves and speeds up maintenance. The glue board is interchangeable with other Chameleon range fly traps reducing servicing and stock-keeping costs.

[www.pestwest.com](http://www.pestwest.com)



## Mont St Michel is now 'Bird Free'

Bird Free has recently visited France on a roadshow. Ian Smith from JJBio said "As a result of our first foray across The Channel, we are seeing a great deal of interest in our fire gel products." For starters, Bird Free has been installed at the World Heritage site Mont St Michel in Normandy and the historic Gibert Jeune bookstore in Paris.

[www.bird-free.com](http://www.bird-free.com)

### CHLOROPICRIN WITHDRAWAL

Chloropicrin will cease to be available from 24th June 2013, with the use-up period from 24th June 2012 in the EU. It is believed that, as the pesticide is required for a range of crops, the manufacturers will resubmit an application for inclusion onto

annex one. At the moment there are no comparative alternatives for Chloropicrin for controlling verticillium wilt in a wide range of crops including strawberries and raspberries in the U.K. and other horticultural crops, such as tomatoes and peppers in southern Europe.



### Wildlife Aware Register of Accredited Technicians

Wildlife Aware Accreditation indicates to customers for rodent pest control services that those who hold the accreditation work to the highest standards in order to achieve effective pest control.

*Show customers that you're a true professional*



For further details on Wildlife Aware see: [www.thinkwildlife.org.uk](http://www.thinkwildlife.org.uk)  
[hope@basis-reg.co.uk](mailto:hope@basis-reg.co.uk)

Dr Steve Havers from Pest Management Consultants Ltd revisits the case of a rat infestation where droppings were being used to judge the age of rodents.

# When an inspector calls

During the examination of a commercial kitchen, an inspector discovered a number of rat droppings ranging in size from 'small' to 'large'. In view of the range of sizes of the droppings he sought the advice of a rodent expert who concluded that either rats of at least two different ages were present, or that one rat had been resident for weeks.

Pest Management Consultants Ltd was able to demonstrate that the conclusion was flawed as it was based on a number of unsubstantiated assumptions, and it failed to take into account biological variability.

In general, a pest control surveyor would be able to determine the numbers of rodents present from the extent and sizes of the droppings, and whether a breeding population with large and small animals was present (Mallis, 1990).

During the inspection of a commercial kitchen, an external auditor discovered a small number of rat droppings of various sizes and concluded that a family of animals were present. The material was sent to a rodent expert who measured the droppings and compared them with a few droppings obtained from two groups of laboratory rats of approximately one and two months of age. The expert concluded that:

- The droppings originated either from animals of at least two age cohorts, with the smaller droppings being produced by animals less than one month old (which, because of its age, would possibly only be active in the proximity of its nest site), or,
- That a one month old rat had gained access to the kitchen and had produced the droppings over a period of about four weeks, with the droppings getting larger as the rat aged.

We were asked to review the assumptions made by the expert in formulating his conclusions, and to carry out their own measurements of rat droppings. The assumptions made by the expert were:

## 1 The weight to age ratio (and therefore expected behaviour) of wild Norway rats may be directly equated with laboratory stock.

King (1923) compared the growth rates of laboratory albino rats and captive, wild-caught Norway rats, and found that the laboratory albino rats grew at a much faster rate even though both were fed on the same diet. She found, for example, that an average 30 day-old laboratory rat had the approximate weight of a 40 day-old wild rat, and a 60 day-old laboratory rat was about the same size as a 95 day-old wild rat.

Apart from weight, there may be considerable differences in behaviour between rats of 4 and 8 weeks of age: they may have been weaned as early as 21 days i.e. just seven days earlier than the age of the younger rat considered, yet be sexually mature a month later (Meehan, 1984) and long left the nest.

Failure to take account of this variability could invalidate any direct comparison between, in this case, the size of droppings from laboratory rats with those of wild rats.

## 2 Different size droppings could only be produced by animals from at least two age cohorts.

### (a) A consideration of approximately one-month old laboratory rats.

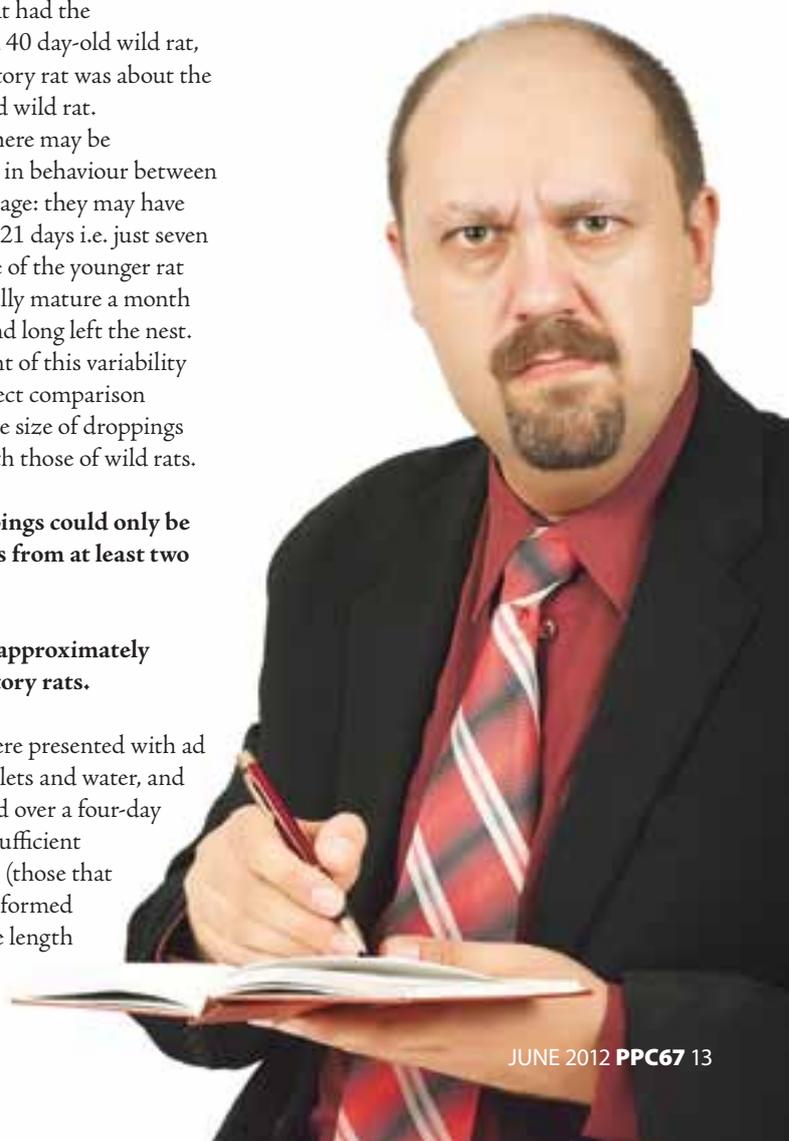
Two male albino rats were presented with ad lib compound cereal pellets and water, and droppings were collected over a four-day period so as to acquire sufficient numbers for assessment (those that were broken or badly deformed were discarded), and the length and diameter were

**“Failure to take account of this variability could invalidate any direct comparison between, in this case, the size of droppings from laboratory rats with those of wild rats.”**

measured with digital callipers. The length of the droppings was found to vary from 7.6mm to 16.6mm showing that droppings are an unreliable guide to the age of a laboratory rat.

A selection of droppings collected from the laboratory rat of approximately one month of age is shown in figure 1 overleaf.

/continued over...



