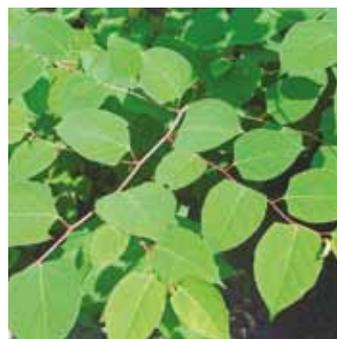


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PPC examines the increasing problems for pest controllers



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A pest control problem that's not to be underestimated.



Branching out
The opportunity afforded by Japanese knotweed



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Being prepared for medical emergencies



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Electronic remote monitoring explored

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Networking events

FAOPMA

26-28 November / Seoul, South Korea

www.faopma2013korea.com

BPCA Fumigation Conference

27 November / BPCA Offices, Derby

www.bpca.org.uk/fumigation

Eurocido 2014

19-20 February / Dortmund, Germany

www.eurocido.de

Expocida Iberia 2014

27-28 February / Madrid, Spain

www.expocida.com

11th Fumigation and Pheromones Conference

2-4 June / Krakow, Poland

www.insectslimited.com

BPCA Regional Training Forums

BPCA is currently planning the 2014 schedule of Regional Training Forums, which will be released on the website shortly. If you'd like to suggest an area or venue you think we should try, let us know by emailing sofi@bpca.org.uk or calling 01332 225 111.



Online learning

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www.bpca.org.uk/online

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

Training

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

Full 2013/14 training calendar
www.bpca.org.uk/training
 ...and in PPC74

Examinations	2014 dates	Venue	Member cost (exc. VAT)	Non-member (exc. VAT)
RSPH/BPCA Level 2 Award in Pest Management	24 January 21 February	BPCA offices, Derby BPCA offices, Derby		
Exams can be arranged to suit other requirements at the discretion of BPCA, minimum of six candidates, there may be an additional cost.	21 March 25 April 16 May 23 May 27 June	University of Warwick, Coventry London (East) Scotland South Wales Berkshire	£135	£150
More dates and venues are on the BPCA website.				
BPCA Accredited Technician in Pest Control	6 February 15 May 2 September 18 November	BPCA offices, Derby BPCA offices, Derby BPCA offices, Derby BPCA offices, Derby	£225	£305
BPCA Certificate in Bird Management	Register interest		£90	£105
BPCA Fumigation Diploma	Register interest		£125	£145
BPCA Fumigation Certificate of Proficiency	Register interest		£210	£265
BPCA Certificated Field Biologist	11 March 10 June 15 October	BPCA offices, Derby	£285	£390

Courses	PROMPT CPD	2014 dates	Venue	Member cost (exc. VAT)	Non-member (exc. VAT)
Modular Pest Control Course	30	21 Jan - 19 Feb 12 Jun - 11 Jul 16 Oct - 14 Nov	BPCA offices, Derby BPCA offices, Derby BPCA offices, Derby	£725	£925
General Pest Control (residential) *	24	16-21 March 11-16 May 7-12 September 7-12 December	University of Warwick, Coventry University of Warwick, Coventry Halo Crowwood Hotel, Glasgow University of Warwick, Coventry	£875	£1045
Successful Bed Bug Control	12	1 April 16 September	BPCA offices, Derby BPCA offices, Derby	£165	£195
Urban Bird Control and Management	20	5 March	BPCA offices, Derby	£165	£195
So you want to be a Field Biologist?	8	10 April 14 October	BPCA offices, Derby BPCA offices, Derby	£165	£195
Heat Treatment Technicians	22	On request		£300	£365
Pest Control Awareness for Administrators	8	25 March 30 September	BPCA offices, Derby BPCA offices, Derby	£165	£195
Insect Classification and Identification	10	Register interest		£165	£195
5 Day Fumigation	30	19-23 May	BPCA offices, Derby	£875	£1045
Stored Product Inspection and Control	10	Register interest		£165	£195
Starting Out in Pest Control		4 March 3 June 23 September	BPCA offices, Derby BPCA offices, Derby BPCA offices, Derby	£165	£195
How to Sell in the Pest Control Industry		8-9 April 7-8 October	BPCA offices, Derby BPCA offices, Derby	£300	£365

Venues details are provisional and may change, please check www.bpca.org.uk/training before booking.

* 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

BPCA reserves the right to cancel a course if insufficient bookings have been received. Delegates will be offered an alternative date or a full refund of the course fee. BPCA will not be liable for any costs incurred by the delegates.



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www.davidson-igd.co.uk

CPD for 2013: 2 points



BASIS reference: PC/18449/1011/g

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Internet: the PCO's friend or foe?

This month saw our 2013 forecast for referrals from BPCA's 24/7 'find a pest controller' service pass 40,000 – four times more than last year. This massive increase has been driven mainly by the internet, and in particular our new website. So, for BPCA the internet has been a major positive, bringing in an estimated £1.5million of extra business to members. For pest controllers, maybe it's more of a mixed blessing.

The web gives customers access to information (and in many cases misinformation) which colours their perception of what pest controllers do. Last week I took a call from a member of the public worried about the 'red widow spiders' in their garden. They had read something on the internet (probably about false widows) and believed that their property was infested, and that they required a whole-house fumigation.

The public also reads online how easy it is to treat an infestation, and likely tries it first for themselves. This confidence is shattered when the pest proves to be superior to the person, and tarnishes the reputation of our industry. While the jury is still out on whether we should embrace or reject amateur use products, if we don't put the right information out there to counter the myths, we face a backlash from consumers.

Just as if they were buying a tin of beans or a washing machine, customers can quickly do a service price comparison online, and sadly some company charging structures don't reflect reality (or, indeed, legality). This again causes problems where consumers can't understand why your price for a mouse job is three times that of someone who advertises per visit and excludes the cost of consumables.

One final burden for pest controllers is the customer who gets in touch to request free advice, taking up valuable time with no actual intention of spending money with you. Perhaps this is an area where the internet can assist, by pointing the consumer to good quality advice, we can manage their expectation and show them that we are a professional industry.

On the positive side, the internet also gives pest controllers access to a wider range of potential customers, the ability to reach a specific target audience rather than the old-school 'blunderbuss marketing' of yellow pages. BPCA now offers our full servicing

members a free mini-site which helps massively in terms of SEO (visit www.ppconline.org/ppc68/ for what I mean by this).

The industry needs to maintain its knowledge and expertise, and one way of doing this is through training. But the cost of travel (and the opportunity cost of a day's lost work) mean that this is more and more difficult. Again, BPCA is leading the way with free online training for our Affiliates which can be taken from the comfort of your home, van or office.

I am one of those who is old enough to remember having to go to the library to get information, but Generation Y (those born in the eighties and thereafter) have never lived in a time without some form of computer access. This has become their primary information source, and so we have a new generation of tech-savvy consumers who will turn to the web first and foremost to find their pest management professional. If you aren't visible on there with a professional, informative and compelling presence, you are likely to see your competitors snap up these customers.

It's about harnessing the web to deliver benefits to your business, and minimising the problems associated with this medium. The web is a double-edged sword, but learn to wield it accurately and you can cut your competition into pieces!



Simon Forrester
BPCA chief executive
simon@bpca.org.uk

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Online CPDs in PPC



BPCA provides at least one article in every issue of PPC as an online CPD quiz. Look out for the ONLINE CPD logo on the relevant page of the magazine, and in the contents list above.

At least two points are given for each quiz, and we even pass your results to BASIS for free within a few days – the only people in the industry to do this!

To access this unique benefit, simply join the BPCA Affiliate Scheme via www.bpca.org.uk/affiliate

Industry mourns Jonathan Peck

The news that Jonathan Peck lost his battle with cancer on Sunday 15 September was received by the BPCA staff team, Executive Board and the industry as a whole with great sadness.

There's little we can tell you about Jonathan that you probably don't already know, either first hand or just from being part of the pest control community - his professionalism, his passion for the industry and his vision and drive.

Henry Mott, BPCA President, summed up the feelings of us all: "It is not easy for us 'die hard pesties' to contemplate the industry, let alone the Killgerm Group without JP at the helm. I do know, however, that with the team he leaves behind his legacy will continue and thrive. In many respects I believe this is the best obituary as far as a person's working life is concerned."

Since joining the Killgerm Group Jonathan led a management buyout, and took the company from £350,000 to over £35million turnover, spearheading moves into markets as diverse as China, Vietnam and South America.

Jonathan was involved with and a supporter of many bodies, both in and allied to the pest control and environmental health industries. He created and financed the CIEH National Pest Advisory Panel, which was used to great effect in promoting research and best practice, and opening doors across the globe.

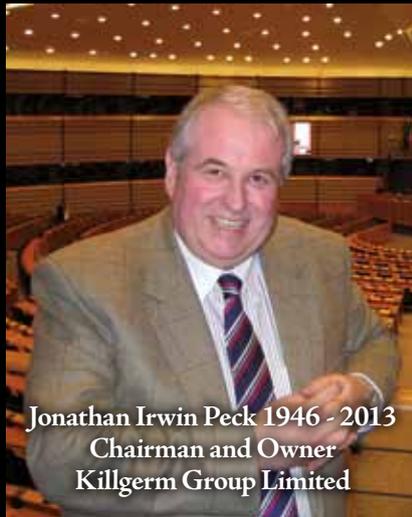
He was passionate about, and instrumental in, promoting and raising awareness of pest control and its impact on public health. He forged close links to achieve this and worked tirelessly with the global pest management industry to raise professional standards and lobby key stakeholders, the results of which benefit BPCA members. He was President of BPCA from June 1984 to June 1986, a member of the Executive Board for many years and one of the two subscribing members to the Association's Memorandum of Association when it was converted to a Company Limited By Guarantee in June 1982.

The funeral, which took place near Sheffield, was attended by a wide selection of the pest control industry, and was much more a celebration of Jonathan's life than a sad event. Two charities have been selected by Jonathan's family, and donations are welcomed.

Macmillan: www.macmillan.tributefunds.com/JonathanPeck

Cancer Research: www.donateinmemory.cancerresearchuk.org/0004308

He'll be greatly missed by all that knew him.



Jonathan Irwin Peck 1946 - 2013
Chairman and Owner
Killgerm Group Limited

New Chairman at Killgerm

Following the death of Jonathan Peck the Board of Directors of Killgerm Group Ltd have met and unanimously agreed to confirm Peter Kitson as Chairman of the Board. In addition to his new responsibilities, Peter remains as Group Finance Director.

Commenting on the appointment, Peter said "It is with mixed feelings that I take on this role, on the one hand great sadness at the loss of our leader, Jonathan Peck, on the other great pride at the faith placed in me by Jonathan and the Board to take the helm and carry the Killgerm Group forward to even greater things. I gave a promise that the direction and ethos of the company will not change and I intend to fulfil this promise to best of my ability with the support of the great team we have here."

www.killgerm.co.uk



SGAR UPDATE

One of Jonathan Peck's many legacies was his work to help professionalise the industry and usher in a stewardship regime designed to address HSE's concerns about misuse of Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs). Recent CRRU stakeholder meetings with HSE and representatives from across the pest control, agricultural and gamekeeping industries have now finished, and Dr Alan Buckle of CRRU is to meet with HSE in late October to put these collected views across. HSE has given the rodenticide supply chain an opportunity to develop best practice and a stewardship regime, or face the loss or severe restriction of their use. Other EU countries have seen serious rodent infestation issues arise under stringent restrictions— a point made clear to HSE.

For our part, the pest control industry seemed to be in broad agreement over the issues. The 'in and around buildings' restriction is seen as unworkable in its current format, and we seek something workable in practice while minimising risk to non-target species.

While professional pest control already has in place a lot of what HSE wants (in terms of codes of practice, a recognised qualification, a CPD regime), there is certainly more that can be done, including further restriction on sale of products, addressing point of sale issues, altering pack sizes for different users groups, and most importantly restrictions on access to professional products by proof of passing a qualification or some form of licencing. The RSPH Level 2 qualification plus registration on a CPD scheme (which BPCA already insists upon for its members) is likely to form the basis of future restriction, based on discussions to date.

HSE intend to begin detailed discussions with sector user groups to develop stewardship, with a view to launch in early 2014. Watch this space!

'Muskil' does kill

Barrettine Environmental Health recently launched their unique new rodenticide, Romax Muskil. It is a patented formulation of 0.0025% difenacoum and 0.0025% bromadiolone, the first of its kind in the UK to use a combination of anticoagulants. The combined active delivers effective results compared with the many existing products containing either bromadiolone or difenacoum as singular active formulations. While there are many other rodenticide products on the market that contain either difenacoum or bromadiolone in isolation, independent studies both in the lab and field have confirmed that Romax Muskil based on the combined lower level actives, delivers outstanding results compared with singular active products.

Due to their research results the makers of Romax Muskil can boast a rapid bait acceptance resulting in a faster kill, less bait usage, and that Muskil can control certain resistant strains of rodent. Studies at Reading University demonstrated that Romax Muskil was effective in controlling both resistant Y139S rats and Y139C mice. It is believed that this success was due to the mode of action of the combined actives being more complex than that of single actives, making Romax Muskil a useful tool in an anti-resistance strategy. Alan Buckle, Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Reading stated "This is the first time we have seen on the market a bait containing a mixture of two second generation anticoagulants. It will be interesting to learn more about how this combination works in both susceptible and resistant rodents."

This new rodenticide was launched at a series of exclusive seminars held around the country. BPCA Marketing and Communications Officer Laurence Barnard who attended the seminar in Wetherby commented "The event was nicely produced, executed, and really whet the appetite for this new product." He added "If Romax Muskil does everything it claims, I have no doubt this will become a very popular rodenticide with pesties."