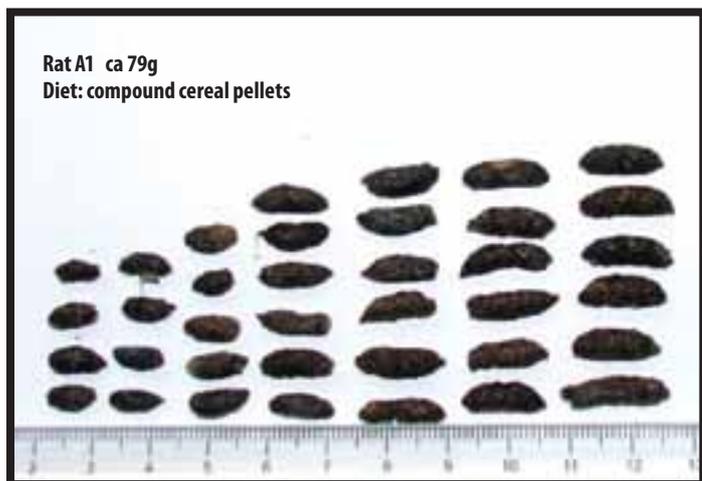


Figure 1. A selection of droppings collected from a rat of approximately one month old.

**(b) The ranges of sizes of droppings produced by laboratory rats of different ages were discrete.**

The frequency of the lengths of droppings produced by a one-month old rat and a two-month old rat, fed on the same diet, were compared (see figure 2).

As may be expected, a larger animal tended to produce larger droppings than a smaller animal, but there was a clear overlap in the range of length of droppings produced by these different aged rats.

**3 Diet does not have any effect on the dimensions of droppings.**

As the diet of rats held in a laboratory is likely to be similar each day and fed ad lib, it is likely that the composition of their droppings will also be similar.

Wild Norway rats are opportunistic omnivores and the composition of their diet may vary daily with resulting differences in composition, texture and shape of droppings.

During the same period that the one- and two-month animals were being offered a compound cereal pellet diet, another pair of identical-aged rats was presented with a whole-wheat and chipped-maize mix. Droppings were also collected from these rats and compared with those from the other, same-age, animals (see table 1).

The lengths of droppings produced by animals on different diets were found to be significantly different.

Following the collection of droppings over a four-day period from the two sets of rats,

the pair receiving compound feed was replaced by a diet consisting of 50% (by weight) of whole wheat and 50% minced beef; the other pair of animals remained on the whole wheat / chipped maize diet.

Allowing for a one-day transit period for the new food to pass through the gut, droppings were collected over the following few days from both pairs of rats. The differences in average length and diameter of the droppings are shown in table 2.

With the exception of the diameters of droppings from the 5+ week old rats, there were no significant differences between the same-age animals following the addition of minced beef to the diet.

Apart from any variations in dimensions, different foodstuffs may also influence the shape of droppings. It was noted that the

inclusion of meat in the diet occasionally resulted in two-or-more small, 'linked' droppings as shown in figure 3.

The results demonstrate that different diets may have a significant effect on the size of droppings.

**4 There was a plentiful food supply for the wild Norway rats around the catering establishment.**

Although it is expected that rats held in a laboratory would have ready access to a balanced diet, the food and water availability for wild rats around the kitchen area was not known, and may have been limited. If food or water was in short supply, it might have reduced the size of the rats' droppings, but we could not explore this for ethical reasons.

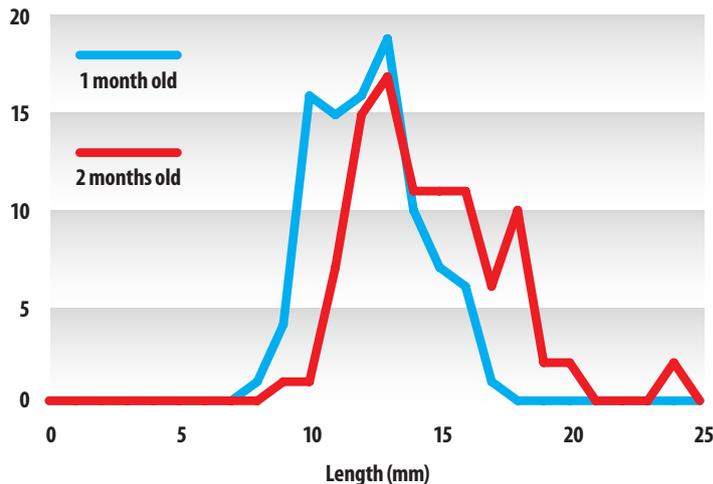


Figure 2. The comparison of percentage frequencies of lengths of droppings produced by rats of ca 1 month and 2 months of age. Sample size of droppings was 66 (1 month-old) and 52 (2 month-old).

Table 1. Comparison of the dimensions of droppings from same-age rats on different diets.

Rat age	Diet	Sample size	Average faecal length mm	max	min	Average faecal diameter mm	max	min
5+ weeks	wheat + meat	23	11.0	14.5	7.9	4.4	5.3	3.7
5+ weeks	whole wheat	71	10.6	14.8	7.4	3.8	4.7	2.9
9+ weeks	wheat + meat	28	13.1	19.3	8.8	5.5	6.9	4.8
9+ weeks	whole wheat	49	12.6	19.1	9.3	5.3	6.9	4.6

Table 2. Comparison of the dimensions of droppings from same-age rats on different diets.

Rat age	Diet	Sample size	Average faecal length mm	max	min	Average faecal diameter mm	max	min
1 month	compound pellet	66	11.7	16.6	7.6	4.2	4.8	3.5
1 month	whole wheat + chipped maize	70	9.6	13.7	6.7	3.5	4.1	2.6
2 months	compound pellet	52	13.9	23.5	8.5	5.5	6.0	4.7
2 months	whole wheat + chipped maize	25	12.1	17.3	7.7	5.4	6.5	3.7



Figure 3. A selection of small, linked droppings found to be associated with a part-meat diet.



## Conclusion

Natural biological variability would suggest that droppings from an individual rat would vary with their food intake such that the size of droppings cannot be used to indicate the age of an animal with any reliability. The results reported here confirm this. The results also demonstrate that comparing the size of droppings of laboratory rats of known age with the size of droppings of wild rats in order to determine the age of the rats, lacks credibility.

[www.pest-management-consultants.co.uk](http://www.pest-management-consultants.co.uk)



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# BPCA membership benefits update

Your Association continues to respond to the needs of industry professionals by delivering more and better benefits. here are just a few...

## BPCA Launches 24/7 'find a pest controller' helpline

BPCA is proud to announce the launch of a new member benefit - a 24/7 hotline to 'find a pest controller'. BPCA Operations Manager Maddy Pritchard said "We are working with Answer4U to introduce a new service which will provide increased benefit and a professional service to our membership and their potential customers."

Last year the BPCA office received over 3,800 calls to the helpline, providing

almost 11,500 leads for our servicing members. This is supported by our web site, which last year saw around 7,500 people use our online search directory to find professional pest controllers for domestic and contract work.

We will be actively promoting the helpline to the public and hope by extending the hours the service is available this will generate more enquiries thus an increase in leads for members.

## BPCA launches Level 2 modular training

BPCA is delighted to announce that it is developing a RSPH/BPCA Level 2 modular training course that can be attended across a 5/6 week period, since some members highlighted that the five day block course did not always suit their business needs.

The new course will be supported by online training provided by BPCA. Each online training section is tailored to the British Pest Management Manual and the three components of the Level 2 exam (Vertebrates, Invertebrates, Legislation and Health and Safety). This approach makes the BPCA modular course unique within the industry, and ensures that candidates attending the training days are suitably prepared for the topics to be covered.

The first BPCA modular course will run in late autumn, dates to be confirmed, at the BPCA offices in Derby. If you would like more information, or wish to register for the course, please contact Tammy Pratt, BPCA Training Officer, on 01332 225113.

## alexo

**alexo** issue three was circulated in May to 15,000 people, and was handed out to visitors at the Facilities Show which required an extra print run. Issue four focuses on 'from farm to fork' and includes articles on:

- Food retail environments
- Packaging: hidden pest problems
- Cleaning up: how to ensure pests can't thrive
- Roundtable discussion: pest control along the supply chain
- The history and importance of public health pest control

One member that already benefits from **alexo** is Green Compliance, securing a contract as a direct result...