Steven Bailey, Managing Director of Barrettine Environmental Health commented on the new product. "Successful trials have demonstrated that less bait is required over a shorter baiting programme, effectively bringing infestations under control quickly and helping to reduce the risk to non-target species. Romax Muskil is produced from high quality food grade materials and contains natural rodent luring components. It is available in three formulations: whole wheat, extruded multi edged block and pasta sachets. The block and sachet formulations benefit from the inclusion of a new Fluo-NP technology that contains a fluorescent dye visible in rodent droppings to help track rodent activity. Initial research has also shown Romax Muskil Fluo-NP baits are more attractive than standard baits resulting in an accelerated acceptance by rodents. David Haskins, Sales Director for Barrettine Environmental Health commented "The whole wheat formulation is produced using a special absorption technology (SAT) that ensures the twin actives are evenly distributed throughout each grain, making Romax Muskil formulation equally effective on Mice and Rats." Dave added "As an additional safety feature, all formulations contain the human taste deterrent denatonium benzoate, and has been authorised by HSE for indoor and outdoor use against rats and mice."

For further information, please contact Barrettine Environmental Health on 01179 672222 or beh@barrettine.co.uk

www.barrettine.co.uk/Environmental-Health



Mathew raises glass to BASIS PROMPT milestone

Mathew Luker, Pest Management Officer, working for East Hampshire District Council has been toasting his good fortune after helping the professional pest control register, BASIS PROMPT to reach a magical milestone.

The 38 year old became the 2,000th member of BASIS PROMPT when he signed up. His prize, a selection of wine, has been going down well ever since. Mathew said "There's a real need for professionalism in pest control and for those who work in the industry to be seen to be professional too. As a pest management officer, I felt it was important not only for me but the industry as a whole to continue to drive standards higher." Mathew added "The BASIS PROMPT register provides independent proof that a pest controller has received proper training and has continued to update their expertise through Continuing Professional Development. So signing up enables companies and individuals to stand out from the competition and is bound to help bring in work."

Rob Simpson, Managing Director of BASIS PROMPT commented, "People like Mathew are a credit to the pest control industry. The fact that he paid to join himself speaks volumes about his approach to work, his dedication and professionalism."

www.basispestcontrol.co.uk

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All enquiries are in strict confidence.



www.midlandpestcontrol.com

Bayer hosts BPCA Regional Training Forum



Bayer recently hosted a BPCA Regional Training Forum at Bayer House in Newbury. Alan Morris, Head of Sales for Bayer and a BPCA Executive Board Member commented "Bayer works closely with BPCA, and holding the event in Newbury was an opportunity to showcase the world of Bayer."

BPCA Events Officer, Sofi Halliday added "Our Regional Training Forums are aimed at pest control business owners and technicians, and helps them keep up to date with the latest legislation changes, product

innovations and best practice. It's also an opportunity for networking."

The event had a varied agenda with talks from different companies on topics including lone working, concerns about pesticide use (from Natural England), new regulations, industry updates and working with environmental health agencies. There was also a certified first aid training course during the afternoon (read page 26 for more information).

"Bayer is a leading player in the pest control business with a high market share, so it's important that we take every opportunity to talk to our customers and this is a great way of doing it," continued Alan. "All in all, the day was a great success with over 30 participants from the Home Counties – it is something that we will consider doing again."

Book your place on a Regional Training Forum near you at www.bpca.org.uk/events

Time running out to order personalised calendars



BPCA has teamed with the printers of PPC magazine (McCorquodale) to give Full Members the chance to get their own personalised company calendars. On the calendar you'll get your company logo, contact details and the BPCA member logo. The end result will give you 12 months of advertising on your customers' walls, which can supply further business leads and opportunities through the coming year.

To order, complete the order form at www.bpca.org.uk/ppc and email it to claire.richardson@mccorquodale.co.uk or call 01332 200 222.

Online CPD hits the spot

Almost 500 pest controllers have passed online training through BPCA's free Affiliate Scheme. The quizzes, on a range of 16 topics, have been released throughout 2013 and have allowed pest controllers to gain valuable training, a certificate for their portfolio, and at least three PROMPT CPD points per quiz passed.

2013 quizzes and number of passes

Rodent Refresher	54
Feral Bees	51
Personal Protective Equipment Refresher	44
Ladder Safety	43
Electric Fly Killer Servicing	42
Safe Storage of Pesticides	31
Animal Welfare	29
Insect Biology	24
Pest Mammals	24
23	Bird Management Refresher
22	Anticoagulant Rodenticides Refresher
21	Dealing with Bats
16	Sharps and Needlesticks
13	Pelgar Bed Bugs CPD
12	Insect-O-Cutor Flying Insect Control CPD
10	Google Adwords

If you'd like to sign up to access the free quizzes, visit www.bpca.org.uk/affiliate

MOBILEWORXS JOINS BPCA



MobileWorx, a provider of enterprise mobile solutions focused on mobilising field based business processes has joined as a BPCA Associate Member.

MobileWorx Managing Director, Andrew Cahill stated, "We see huge benefits for the use of mobile computing within the pest control community. Eliminating paperwork and re-keying of data reduces errors and speeds up back office functions which helps remote workers be more effective and get more done in a day." Andrew added "for operational staff our goal is for admin to be less of a chore freeing up time to find new business and improve customer service. We believe our long experience of building mobile applications for remote workers across a number of industries enables us to build successful and sustainable apps for technicians."

MobileWorx aims to help companies improve the productivity, effectiveness and responsiveness of their field based workers. Apps and solutions are comprised of software, hardware and integration that are quick to deploy and are supported by an implementation process that minimises disruption and the time taken to see a return on investment.

www.mobileworxs.com/solutions/pest-control

Prize winners

In PPC72 we ran a competition with distributors SX Environmental Supplies to win a selection of items worth almost £2000. Well done to the lucky winner Ian Naysmith (pictured) of Red Rose Pest Control in Lancashire.

Also the winner of PPC72's competition to win an XL8 D telescopic extension lance (donated by www.wasp-reach.com) was Steve Preston from Leicester.



Win an iPad mini for Christmas

PPC magazine has been running for over 20 years, and we're always looking at ways to improve it for our readers. So, we would love to know what you think of PPC magazine. Simply spend a few minutes answering 10 easy questions in our online survey and we'll enter you into a prize draw for a chance to win an iPad mini.

www.surveymonkey.com/s/MHJ5VPS

End of the pest adventure

After 15 years and 23 seminars the Pest-Ventures team has decided to call it a day with immediate effect. Organised by Pest Magazine, Acheta and Dewpoint Marketing, the decision to cease the event was based on budgetary restrictions from the shrinking audience of local authority pest controllers, coupled with the rise of free-to-attend events such as BPCA's regional training forums.