"I just visited a large property in Kent, the contact was sourced from the BPCA directory in **alexo** magazine. The client subscribes to **alexo**, and looked for a professional independent operator." Iain Whatley, Green Compliance Pest & Environmental Services



The Contractor Health and Safety Scheme (CHAS) is

designed to ensure that contractors have suitable health and safety procedures in place, via auditing a company's health and safety policies. CHAS allows access to safe contractors without potential customers having to research individual companies. The basic level of CHAS membership, available through BPCA, now has an annual instead of two-year assessment. This brings the scheme in line with the SSIP (Safety Schemes in Procurement) group, designed to offer mutual recognition between health and safety schemes. If you meet the requirements of one, theoretically you meet the others' requirements. Even with a move to annual assessments, this will remain a free benefit for BPCA members, which can then be extended to higher level accreditation for a small fee.

[www.chas.gov.uk](http://www.chas.gov.uk)

## Specifications

For some time BPCA has provided a specification outlining pest control service expectations, offered to clients and end users who contacted the Association to ask the key question: "what do I require from my pest control contract?" This advisory document helps them make the correct choices.

But BPCA does not just write its own technical specifications. We work to support and advise organisations to ensure that their pest specifications are fit for purpose. We have worked with groups such as the British Retail Consortium and United Utilities in the development of pest control specifications, and hope to work with other well-known names after links were formed at the Facilities Show.

Members who are interested in the pest control specification, or who would like to forward it to their customers and potential customers, can obtain the document by contacting the BPCA office.



EXCLUSIVE BENEFITS PACKAGE

“Pests ... these fact sheets show operators how best they can be avoided.”

## Facilities Show



In May BPCA exhibited at the Facilities Show, the largest event for facilities and business premises managers in the UK. Our stand proved popular with visitors, and we took over 250 leads of people interested in professional pest control for their business, ranging from alexo subscribers to people looking for advice and support with pest problems and contract tendering.

BPCA's Laurence Barnard, who attended the show for the whole three days said "The show was a great opportunity for us to increase awareness of the association, members and of pest control as an industry. We expect our members to directly benefit from our presence and promotion at the show, and we hope to be at similar events in the future."

BPCA was featured on the speaker programme, too, with Richard Moseley giving a presentation on pest prevention and control – key requirements and contractor competency.

## Work with client bodies

One of the key benefits of membership of BPCA is our work with the trade bodies of your customers. Recently, BPCA has worked with the British Hospitality Association (BHA) to put together an article for alexo, plus a series of jointly-badged factsheets which help hotel and restaurant clients choose a pest controller from among the BPCA membership, and provide some support on the key pest-related issues affecting the hospitality industry.

Simon Forrester, BPCA Chief Executive said "Pest controllers see the same issues arising time after time, and in the fact sheets we share their tips on how to maintain a pest-free environment. Case studies will be used where appropriate to put the guidance in perspective, and show what a difference the advice has made in real-life situations."

Ufi Ibrahim, BHA Chief Executive welcomed the alliance. "Pests are unwelcome in any hospitality premises and these fact sheets show operators how best they can be avoided – and eliminated. We are delighted to join with BPCA in producing this material so that the critical importance of good pest control can be highlighted." The fact sheets will be released over the next few months, and will be placed on the BHA and BPCA websites.



### THE FACT SHEETS

- Seven steps to prevent pests
- Help! I have an infestation – is it my fault? What should I do?
- How to select a pest controller
- How to work with your pest controller: reaching understanding through a contract specification
- "Waiter, there's a fly in your soup!": how to deal with pest-related complaints
- A code of practice for pest control
- Bed bugs: public health enemy number one
- Flying insect control: A practical guide
- Rodent Infestations: simple steps to getting control
- Dealing with cockroaches

If there are other topics you'd like BPCA and BHA to produce factsheets on, please get in touch via [editor@ppconline.org](mailto:editor@ppconline.org)



## Jobs

BPCA offers a job website for those looking to recruit new staff, or fill vacancies. We get around 10 new jobs listed, and around 400 visits to the jobs page each month.

If you have a vacancy to fill within your company, members can list for free (not available to non-members) by emailing [enquiry@bpca.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@bpca.org.uk)

[www.bpca.org.uk/jobs.html](http://www.bpca.org.uk/jobs.html)

### Not a member yet?

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# BPCA launches National Survey

The British Pest Control Association is proud to announce the publication of our National Survey of Pest Species 2012 – the first of its kind.



BPCA sent Freedom of Information Act (FOI) requests to all district, borough and unitary authorities asking for service demand figures for the 12 months to April 2011. The data will act as a benchmark for future research, allowing BPCA to annually establish a national pest picture and analyse how the landscape of public health pest control is changing.

BPCA Chief Executive Simon Forrester said: "This is the most comprehensive study of the demand placed on local authorities for pest control ever carried out and it covers a period when the austerity measures were starting to bite. There may be a number of local factors why some authorities feature so prominently at the top of some of these tables, but the BPCA is concerned that, on a national scale, pest control budgets are being hit.

"That makes it much harder for councils to respond as effectively as they would like, which could have implications for both quality of life and public health."

The research has already had a lot of media attention, and the plan is to launch targeted regional and local press releases in June.

**The full report has detailed information on:**

- All 393 UK local authorities
- 112 district councils

- Every unitary body
- Nine English regions
- All four home nations
- Local authority resources – including pest control staff numbers, staffing levels and the number of treatments administered for every pest problem.

**The report highlights:**

- The best (and worst) areas for all main pest species
- The London borough with the most concentrated pest problem in England
- The busiest and most efficient local authority pest control teams – and the least
- The 'hardest working man in pest control'
- The local authority with the UK's worst bed bug problem
- The 'wasp capital of Britain'
- And much, much more.

**The report offers:**

- Benchmarking of local authorities
- Direct comparison between councils, regions, even countries
- Clear information on changes to staffing numbers
- Useful data on the common UK pest species for different urban and rural areas
- Evidence to show the end of free pest control for much of the UK population.

## Media coverage

"Rats love it in Brum – according to a survey of all 393 UK councils by the British Pest Control Association."  
**The Sun**

"No1 for the mouse calls" **Daily Mirror**

"Figures place Newport as 'pest control capital of Wales'" **Western Mail**

"Tower Hamlets the capital for all kinds of infestations rats and cockroaches"  
**The Independent**

"Anyone with a pest problem will be referred to accredited British Pest Control Association operators."  
**MidUlster Mail**



**A copy of the full report, which includes over 800 pages of detailed information is available from BPCA for £95+VAT.**

**A free executive summary is available from [www.bpca.org.uk/research](http://www.bpca.org.uk/research)**

# How to choose where to study

Dr Richard Burton, Head of Qualifications Development at the Royal Society for Public Health answers a common question among candidates on the BPCA/RSPH Level 2 Pest Management course: "where should I study for the best chance of success?"

**"No centre has a 100% pass rate..."**

Over 600 candidates a year take the RSPH/BPCA Level 2 Award in Pest Management, but with ten or so approved centres, how does someone choose where to study (assuming their employer gives them a choice)? The qualifications section of the RSPH website has a centre finder where post code and qualification required can be input, then a list of approved centres is produced starting with the one nearest to the postcode, but is your nearest centre necessarily your best option?

There are a number of factors that you might like to consider when choosing a centre other than location. These could include the success rate of the centre, mode of study, length of course, group size and who the tutors are.

The success rate of the centre may seem to be an important factor, but if the most successful centre is in Newcastle-upon-Tyne (it isn't, we don't have any centres in Newcastle) and you live on the South coast this isn't going to help you very much. A high success rate may be because the centre does not have very many candidates; a lower success rate may be because the centre accepts a proportion of candidates for the exam only and so doesn't actually train all their candidates (like BPCA).

RSPH does not reveal the different success rates of centres because there are so many factors that can influence it, but we can say that no centre has a 100% pass rate. For 2011 the pass rate for centres varied between 60% and 86%, with the centre having the highest success rate entering a low number of candidates.

The mode of study can be full-time or part-time, distance learning or classroom based. Which one of these is best for you depends on your learning style. Do you prefer a period of intensive revision or will short study periods suit you best? Short 'modular' study (eg one day a week for several weeks) should give you more time to learn the material between sessions and possibly apply what you have learned to your work if you are already employed in pest control. However one day a week may be difficult to commit to, and it is often hard to study after a long day at work – something to consider if you are contemplating distance learning. A classroom based approach should enable candidates to 'network' and discuss pest management issues amongst themselves. Larger groups will enable greater networking and more points of view during discussions, smaller groups more individual attention from tutors.

Some centres utilise a range of specialist tutors, others have one or two tutors that cover everything. RSPH approves centres rather than tutors as we cannot ensure that a centre will only use tutors that we have approved, but all centres must demonstrate

that they have suitably qualified staff before they can offer courses. When applying for a course, candidates could try to find out who would be doing the actual teaching.

So, a range of factors, with pros and cons for each. The biggest single factor that will affect whether a candidate is successful or not is the candidate themselves. Perhaps your best option is your nearest centre after all.

[www.rsph.org.uk](http://www.rsph.org.uk)



## FIVE FACTS

- 1** The highest pass rate for the Level 2 Award in 2011 was 86%. No centre has a 100% pass rate, despite some who might claim so.
- 2** BPCA is introducing modular courses using online learning – the only exam centre to do this.
- 3** The RSPH website offers lists of exams and course dates for all their courses.
- 4** BPCA is the largest exam centre with venues right across the UK. During 2011 776 people sat the Level 2 qualification with 467 (61%) attending an exam through BPCA.
- 5** The majority of students are still taking the Award over the Certificate, despite the latter including a practical element. The Certificate is becoming more popular with both employers and candidates.

# 'PEST CONTROLLERS' PROSECUTED FOR FUMIGANT MISUSE



It was announced by Natural England on 30th April that Andrew Bray from Norfolk has been prosecuted and fined £1,000 over two pesticide offences. Norfolk police officers found nine containers of a vertebrate fumigant to be stored in an unlocked garden shed that was not signposted as a fumigant store. The fumigant was not stored in a metal or flame proof cabinet within the shed. Some of the tubes were found to be products withdrawn in the UK, and some were found to have been opened and resealed. Product labels were also found to be faded and were not legible.

This case should prove a timely reminder to us all that phosphine releasing products should be handled with extreme care, and as per the label. The RAMPS organisation, on which the BPCA is represented, is working hard to ensure that aluminium phosphide remains an accessible tool for pest control professionals. Examples of misuse such as this help to put the product under the microscope and could ultimately result in the removal of the phosphine-generating products for both rodent and insect control. This would prove disastrous as this is the only remaining fumigant product in a number of different infestation situations.

In a separate case earlier this year, Allan Armistead of Hulleter Farm, Ulverston was

fined £7,000 plus costs and sentenced for offences under the Food and Environment Protection Act and the Firearms Act at Preston Crown Court. Mr Armistead was fined for seven counts of storing unapproved pesticide products, including strychnine, Cymag and Rentokil Phostoxin.

Proceedings were taken against Mr Armistead by Cumbrian police following Natural England's investigation of the death of a red kite through bendiocarb poisoning under the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme, though there was no case to answer in relation to the red kite that sparked the investigation. During the investigation Mr Armistead's premises were visited and a

**"...misuse ... could ultimately result in the removal of the phosphine-generating products for both rodent and insect control."**

number of unapproved pesticides including strychnine, Cymag and Phosdrin were found, along with unlicensed firearms.

BPCA strongly advises that all pest controllers (members or not) should assess their storage facilities and ensure that they are fit for purpose if you use and/or store phosphine-liberating products. Users should also ensure that they have the capability to meet the label requirements for transportation and use of vertebrate and invertebrate control fumigants. It is essential that pest controllers keep close tabs on the label requirements of all pesticides, especially phosphine liberators, as the operating distances from inhabited structures are changing. Similarly, check your shelves carefully, and dispose of old, unwanted or unapproved products safely by contacting your distributor or manufacturer.

Risk assessments and method statements for the use of phosphine-releasing products are organic documents that must be reviewed

An unemployed pest controller's recent prosecution under Plant Protection Products regulations demonstrates the need for stewardship of biocides, and the importance of proper storage.



on a regular basis and should be amended or rewritten if situations or conditions change. Pest controllers who are members of BPCA and who need support with risk assessments and procedures for Fumigants or any other pesticide can access specialist help and safety advice from our dedicated health and safety consultancy scheme, BusinessShield. Members can also ensure they are storing such products safely during regular visits from the BPCA field team.

[www.bpca.business-shield.co.uk](http://www.bpca.business-shield.co.uk)

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# Pest in show



Hazel Davis finds out how to turn your ideas into gold.

Inventors are people who sit in their attics for hours tinkering away at robots or who make machines to fly to the moon, right? Not necessarily. You might even be one yourself. Have you developed a tool which has made your job as a pest controller easier? Have you worked out a way of making emptying bait boxes faster or more efficient?

The UK professional pest control market is still relatively small and yet we continue to be leaders in innovation. Says Simon Forrester, BPCA's chief executive, "The UK has always had a reputation for fighting above its weight in delivering solutions in fields such as engineering, biotech and pharmaceuticals. Similarly, the UK pest management industry continues to be a leader in innovation, and one of the most prominent countries in terms of new developments."

Due to the European Biocides Directive, concepts involving chemicals are very difficult and costly to bring about (potentially hundreds of thousands of pounds spent before a product even gets to market) unless you have the backing of a huge company, so chances are your idea will be of the non-chemical variety (unless you're reading this in a lab somewhere). But how do you get your idea from pie in the sky into a viable product, and how do you convince everybody else to buy it?

First of all, you need to make sure your idea isn't already in use or being developed by someone else. Says Graham Barker, invention specialist and author of *A Better Mousetrap*, "Look for your idea in patent databases like Espacenet. In a mature field like pest control, you may have to search a long way back. In our experience it's rare for an idea to be totally novel, so if you don't find anything similar you may not be looking hard enough."

But you don't need to rush to get that patent just yet, Barker says. "In the early stages, the best protection is just to keep your mouth shut. When it comes to talking

to companies, don't expect them to sign an NDA (non-disclosure agreement) straight away. Get them interested first, by focusing on the business benefits to them of your idea. Don't reveal the inventive step that delivers those benefits. If they want to know more and their interest is genuine, that's when you both need NDAs."

A patent might seem appealing but, says Barker, "Patents are vastly misunderstood. A patent may not improve the commercial prospects of your idea, could cost more than you ever make in sales, profit or royalties, and actually can protect nothing. Look at other ways of protecting your intellectual property first and don't apply for a patent until you know exactly why you're doing it." However, if you produce a product and infringe an existing patent, you could find yourself in trouble so it's important to ensure that a similar product isn't already in place.

Barker also suggests building a sound business plan, "because you'll probably need development funding even if you ultimately want to license your idea to a company."

This development matters in the pest control world and if you can't find a way to develop your product yourself you might want to engage the services of a specialist company like Xenex International to help. Xenex International are worldwide business consultants for the pest industry, sourcing ideas from the major international pest events. Says Xenex senior associate Rob Fryatt, "These ideas usually come from the practical aspects of pest control; better ways to do things, simpler systems, things that make a job easier."