PEST-VENTURES

Moira Hart from the third partner, Dewpoint Marketing, commented, "While we realise that there are a number of people who will be disappointed by the decision, we have to be realistic. It takes a lot of time and effort to organise Pest-Ventures and with so many low-cost or free events it makes sense for us to bow out whilst we are ahead. We want everyone who attended Pest-Ventures to remember it for what it always was – a lively, informative and enjoyable event. We are not closing the door entirely, and should a suitable opportunity arise then, who knows, the Pest-Ventures brand may return, but, for now, we believe that the full day independent technical seminar format has had its day," she concludes.

Everyone in the Pest-Ventures team would like to thank the loyal band of delegates, speakers and exhibitors who regularly supported the Pest-Ventures events.

CEPA Standard discussed at Barrettine Training Day

At Barrettine's recent training day in Rotherham, delegates heard from a range of speakers including a bed bug detection demo from LAPA, the latest in IT systems for pest controllers, and Stevenage Council on both Apodemus and exotic pests (including a demo of some rather bolshy snakes). CEPA were represented by Simon Forrester, who spoke about Professionalism and the last chance saloon for cowboys (see PPC 72), and outlined the latest on the CEPA Standard (EN 16636) for Pest Management Services – more on that in the next issue of PPC.

Bayer products – imidacloprid update

This summer has provided a mixture of long hot summer days and occasionally heavy rainfall for sustained periods, providing the ideal environmental conditions for flies, cockroaches and ants. Effective control treatments for these pests are the Quick Bayt® and Maxforce® ranges, which contain imidacloprid.

The EU recently adopted EU Regulation No. 485/2013 to amend the approvals of three neonicotinoid substances (imidacloprid, clothianidin and thiamethoxam) so that their plant protection uses are restricted, due to perceived risks to honeybees when they are incorporated into a treatment programme on flowering plants /crops.

The restriction applies to plant protection

products only and does not apply to currently authorised products for biocidal /professional pest control use. Our professional pest control insecticides using imidacloprid are in the form of baits or gels for flies, cockroaches or ants. These products are therefore not sprayed and do not generate aerosols (spray droplets) and are not applied to flowering plants and crops.

UK pest control customers can be assured that the complete Bayer biocidal product range is unaffected by the revised EU regulations, enabling them to maintain effective treatments for the foreseeable future.

www.bayer.co.uk



All change for team PelGar

PelGar has announced some

changes to its team to further develop the company as a key player in the global pest control market. Richard Applegarth has been promoted to UK Sales Manager. Richard will continue to look after the eastern territory, where he has been building PelGar's business over the past 15 months, but he will now take over the responsibility for PelGar's key accounts and will be working closely with PelGar's UK regional managers David Gill and Jenni Smithson.

In parallel Nic Blaszkwicz will become PelGar's Global Marketing Manager. Nic has been at PelGar since 2006 and has helped the company gain a considerable share of the UK rodenticide market and raised the profile of its key brands in both the UK and overseas markets. Nic explains "As our international business develops it is important to maintain a strong brand and corporate identity to promote PelGar to the wider world." Working closely with PelGar's country managers and distributors to create innovative and impactful marketing campaigns Nic's aim is to ensure that PelGar lives up to its mission statement of 'leading the way in global pest control'.

In addition PelGar has appointed Judith Hall as its Office and Sales Support Manager to manage the day-to-day office operations and support the sales function. Judith has vast management experience in some extremely varied businesses – from corporate banking to students' unions, and most recently in the luxury home entertainment industry.

www.pelgar.co.uk

BPCA Awards

On 12 June at the AGM, BPCA presented some annual prestigious awards in recognition of outstanding achievement. The Del Norton Award is made as an acknowledgement of an individual's contribution to the Fumigation industry. This year the award was given to fumigation expert and long standing BPCA lecturer for the Fumigation Diploma, Mike Kelly of Acheta. Mike commented "It's a great honour to receive this award and recognition. I joined the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food's Infestation Control Division's Liverpool Port Office, under Edwin Bezzant, a superb entomologist, in 1967. Edwin arranged for me to spend some time at the Central Science Laboratory in Slough working alongside Harry Wainman and Bishu Chakrabarti, the mainstays of the UK Government's storage pest fumigation research, for so many years. And the subject has never lost its appeal in over 45 years".

Other awards presented on the day were the 'Charles Keeble Award' for best overall achievement in the Accredited Technician in Pest Control examination which went to Rachel Waterworth of Cannon Pest Control, and the 'John Bull Award' for best overall achievement in the Fumigation Diploma examination which went to Robert Smith of Smith Pest Control.



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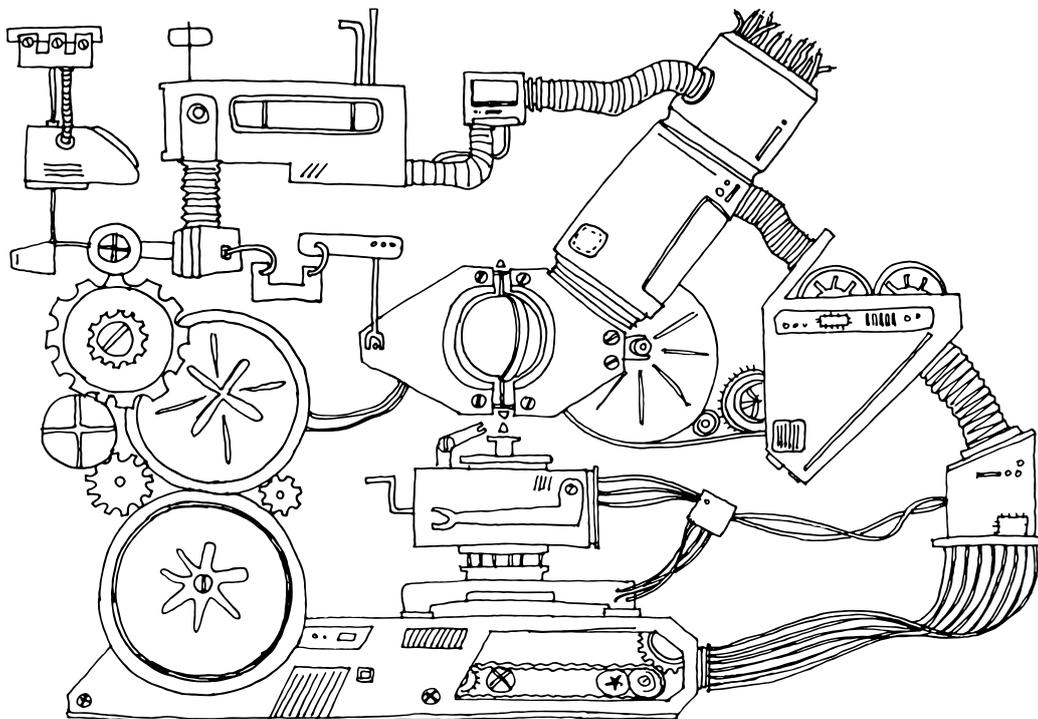
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GIMMICK OR GIMME?