One success story (which Xenex markets internationally) is the Green Eye Termite Alert System. The system was invented and developed by a pest controller in Florida as a novel monitoring system for termite control. Instead of having to take termite stations out of the ground, the user simply looks to see whether a central green disc is active. If

the disc is invisible, there's termite activity, if it's not, there isn't. "It's an incredibly simple idea," says Fryatt, "but saves a lot of bending down and disturbing termites."

Xenex has also been working with a Brazilian company which has been developing a powder applicator for applying dust. Says Fryatt, "The thing about powder applicators is that they clog up. So a pest controller developed a low-cost applicator with a cleaning rod permanently attached. There's also a neat funnel on top to help get the powder in. That is a great example of a pest controller looking at and improving his product."

If you have no means to properly test your product and aren't ready to take it further, you could engage the services of a company like Pest Management Consultants, run by Dr Steven Havers. Havers tests innovations using field assessments on his own site. He says, "There are some people who will just assume that certain things don't work, but I have a childlike passion for innovation." Havers' testing finds crucial flaws in things. For example he recently tested a great non-toxic product which worked really well, providing you modified the pests' behavior first, which of course reduces its commercial appeal. With the reduction in rodenticide availability, says Havers, he thinks there is a market for a new rodenticide for use in inner-cities (as inner-city rats are becoming resistant to existing carbohydrate-based products).

Simon Henton is managing director of SPM Europe, which helps the pest control industry with its supply chains. It sources products on behalf of companies which they can take to market and helps companies that have novel products reach a global market. Says Henton, "The challenge we find with new ideas is finding the viable ones amongst the plethora of 'wacky' ideas people think

the world is waiting for.” But, he adds, “They do exist.”

In order to get somewhere, Henton has some basic questions for inventors: “What is your target market? (size, geography, value, etc), what are the competitor products it either competes with or replaces? If it is a totally new segment what research do you have that demonstrates the market opportunity? What IP do you have on the product? (Copyright, design right, patent) and what is your route to market/supply chain? (cost price, selling price, marketing, distribution)?” If you can answer all these satisfactorily, says Henton, you’re in with a chance of your product making it.

Most of the current pest market drivers are currently around sustainability (ie devices which help PCOs use less or no chemicals, devices for monitoring, trapping and excluding pests) and automation (devices which can communicate automatically and reduce the amount of human intervention and labour cost in checking for pest activity and triggered traps) and new threats (such as bed bugs, which have generated a lot of activity lately).

However, says Killgerm’s Jonathan Peck, “The best innovative products are often



### “One success story...is the Green Eye Termite Alert System.”

those designed by pest controllers. Life is very different when you are down in the ducts controlling rats or 20 metres up in the air installing bird control products. Too

many new products are designed in the laboratory by people who don’t have working knowledge of how PCOs actually work.”

“An all round approach to innovation is required in order to deliver products and services that truly benefit both the pest controller and the end user”, says Tom Holmes, Technical Manager at P+L Systems. “This requires thorough research and testing at every stage in the process, using scientific test conditions to ensure that the highest levels of efficacy are delivered to end users, alongside robust field trials with pest controllers to ensure that installation and servicing is quick and practical.”

Peter Whittall is group chief scientific officer for Rentokil. He says the industry is currently looking at ways in which to track trends and have information at one’s fingertips and reduce the use of toxic materials. For its own innovations, Rentokil uses a scale it calls ‘technical readiness’, level one being an interesting observation in a research lab and nine being out there on the market. The journey goes through a series of steps including how a product can make money and how it can be rolled out worldwide.

/continued over...

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Rentokil is always looking for ideas, says Whittall, and if someone wanted them to take theirs on, he says, the company would work from testing stage and above on an idea that did something different or resonated with a trend in the marketplace. "We are always interested in technology sequencing," says Whittall, "things which can be expanded and improved on," and he cites the Radar product, designed to trap rodents in a box before releasing CO<sub>2</sub> and killing them instantly. Rentokil's new Pest Connect is an extension of this but using technology that sends an email to Rentokil as well as the customer, so that within 30 minutes a technician can know to empty the box.

Pest control distributors have a real advantage when it comes to product innovation. "Our technical team work in the field with pest controllers on a daily basis so we're able to quickly identify opportunities for new or improved products" says Richard Lunn, Managing Director of SX Environmental. "The translucent pre-set Trap-in-a-Box is a great example of how practical insight can be translated into tangible benefits for a pest controller – giving a clear reduction in the time taken to set and check each box".

If you get to the stage of approaching a large distributor you need to be sure that you can offer them something they can't get elsewhere. Says Jonathan Peck, "We receive a number of proposals each year from pest controllers who have designed products which they want us to market for them. For us to be interested, the new product needs to either fill a gap in the market or offer significant value-added benefits. When several companies offer the same or similar services or products, it is essential that a supplier has something to offer their customers, other than simply lower prices. This added value can be through better technical support; product or commercial training; or innovative and new, exclusive products."

The fact is that most distributors are very keen on innovation. Barrettine even hosted its own version of Dragons' Den a few years ago in order to stay one step ahead. Says Barrettine divisional director Chris Parmiter, "A unique and innovative product range is an increasingly important part of a company's service offering."

The sort of exclusivity a distributor will require may differ from company to company and, says Parmiter, will depend on what sort of product it is, "how much design, marketing, tooling or registration costs may be required." However, he adds, most are happy to sign confidentiality agreements. If they're not, then you might be advised to steer clear anyway. In



**"The thing about powder applicators is that they clog up. So a pest controller developed a low-cost applicator with a cleaning rod permanently attached."**

recent years, says Parmiter, "we've had particular success with more environmentally friendly products as the market looks towards less pesticide/pesticide free. Three of our exclusive products in the past 18 months have not only been commercially successful but have also won awards for their innovation."

These products include the Knockout Biological Drain Treatment, based on biological ferments with exceptional bacteria enzyme activity and no harmful or corrosive additives. It speeds the breakdown and digestion of fats, proteins and cellulose that clog waste pipes. Its Oa2ki spray has also been making waves with its efficiency. Due to its solely physical means of action it falls outside of current HSE registration requirements (enabling flexibility to sell the product on to non-professionals etc). Both these products demonstrate that there is a market for non-harmful products or those which are easy to make commercial without any tiresome loopholes holding them back.

One method of innovation that is often overlooked is to 'port' a product from one type of use to another. A good example of this is BASF's new Formidor ant control gel, which was originally developed as 'Goliath' cockroach bait. Apart from this sideways move, the gel is also designed to become lethal 12 to 24 hours after take, which maximises the gel's efficiency. As BASF Marketing Manager James Whittaker says "The net result is more rapid and complete activity than with other commonly-used ant baits, leading to colony collapse within 10-14 days in most cases".

## What to do if you have a great idea

Has someone else already done it? Do your research. Just because you haven't heard of a product doesn't mean that Barry's Bugs in Leicester hasn't been using a similar idea for the last decade. Do thorough research before embarking on anything more time-consuming or costly.

## Check the IP/patent

Find out whether a patent exists on your product on a site such as Espacenet (<http://worldwide.espacenet.com>) but don't get bogged down in patents unless you're absolutely sure you need one.

## Get a prototype

Do you need to make a prototype? Can you afford to make a prototype? Maybe your product is one you've been using for years. If you can afford to have a sample made then do it yourself. If not, contact a company such as Xenex or SPM and see if they can assist. Sometimes a prototype isn't worthwhile but on occasion it can help you broker a better deal.

## Approach a distributor

If you have a prototype and a clear idea of how your product will enhance the market then you're ready to talk to the big guys – but make sure whoever you speak to is willing to sign a non-disclosure agreement (and be very suspicious if they won't). You can get templates or guides to creating your own from the Business Link website [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)

## Sit back and reap the rewards

Well, maybe. Says Chris Parmiter, "Inventors do need to bear in mind that the professional market is still quite a small audience and not necessarily a guarantee of huge riches..."

### Useful links

[www.pest-management-consultants.co.uk](http://www.pest-management-consultants.co.uk)

[www.xenexassociates.com](http://www.xenexassociates.com)

[www.barrettine.co.uk](http://www.barrettine.co.uk)

[www.killgerm.com](http://www.killgerm.com)

[www.abettermousetrap.co.uk](http://www.abettermousetrap.co.uk)

[www.pestcontrolonline.com](http://www.pestcontrolonline.com)

[www.pandlsystems.com](http://www.pandlsystems.com)

[www.spmglobal.co](http://www.spmglobal.co)

[www.rentokil.co.uk](http://www.rentokil.co.uk)

[www.pestcontrol.basf.co.uk](http://www.pestcontrol.basf.co.uk)



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**THIS IMPORTANT UK STUDY  
NEEDS YOUR HELP!**

BPCA Technical Manager Richard Moseley interviews Dr Dougie Clarke, UK Norway Rat Anticoagulant Resistance Project Leader at the University of Huddersfield.

## Researching resistance

### What research has been done so far on rodenticide resistance?

Anticoagulant rodenticide resistance in Norway rats was first reported in the 1950s in Scotland (Boyle et al 1960) and has been recorded in England and Wales from the 1960s to present. Up until the mid-1990s resistance was monitored in trapped live rats using lethal feeding period (LFP) and blood clotting response (BCR) tests (Myllymaki 1995). However, in 2004 the identification and sequencing of the vitamin K epoxide reductase (VKORC1) gene that confers resistance in Norway rats and House mice (Rost et al 2004) made it possible to identify resistant animals in the laboratory using the new molecular DNA sequencing technology.

As DNA can be extracted from tissue taken from the tip of the tail of recently-killed animals, there is no longer a requirement for trapping and testing live animals. In contrast to France and Germany where spatial mapping of hundreds of resistant animals has occurred using this new technique, in the UK we have a very limited current knowledge of the distribution and prevalence of the different genotypes that cause resistance.

### What is the set up at the Huddersfield testing lab?

Pilot testing of small numbers of UK rats in 2007 at Huddersfield University established a monitoring lab in the UK. Using the same DNA technology as the German and French labs, hundreds of samples from mice and rats with known practical resistance have been sent for testing from many different organisations in the UK and other parts of

Europe. These results were biased, as random sampling was not done and sampling was client-led.

### What was the purpose behind the project?

In 2010 the UK Norway Rat Anticoagulant Resistance Project was initiated to randomly sample rats to determine the incidence and spatial distribution of resistance. Sampling in our study is not biased towards rats from areas undergoing treatment. The project was made possible with the sponsorship for DNA sequencing consumables from a consortium (BASF, Bayer, Bell, BPCA, NPTA, PelGar, Killgerm and Syngenta) and labour provided by Huddersfield and Reading Universities.

As there is insufficient resource to try to sample the whole country, or to sample areas with no indication of resistance (except as part of spatial mapping) the aim is to monitor the distribution and incidence of resistance mutations in and around seven resistance foci (see 'Where to collect tails' opposite) using DNA from rat tails.

### What are the results so far?

73% of the 88 rats tested have resistance mutations from as far west as Bristol, as far East as Kings Lynn and from as far South Hampshire and as far North as Dumfries.

### Has the recent information on resistance from Holland has any bearing on the research?

Both our research at Huddersfield and that by the Dutch research lab indicate that greater than 50% of animals in both countries host resistance mutations. In contrast to

Holland, where only two types of resistance mutations were tested and are found, we have found five different subtypes in different areas of England, Wales and Scotland. It's important to note that the Dutch lab only studied 61 samples whereas our target is 600.

### What help is industry giving to deliver results?

Killgerm and Barrettine have agreed to support pest controllers in delivering tail samples, and the consortium has provided consumables and covered costs for the project (BPCA has donated £3,500). Local Authorities and pest control operators have supplied the samples thus far, but more are needed.

### HOW CAN INDIVIDUALS HELP?

**The target in the UK study is 600 so that we have thorough coverage of the foci we are interested in. We desperately need help with obtaining more tails from rats caught in traditional traps.**

### HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

For further information or to volunteer to collect samples for the project please email [resistancesurvey@hud.ac.uk](mailto:resistancesurvey@hud.ac.uk) or text 07852 975871

[www.bpca.org.uk/rrag/index.html](http://www.bpca.org.uk/rrag/index.html)

## Where to collect tails

**AREA 1** South West England  
Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Avon,  
Wiltshire, Oxfordshire

**AREA 2** East Anglia  
Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge

**AREA 3** South East England  
Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex

**AREA 4** AngloWelsh Border  
Gwynedd, Powys, Staffordshire, Cheshire,  
Shropshire, Herefordshire, Wrexham

**AREA 5** North East England  
East Riding, South Yorkshire, Lincolnshire,  
Nottinghamshire, Rutland

**AREA 6** Central Southern England  
Berkshire, Hampshire, Surrey

**AREA 7** South West Scotland  
Dumfries and Galloway

- Sites should not be selected due to any treatment difficulty and should be a random representation of the rats present in the area.
- Rats should be trapped before any treatment (ideally >3 months since previous treatment).
- Where an initial treatment is to be carried out, traps may be set at the same time as placing the rodenticide baits providing that rats are caught and removed within 24-48 hours.
- When you have a choice of sampling locations that fit the other criteria for sampling, you should select sampling locations in the following order of preference: rural/agricultural; then commercial; and finally domestic.
- In order to reduce the chance of sampling individuals from the same family or social group, collect either a single juvenile animal or two adult animals from any one site. But if in doubt we would sooner receive tails than not receive them.



## How to collect rats

The trapping technique used will be the one most appropriate for the conditions prevailing, type of traps available, and manpower resources and will be determined by the person undertaking the trapping.

### RECOMMENDED TRAPS

- Cage trap – rats may be less willing to enter and there is the additional consideration of despatch.
- Break-back trap in tamper resistant bait station – rats may be unwilling to enter initially but young rats will be less wary.
- Fenn spring trap set in tunnel or other protective cover – prevents access by non-target species.

Vials should be sent by Royal Mail or courier to the appropriate lab for analysis as follows:

### AREAS 1, 4, 5, 7

Dr Dougie Clarke  
School of Applied Sciences  
University of Huddersfield  
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## How to process tails

- A tail tip (3-5cm) is required to provide DNA from each rat. Each tail tip must be removed using a clean blade or sturdy scissors, stored in a Zip-Lok bag and frozen the day it is collected. The exact location where the sample was obtained (GPS co-ordinates or a post code and address) should be recorded. In addition to location, we would like to know the gender of the animal and a measure of body size (nose to base of tail) if possible.
- Once you have collected a tail or tails contact Killgerm (01924 268400) to request individually-coded free-of-charge sample vials and data input forms. These vials contain 80% ethanol to stop microbiological degradation of samples.
- When vials arrive, put each frozen tail tip in a separate coded vial, complete the sample data input form and send the vials and form by Royal Mail or courier to the appropriate lab for analysis. Note if the exact location is not provided with a sample then it will not be processed.

If you wish to collect a number of samples and store them in a freezer this is acceptable with or without the ethanol preservative.

If you are not able to store the sample in a freezer then please request vials in advance of collection and dispatch the sample within 48 hours of a tail sample being collected.

“If you can’t read, perhaps pest control is not for you?” A blunt and provocative comment. But pest controllers must be able to:

- Read and understand pesticide labels and manufacturers safety data sheets.
- Communicate to their clients the measures that they have taken and what impact those measures may have on the home or workplace.
- List actions that the client should take to mitigate pest problems.

Literacy is an issue that often surfaces during training, but literacy (or the lack of it) remains an issue throughout an individual pest controller’s working life. Provided that the problem and the reasons for it are recognised, there is much that can

the world of work the chances are that they will seek help to catch up. Very often, given the right help and in an environment very different from school, the improvement will be rapid.