Are electronic monitoring systems a useless selling 'gimmick' or are they a practical tool we should all consider using more? BPCA President Henry Mott talks about his personal experiences and investigates if they are 'gimmicks' or 'gimmies'.

Amongst the array of interesting products on display at the trade shows this year, there seemed to be an increase in the proliferation of non-toxic mouse control products and systems. The developments in such systems since they first hit the market seem to demonstrate how far technology has allowed us to progress.

Over a decade ago whilst working as pest control surveyor/salesman in central London I attended a sales meeting where I and my colleagues were presented with a new product that was going to revolutionise the industry. Hurrah! we all cried, "a new product that was unique, clever, affordable and without equal, along with a whole host of features and benefits. This will be a great addition to our sales portfolio." Sadly I can't recollect the name of the product these days, but be assured we wore suitably beaming smiles at the prospect of how much commission said product could make us.

What was this incredible product I hear you say? It was the first (to my knowledge) electronic mouse monitor. The secret behind this little box was a pressure pad designed only to be activated when a mouse passed through, thus illuminating a small red light on the top of the box. This would enable the customer and/or the technician to be instantly alerted to the

"Reflecting back on this experience, I ask myself: was the buyer right? Was this type of product too 'niche', or just ahead of its time?"

presence of the furry fella, and therefore confirm that action would need to be taken to avert an impending rodent disaster.

Armed with this new product I made my first sales appointment with one of my particularly large accounts, and strode in to deliver the sales pitch of the century. After a well-planned and passionate introduction I thrust the mouse box into the buyer's expectant hand with some aplomb and demanded to know: "So what do you think of that then?"

Needless to say there was a pause as he pondered the importance of such a new and unique product until he uttered the word "Gimmick!" I vaguely remember trying to mumble some retort but in truth I had been instantly crushed. I confess from that day the little box did not make as many appearances as my sales reports might have suggested, and up until now that memory has affected my attitude towards devices of this type.

Was the buyer right?

Probably not – he didn't suffer with any rodent issues and despite this the building was still laced with boxes of poison (enough to kill an army of mice). In the event that a rodent still managed to bypass the 'ring of steel' we could have still thrown a whole range of contact rodenticides at the issue, not to mention a vast array of actives often lovingly mixed by ourselves with the rodents' preferred nutrition. Great times.

Was this product too niche?

Like many inventions, the prototypes can look laughable to modern day versions. Take mobile phones for example. Compare your 1996 Nokia 9000 with its modern smartphone equivalent. Back then a bulky gadget for the few, now they are everywhere. For a number of years and certainly as long as I have been in the industry there has always been a certain type of client that has adopted the non-toxic approach to pest control. This was either driven from external factors such as auditing bodies, or from a self-driven recognition of the impact and possible risk that toxic substances might have on their business.

/continued over...

“If all toxics were removed from sale tomorrow would you resort to **break back traps as a method of control?**”



So are these systems needed or wanted, and if they can increase profits, how do they work?

With us potentially facing the loss of more actives, along with all the other pressures around the use of toxic substances, surely nontoxic control of rodents must now feature in every pest controller's armoury? Let's assume that if things go the way they have been, we will have few or no actives left, and this type of control is the best (or indeed only) way forward. At this point we need to consider what service our clients not only want, but are prepared to pay for.

If all toxics were removed from sale tomorrow would you resort to break back traps as a method of control? If so, would you leave them down permanently and inspect them on a regular basis or would you leave it to your client to tell you that one's gone off, and go in when called to collect and reset? Would you just offer an inspection service only using traps if and when required? All these types of questions and many more are probably something that you need to consider. Given the change in the market and customer demands, has the time come to consider these products not as a gimmick, but as an essential offering?

Here are just a few devices I found on the market:

Woodstream - VICTOR Kill-@lert

An innovative system of electronic mouse and rat traps which talk to a computer or tablet on-site via a simple USB dongle. The system comprises the traps and a dongle... that's it. So whether installing a system in a food manufacturing facility or a couple of traps in hard-to-reach locations in a domestic setting, the setup is simple and easily scalable. Once in place, the system will send alerts via email and/or SMS when triggered, and the simple online dashboard offers monitoring and trend analysis. Technology is all well and good, but PCOs need systems that are easy to install and maintain. Woodstream's new system, due for launch in November 2013, seems to offer PCOs an excellent option in terms of monitoring and provision of data to clients, resulting in a more profitable bottom line. Woodstream's European Sales Manager Will Golland said "We are really excited about the upcoming launch of the Victor Kill @lert system. Remote notification systems have been on the market for some time but have never been bought in significant numbers. The Victor Kill @lert system aims to change that as it opens up this technology to the entire marketplace by being not only easy to use, but also affordable. Kill @lert also gives control of an infestation rather than just monitoring rodent numbers by using the patented, non-toxic, humane electronic rat and mouse traps." www.woodstream.com

Pest-Scan+

Dutch company PestScan offers a complete system consists of a battery less and wireless mouse trap that sends a signal when it is activated. www.pestscan.eu

Paragon – Alert 24

The Alert24 remote rodent monitoring system offers 24/7 rodent protection and control, through immediate warning of rodent presence. The battery powered remote units communicate by RF transmission, allowing messages to be sent by email when activity is detected, or service required via an on-site base station linked to Alert24's secure server. www.paragonpestcontrol.co.uk

GreenTrapOnline

GreenTrapOnline A/S is a Danish company which develops and operates wireless electronic monitoring systems for use in pest control but also fire/humidity/radiation monitoring and personal safety. The GTO System is built on a modular structure allowing flexibility and easy extension. www.greentraponline.com

We can of course disregard these types of devices and rely on the use of nontoxic baits and mechanical traps, but I believe you ignore the advance of technology at your peril. Technology has changed and hopefully enhanced our lives in so many ways, most notably in time saving. We all complain about not enough hours in the day but imagine how fewer those hours would seem without a computer or mobile.

These pest control devices may now really offer an alternative to the time consuming and sometimes pointless exercise of checking dozens of bait boxes around a site. The time saved might allow you or your technicians to really inspect the site and offer better advice or maybe service far more sites in a day and thus improve productivity and profitability. With this type of device is it really necessary to make

the six weekly/monthly inspections that the industry has set as the benchmark for decades? To borrow that over-used management phrase the 'elephant in the room' is the PCO's fear that if poisons disappear, how we can continue to make our living? Perhaps modern technology provides an answer – today's gimmick might just be tomorrow's bread and butter product!

From my perspective as the owner of a pest control company, just because I had one bad experience years ago I shouldn't dismiss or ignore this area of our industry any more. Twenty years ago I would have not wanted to carry a suitcase around to make a phone call, but now my whole world would collapse without it! I for one don't want my business to be a 'me too', I want to be seen as a leader – do you? For me it's definitely a 'gimme!'