If the problem boils down to a lack of confidence following the would-be pest controller from school to the work place, training style may prove significant in how quickly the trainee learns (see ‘How we learn’ on page 30). Emphasis should be on practical demonstrations of equipment and techniques, letting the trainees ‘have a go’. Food for thought! Perhaps the introduction of the practically oriented Level 2 ‘Certificate’ (as opposed to ‘Award’) in Pest Control will encourage a much higher

Perfectly competent pest controllers may panic when confronted with written questions and a blank sheet of paper. Negative emotions from long past school days come flooding back and for older candidates, the experience is totally alien to their everyday life. ‘Exam nerves’ block an understanding of the words on the page and the ability to assemble a logical train of thought in the candidate’s mind. In this situation there is no problem or issue with reading labels or writing reports, it is simply the examination environment which is the cause.

Evidence of this can sometimes be found simply by reading through a candidate’s exam paper – as an examiner I see this

# Literacy in pest control

Pest control is a practical activity: an occupation that, on the face of it, doesn’t require strong non-verbal communication skills – but is that view correct? And if so, do we as an industry have a problem? Are there poor levels of literacy amongst pest controllers? Richard Strand investigates.

be done to help the individual to meet all of the requirements of the job.

Poor reading skills can result from a number of causes and, while health and safety may be paramount in the final analysis, equal opportunities cannot be disregarded. For this reason training providers and instructors are on the lookout for those who may need help. An understanding of the reasons for poor reading skills may provide a solution for the individual and, if the cause is due to a medical condition, employers have a legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010, to make a ‘reasonable adjustment’ to their work place and to working practices if these substantially disadvantage an affected employee.

Some people have poor reading skills because opportunities at school, for whatever reason, were not taken. Once in

practical content in pest control training?

Lantra, an organisation which specialises in training in agriculturally orientated skills, offers a good example. The majority of its courses have a strong practical leaning. Lesley Barr, Lantra’s Head of Product Development said: “We develop courses which are designed to lead the learner through the performance criteria ensuring they have adequate knowledge and understanding to achieve the learning outcomes. All our courses are structured with a substantial practical content to ensure the course programme is delivered to the highest standards.”

Even after successful training sessions, some very good and very competent pest controllers struggle when it comes to ‘assessment’. Practical people often feel like fish out of water when confronted with a ‘closed book’ formal examination situation.

regularly. The first few questions are answered well and then a question throws the candidate. The reader can almost see the candidate start to panic with answers rushed and failing to address questions which have clearly not been read properly. As the end of the paper approaches the candidate can see the ‘light at the end of the tunnel’, calms down and often produces a final set of good answers.

The damage, however, has been done with too many lost marks in the body of the examination. The net result is that the candidate has difficulty in passing a written exam of any form, be it multi-choice, short answer or longer essay. Even a viva (a spoken ‘Q&A’ assessment) presents problems – but in that situation the examiner will be acutely aware of the candidate’s nerves and, if both skilled at conducting vivas and sympathetic to the plight of the candidate, may be able to

retrieve the situation.

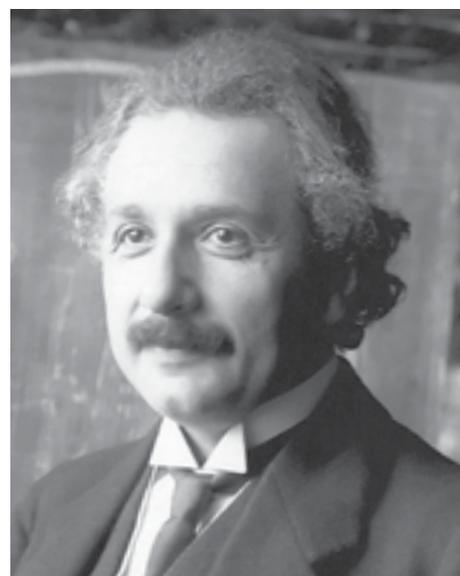
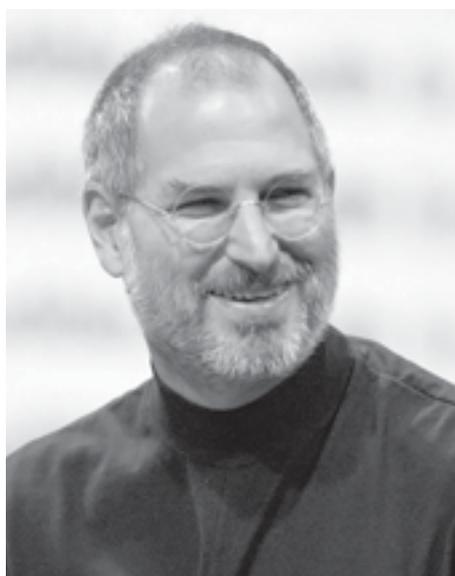
Perhaps the best solution for such candidates, is a far greater emphasis towards 'on the job' assessment. As has already been noted RSPH is moving that way by promotion of more practically oriented Level 2 Certificate in Pest Control. City & Guilds has placed an emphasis on practical assessment rather than testing by examination for many years. Steve Hewitt, Head of Product at City & Guilds drew attention to the recently introduced qualification in the 'Safe Use of Aluminium Phosphide'. "We were very conscious that misuse of aluminium phosphide was potentially lethal. The only realistic way of assessing whether a candidate is truly competent is to assess him/her actually doing the job."

During recent years training and certification centres have noted an increase in the number of trainees for whom English is not their first language. This is a problem on all fronts: not only will the individual have difficulty reading labels, writing reports and with being able to cope with the examination; teaching may also prove difficult. Once again a 'kinaesthetic' approach to training is likely to prove more successful with the trainee grasping techniques and picking up skills by actually using pest control tools and equipment. Job-based assessment will also prove more successful. Labels and reports remain an issue but one which the employer can address and one which a skilled and diligent employee will quickly overcome.

Another common reason for trainee pest controllers to struggle, particularly when it comes to examinations, is dyslexia. The British Dyslexia Association estimates that, to some degree 10% of the population suffers from dyslexia. It is genetic in origin and so can pass from parent to offspring. The first signs at school are of a pupil who, despite being attentive, falls behind at an early stage in learning to read.

The conclusion that the pupil is not particularly bright is probably a very mistaken one. Frequently this is not the case. Dyslexic people often have strong visual, creative and problem solving abilities, they have a different view on the world. Stephen Spielberg once put his success down to deliberately surrounding himself with people who did not conform to society's norm. Many famous and successful people are dyslexic (see above).

/continued over...



Sufferers are in good company: fellow dyslexics include Agatha Christie, Walt Disney, Steve Jobs and Albert Einstein.

## AN OVERVIEW OF DYSLEXIA

The word 'dyslexia' comes from the Greek and means 'difficulty with words'. It is a life-long, usually inherited condition and affects around 10% of the population. Dyslexia occurs in people of all races, backgrounds and abilities, and varies from person to person: no two people will have the same set of strengths and weaknesses.

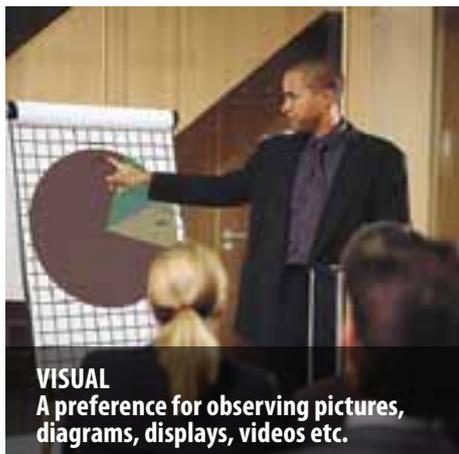
Dyslexia occurs independently of intelligence. It is really about information processing: dyslexic people may have difficulty processing and remembering information they see and hear. This can affect learning and the acquisition of literacy skills.