One final thought

When we look where our industry is heading, we seem to have two routes. Either we stay as ratcatchers, and eventually get replaced by cleaning staff, or instead become professional consultants known for our expertise and access to every modern tool. It's in our hands to change our image, and by using products such as these we give off an aura of proficiency that will in the long term help redefine us as a profession.

“National austerity and the municipal cutbacks it has brought are seen as an important cause of the greater rat and mouse control challenges faced by pest controllers across Europe today.”

Tackling the growing European rodent control challenge

Professional pest controllers across Europe are finding rats and mice significantly more challenging to control these days.



Urban infestations are proving especially problematic, with by far the greatest difficulties encountered in food processing and retailing. And they primarily derive from less good bait consumption in the face of a noticeably greater availability of attractive food sources, making the most palatable rodenticides essential for effective control.

These are the key findings of the first Europe-wide rodent control study conducted by BASF Pest Control Solutions earlier this year with more than 250 pest control specialists across Germany, the UK, Spain and Italy. Fully 90% of the pest controllers involved are finding rodent control more challenging, with over 60% of these seeing it as significantly so, and urban environments clearly causing the greatest concern (see figure 1 over).

Interestingly, while urban rats and mice are rated similarly in the challenges they present in the UK, mice appear to be more problematic than rats in German urban environments, and rats

especially challenging in towns and cities in Spain and Italy.

The food processing and retailing sectors stand out as presenting the biggest challenges across Europe, followed by houses and flats, hotels and restaurants, farms and rural buildings and public buildings (see figure 2 over).

Again though, marked differences are apparent between the countries. More than half of PCOs in Germany, Spain and Italy identify the food processing and retailing sectors as particularly challenging with around 25% in each case identifying hotels and restaurants and just 20% houses and flats.

In the UK, however, houses and flats are found to present the greatest rodent control challenges by over 70% of controllers, compared to 30% for food processing and retailing and 14% for hotels and restaurants.

/continued over...

Across all these sectors poorer bait consumption is identified as the biggest single challenge, with more frequent infestations and greater public health demands also reported by three in every 10 pest controllers or more (see figure 3).

Poorer bait consumption clearly presents greater than average problems in Germany, more frequent and bigger infestations are more widely identified in the UK, and in Spain and Italy greater public health demands are rated as markedly more important than the average.

Probably reflecting the particular drive for responsible baiting in recent years (see news item on SGARS, page 6), more UK pest controllers than the average report greater need for wildlife safety as a key factor behind their increased rodent control challenge.

“National austerity and the municipal cutbacks it has brought are seen as an important cause of the greater rat and mouse control challenges faced by pest controllers across Europe today,” notes study co-ordinator, Martina Flynn of BASF Pest Control Solutions. “But interestingly, not the most important one.

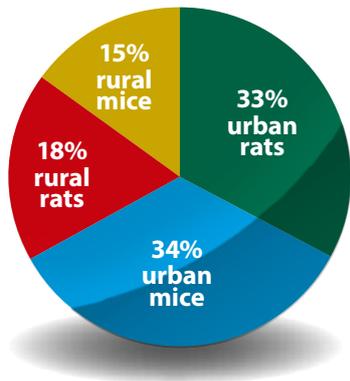


Figure 1: Which rodents are you finding the most challenging to control?

“Greater food availability is pinpointed as the key culprit by far more PCOs – well over half, in fact. Poorer waste management, which may well be linked to municipal cutbacks is also considered significant. And all three factors are felt to be markedly more important than rodenticide resistance, private sector economies or warmer winters (see figure 3).

“There’s also a clear uniformity of opinion on this score across Europe too,” she points out. “Regardless of their location, PCOs in all three regions placed the overwhelming majority of the blame on the same three causes.

“Understandably perhaps, municipal cutbacks are the biggest current problem in Spain and Italy – as Greek PCOs would almost certainly agree. In both Germany and the UK, though, greater food availability is pinpointed as the key reason by around twice as many pest controllers as municipal cuts.”

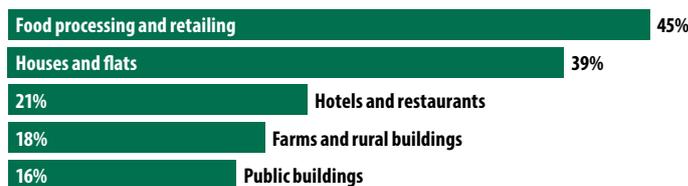


Figure 2: In which main sectors do you find the greatest rodent control challenges?

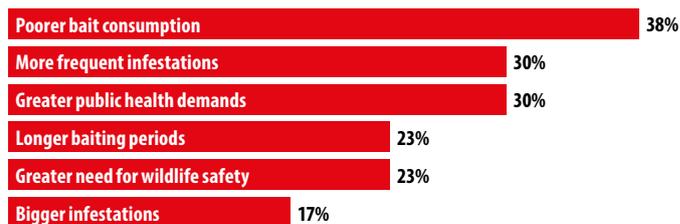


Figure 3: In what ways are you finding rodent control more challenging?

Since wide availability of alternative food sources invariably makes rodent control more difficult, it comes as no surprise to Martina Flynn that pest controllers consider poorer bait consumption their most significant issue. Nor that they are seeing more frequent infestations, since the breeding rate of rats and mice means that even with 80% control, populations can re-establish themselves at the same level in little more than a month.

“Growing public health demands are clearly making the problem worse,” she notes. “On the one hand, they mean greater pressure to avoid rodent infestations. And on the other, they force more cautious rodenticide use in secure baiting containers that are far less attractive to rats and mice in urban environments full of alternative foods.”

To tackle the growing challenge Martina insists that the most palatable rodenticide baits developed from and delivered with a firm understanding of rodent behaviour must be the number one priority for pest controllers.

She stresses that the best and safest rodent control is achieved by delivering a lethal dose of rodenticide to as many rats and mice as possible, as quickly as possible. And the key to doing this, she insists, is treatment programmes that take the greatest advantage of their natural behaviour.

“Essentially, we need to think like a rodent,” she suggests. “We must plan and manage our treatment with the best possible understanding of how rats and mice live and feed.

“... even the most powerful rodenticide **needs to be eaten to have an effect**, making the palatability of any bait to rats and mice as important as the potency of its active ingredient.”

“Because populations can build so rapidly we need our customers to be continually alert for the first signs of infestation rather than only calling us in when rats and mice really become obvious. And because so many infestations are broad-based, we need to ensure they allow us to treat widely enough around their premises not just in the immediate areas rodents are seen.

“This also makes working together with neighbouring premises especially important. After all, only attempting to control rodents in one part of what can be a very extensive foraging area is a recipe for poor performance and rapid re-infestation – not to mention an increased risk of developing rodenticide resistance.

“As PCOs we need to be more disciplined than ever in our surveying so we place bait stations where rats and mice are mostly likely to find them too,” adds Martina Flynn. “As well as siting rat boxes carefully on well-travelled or likely rat runs from their external burrows and in locations they consider safe, wherever possible we need to place them there permanently, although only filling them with bait at the first sign of activity. This will help overcome the natural neophobia which may prevent them feeding from an unfamiliar object for a considerable time.

“We also need to keep bait levels topped up sufficiently throughout treatment – especially in the first week or so – to ensure every individual consumes a lethal dose. This may demand inspection visits every two or three days during the initial phase of treatment.

“At the same time, we need to make our customers aware of the need to watch out for rodents moving in from outside to re-populate territories cleared by treatment. Apart from anything else, setting expectations in this way will be important in preventing them seeing re-infestations as a sign of treatment failure on our part.”

The single most important essential in this behaviour-led approach to control, Martina Flynn is convinced, are rodenticide baits which stimulate the most immediate, complete and reliable rodenticide consumption.

She stresses that even the most powerful rodenticide needs to be eaten to have an effect, making the palatability of any bait to rats and mice as important as the potency of its active ingredient.

“Our evaluations of a large number of commercial European baits show the best quality formulations (such as BASF’s Neosorex and Storm) can be nearly 20 times more palatable to rats and around five times more appealing to mice than some other formulations,” she reports.

“As a result, we’ve found they can be consumed much faster and more completely to give noticeably more rapid and reliable rodent control. This is particularly important where other attractive food sources are freely available. In these cases we strongly advise using either baits with uptake-enhancing foraging grains or pasta baits

which have special appeal to protein and fat-loving urban rodents.

“It all comes down understanding the value of the right, well-researched mix of ingredients. Also to appreciating the extent to which differences in palatability – even between apparently similar baits – can impact performance in practice.

“It’s also vital too that we bear in mind that rodents’ sense of smell is so much more acute than our own. So a bait that smells highly attractive to us can be overpowering and off-putting to them.”

Martina Flynn insists that, whether urban or rural, this depth of understanding and precision is essential in modern rat and mouse control if European pest controllers are to ensure the most rapid and effective rodent treatment despite the greater challenges they so clearly face. And, in turn, she sees faster control, allowing baiting periods to be reduced, helping to meet the environmental safeguards increasingly being required by legislators.

For assistance on rodent control, the BPCA website contains free online CPD quizzes, plus further technical and documentation support for members, or visit the BASF website.

www.bpca.org.uk

www.pestcontrol.basf.co.uk








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Facilities Management Show continues to grow



Show organiser, easyFairs, reports that an array of major names from across the supply spectrum have signed up for Facilities Management 2014. Companies including WD40, Lex Autolease, Asset Skills, Innovise, Rubbermaid, MT Waste and even new BPCA Associate Member 'MobileWorxs' have all confirmed they will be exhibiting at the show, which takes place on **11-13 March 2014** at Birmingham's NEC.

BPCA Events Officer Sofi Halliday commented "It is great to see that there will still be an FM show at the NEC. The show is always the perfect opportunity for us to meet with potential and existing clients of our members." Sofi adds "BPCA will have a dedicated zone and hospitality area for members who choose to exhibit."

The show is co-located with easyFairs' flagship event Maintec, which is in its 39th year, and each year attracts all the leading plant and site managers, maintenance professionals and engineers working across the UK. In a major coup,

Facilities Management is also running alongside the brand new Health & Safety event. BPCA Membership Manager, Kevin Higgins believes the co-locations give the Facilities Management show massive national appeal, "We have had great success in the past as both shows bring in a broad audience of senior buyers from far and wide." Commenting on the market feedback, Matt Benyon, easyFairs UK and Global Managing Director said "Exhibitors really want the kind of show we're offering. They recognise that there is a huge overlap between the professionals attending Maintec and those involved in facilities management. They also know that the thousands of FM decision makers who work outside London are currently badly neglected when it comes to exhibitions. That's why our NEC-based Facilities Management

"... attracts all the leading plant and site managers, maintenance professionals and engineers working across the UK"

show has been so well received."

The Facilities Management Show provides companies with the perfect opportunity to get their company in front of a large audience of senior buyers looking to source services. BPCA are working with easyFairs to create a special area and promotional campaign to attract FM and building services managers, and we welcome BPCA members who want to exhibit around BPCA at the show.

Stand booking for 2014 is well underway and spaces are running out fast, so book your stand now to avoid disappointment.

DON'T FORGET!

BPCA members are eligible to a small discount if they choose to book a stand within the dedicated BPCA pavilion. For more information on exhibiting opportunities at Facilities Management 2014 contact Jerry Dawson on +44 (0)20 8843 8823, or go to www.easyFairs.com/facilitiesmanagement



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Brand in demand

In recent months BPCA has noticed an increasing number of non-member companies attempting to use the BPCA name to promote their business. If you are not a BPCA Member, you cannot use the BPCA logo. You may link to the BPCA website but cannot imply you are a member.

We have taken the step of trademarking the BPCA and member logos, giving us added legal protection of the BPCA brand. Membership Manager Kevin Higgins said "It's great to know that our logo is so much in demand that companies want to use it – we'd just prefer it if they joined first!"

BPCA will continue to keep an eye out for those companies who value the BPCA brand, but aren't prepared to join. The Association takes misuse of the logo seriously, and will involve Trading Standards and take legal action for 'passing off' where appropriate.

Another area that trips people up is around what text can be used where a company has been trained via BPCA. The confusion has

TM



resulted in some well-meaning companies falling foul of the rules. So just to clarify: companies who have gone through training on a course run by or bearing the BPCA name cannot use the BPCA logo,

nor can you use the RSPH logo for the purpose of promotion.

BPCA is proud to be the largest and leading training organisation for our sector, and wants those people trained by BPCA to be able to acknowledge it, without confusing the public.

Companies may want to state their employees have been trained by BPCA. Again, there are some wordings that are and are not allowed.

ALLOWED (when true)

"Trained by the British Pest Control Association"

"Qualified through BPCA"

"XX has gained the BPCA/RSPH Level 2 Award/Certificate (delete as applicable) in Pest Management, the recognised industry standard qualification"

NOT ALLOWED

"BPCA Approved"

"BPCA Accredited"

"BPCA Certified"

"BPCA Endorsed"

"BPCA Certificated"

If you have spotted the use of a BPCA logo somewhere and think it might be wrong, or want to check what can and cannot be said, visit our special web page

www.bpca.org.uk/contact

BPCA honours Peter Priestley

Following the BPCA AGM in June, the Association also honoured one of the industry's greats by bestowing Life Membership of BPCA on Peter Priestley.

Peter said "it came as a complete surprise but, nevertheless an extremely pleasant one. I should like to thank the Board and BPCA members for putting my name in the frame." Peter added "During my time on the BPCA Board I was very keen to try and get our industry recognised by statutory regulation and the adoption of CPD will hopefully pave the way. I still hope that one day it will happen and no longer will just anyone be able to call themselves a pest controller."