Dyslexia is one of a family of specific learning difficulties, and often occurs alongside related conditions, such as dyspraxia (difficulty with co-ordination of movement), dyscalculia (difficulties with numbers) and attention deficit disorder.

On the plus side, dyslexic people often have strong visual, creative and problem-solving skills and are prominent among entrepreneurs, inventors, architects, engineers and in the arts and entertainment world. Many famous and successful people are dyslexic.

## HOW WE LEARN

Educationalists have shown that people process information and so learn, in different ways. Three routes have been identified and documented:



**VISUAL**  
A preference for observing pictures, diagrams, displays, videos etc.



**AUDITORY**  
By listening to sounds, primarily but not exclusively, the spoken word.



**KINAESTHETIC**  
By touching, holding, trying out and using.

Individuals from an academic background are good at learning via the 'auditory' route. However, practical people such as pest controllers generally fare best by

observing a process and then trying it out i.e. a visual, closely followed by a kinaesthetic route. They are least engaged by auditory teaching methods. Rather

than relying on traditional 'lectures', trainers and instructors need to develop strong practical teaching skills if they are to inspire their trainees.

What does this different view on the world feel like? Rob Long of Absolute Pest Control described his experiences. Rob counts himself lucky as having found himself working for a sympathetic employer and with a line manager who took the time and trouble to go through labels, safety data sheets, lists of insects, lists of chemicals, helping Rob take them all in. Rob is now the managing director of his own successful pest control business but he says "I'd rather shovel bird excreta for four hours than put four sentences on a piece of paper!"

At 10% of the population the level of incidence of dyslexia seems high, but this figure is, by and large, borne out by BPCA which notes approximately one or two candidates on each course reporting problems with dyslexia. RSPH records a much lower level of reporting, with most requests for reasonable adjustments for all qualifications coming from Further Education (FE) colleges. This perhaps reflects the fact that FE colleges have their candidates for a much longer time period and can carry out the assessments required to confirm the condition. Since such assessments are not supported for funding they can be expensive with sums of up to £500 for a private assessment not being uncommon. It may well be, therefore, that declared sufferers are only those who were identified whilst still at school, and that for

every candidate who declares the condition there is another who has not come forward.

Once confirmed RSPH will offer, as required by the Equality Act 2010, a range of 'reasonable adjustments' to assist the candidate during the examination. These may include additional time to complete the exam or in extreme cases, a reader and/or a scribe for the candidate. Richard Burton of RSPH says "If requested we will provide the examinations on a range of different coloured paper. The scripts are printed in 'Arial' – a font recommended for dyslexics, but we can use any font style or size requested by the centre. If the centre has the facilities we can also offer an electronic version of the examination."

Just as the certification body must offer reasonable adjustments under the legislation, to candidates sitting exams, so must those candidates' employers. The foremost requirement is patience and understanding. Rob Long's experiences underline this need.

Not everyone with dyslexia responds in the same way to adjustments offered by their employer. Sometimes patience is not enough. In some cases assisted technology is needed, for example coloured paper in place of white, or tinted filters for laptops, PCs and handheld devices and coloured overlays for commercially printed documentation. Font style and size in written documents can

help (for example, the use of plain fonts like Verdana or Colibri) in a larger size.

For others, or perhaps in addition, the use of templates for reports and help with learning sets of standard phrases is useful.

Some computerised systems now allow technicians to use standard phrases, which can help them deliver acceptable reports to clients, but on occasion the results can lack insight or clarity.

Pesticide labels have been made easy to read, with the statutory box created from standardised phrases.

So to conclude, literacy issues do not prevent a strong individual from carving out a successful career as a pest controller. With a sympathetic employer plus a proper assessment of needs, any candidate with reading difficulties can be helped to thrive.

[www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)

[www.rsph.org.uk](http://www.rsph.org.uk)

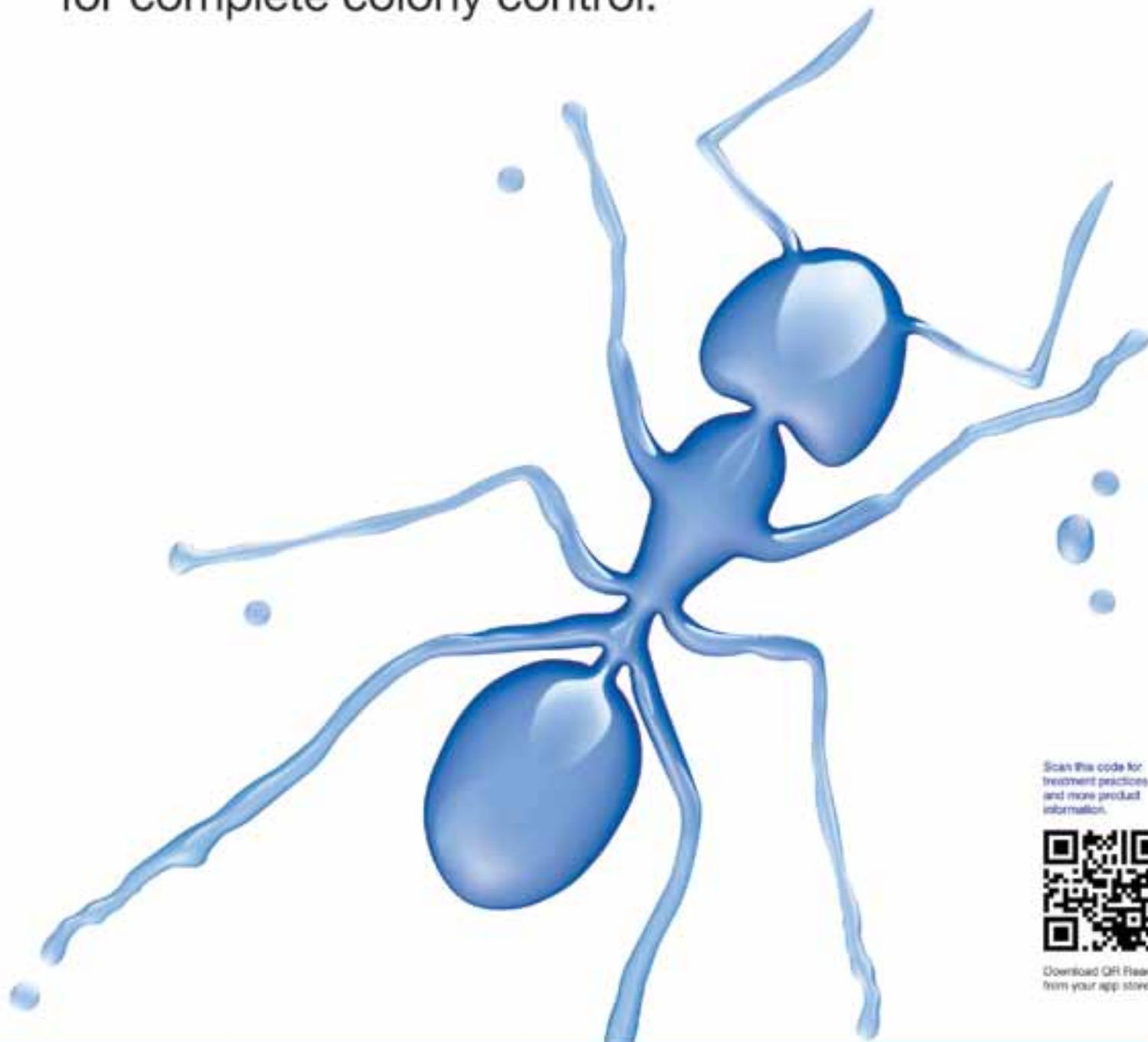
[www.lantra.co.uk](http://www.lantra.co.uk)

**Have you or a colleague been affected by dyslexia? Do you need assistance? All BPCA members can contact the office for help and further advice – call Tammy Pratt on 01332 225113.**

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