BPCA President Henry Mott commented "This honour is only bestowed on individuals who have, over many years, voluntarily worked on behalf of the industry and the Association. It is important to remember that our Association can only function to serve its members with the support and time given by volunteers such as Peter."

Henry added "It is testament to the man that the comments I have heard have always been in respect of his decency as a manager,

boss and general mentor to those individuals who have had the pleasure of working more closely with him. I wish him well in his semi-retirement and trust that from time to time he might offer up some advice for 'newbies!'"

Peter Priestley joined Rentokil in 1980 and over the following 12 years worked as a manager at several locations before moving to Terminix (now Ecolab) for a further nine years. Peter bought London-based Abatis Ltd in 2001, which became EnviroCare GB Ltd. He built the company up from around £400k to just over £5M and subsequently sold to Green Compliance in 2010. Since selling the business Peter has remained in the industry as a specialist consultant on systems, acquisitions and disposals but illness has restricted activity and he is now semi-retired.

Peter served on the BPCA Board for nine years in total, spread over two terms, and was



elected President in 2003, an office which he held until 2007. Former colleague, John Somner, formally of Enviroguard (UK) Ltd said "I always found Peter very enlightening on how to run a pest control business. Peter was an excellent salesman and was continuously a threat to Enviroguard's contracts. However if he did pinch one, he was always very gentlemanly about it and would insist on buying me lunch at The Spotted Dog! Everyone at Nightshift Pest Control congratulates Peter on his life membership of the BPCA."

BPCA UPDATE | feature



**EXCLUSIVE
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BPCA research

BPCA carries out a range of high quality research activities designed to better understand the sector and provide members and key stakeholders with unbiased advice and information on the market. Our programme has expanded during 2013 and we've been busy trying to deliver a wider spread of research activities that will benefit our members. Here are some examples:

Pest search

In the last issue of PPC we estimated we'd have given out 35,000 referrals to Full Servicing members by the end of 2013. We're sorry, but we got it wrong – it'll be more like 40,000! From January to October 35,482 company details have been passed on to the public for domestic and commercial jobs, bringing an estimated **£1.5 million** of extra business to BPCA members.

Pest search headlines

Bed bugs were the third most common pest search

Bees topped the table for June pest searches

L31 (Liverpool) is the most popular postcode for pest searches

Would you like to know more..?

Further research and analysis into our referrals data has provided us with a number of trends including:

- The most common pest searches per month
- A breakdown of commercial versus domestic enquiries
- The highest performing postcodes for pests in the UK.

BPCA Marketing Officer Laurence Barnard said "The referral data our new website gives us will be a useful tool for all BPCA members. We're able to tell them the most popular areas and pest searches in the UK. For example, we know that bird management enquiries peaked at one particular time of year, and in certain locations. Now we know

this, we (and our members) can focus our marketing efforts to clients on bird control for that point in the calendar, and in specific postcodes." Laurence added "In other sectors, companies would pay thousands for this information – but we're giving it to our Full Members for free, helping them target new business efficiently. Much more useful than giving members pre-written press releases."

Market research

BPCA is also carrying out market research on the size and shape of the UK pest control sector. This will be used to fight our case in Westminster and Brussels, and help us demonstrate the value of what we do to protect public health. For more information see the next issue of PPC magazine.



Member referrals – scores on the doors

It's that time of the year when most of us review our year and plan budgets. During this time it's not unusual to assess the value of the services and products you're spending your money on – and BPCA membership is no different. Forgetting the wide range of membership benefits you may have access to, you may actually find the BPCA consumer referrals through the website will more than cover and justify your membership fee. We are now able to give members the exact number of referrals that come from BPCA, and we'll be writing to them all soon. BPCA Membership Manager Kevin Higgins explained "We can now clearly demonstrate that members are actually saving money by being a BPCA member, through a combination of the amount of referrals they've received, and the savings they are making by accessing all our other benefits."



See how much BPCA membership can save you! Have a go on our membership benefits calculator at www.bpca.org.uk/calculator

Not a member yet?

Join now - we can save your business much more than the cost of membership. To find out more about how to access these benefits or to join BPCA contact Rachel Eyre on 01332 225 112

rachel@bpca.org.uk

BPCA produces an annual National Survey of Pest Species, focusing on the work carried out by UK local authorities, to examine and benchmark any variations in pest numbers, treatments and resources in public health pest control. The survey analyses the demand for pest control across all 406 local authorities in the UK over a 12 month period, using FOI requests.



The National Survey contains detailed information on pest control staffing numbers and the number of treatments administered for every core pest species. This annual benchmarking exercise allows for direct comparison between councils, regions, and even countries. Simon added "There may be a number

of local factors why certain areas 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 cut and members of the public are being told to solve the problem themselves." The Survey also highlights areas which are no longer providing free or subsidised pest control services. "We publish the National Survey to highlight this fact to the public and encourage them to use BPCA members to deal with pest problems professionally."

BPCA Chief Executive Simon Forrester said: "This is one of the most comprehensive studies of the demand placed on local authorities for pest control ever carried out, and it covers a period when austerity measures were biting hard. Our second national survey provides incredibly valuable data and we can now refer to last year's figures to plot trends, identify new threats and gauge how cutbacks are affecting such a vital public health service."



This year's National Survey coverage seemed to have been dominated by the airwaves, with a number of radio stations across the UK discussing the survey. Despite this, we were still heavily featured in printed newspapers and on the web in hundreds of places.

Rats and bed bugs thriving in the age of austerity

By Steve Hawkes, Consumer Affairs Editor

MORE "pest plagues" and rat infestations are likely as councils shed their pest control teams to cope with Government cutbacks, experts warned yesterday.

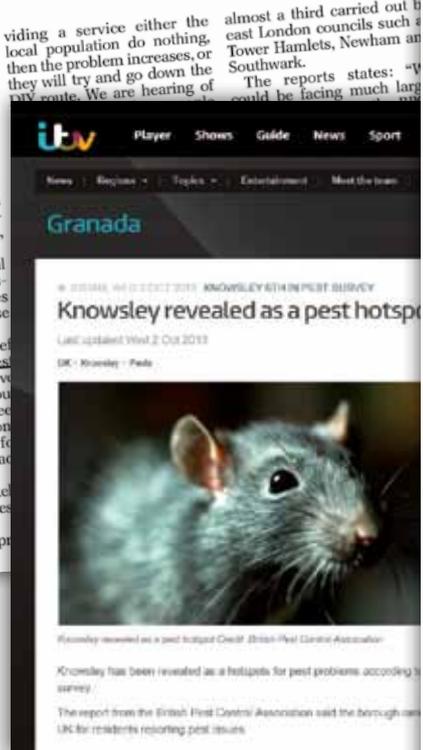
The number of bed bugs is also likely to rise in London because of the "influx of tourists" after last year's Olympics, it was claimed.

Around 15 per cent of local authorities have already discontinued their pest services and the number could rise "considerably".

Simon Forrester, the chief executive of the British Pest Control Association, said: "I've got some real concerns about the ongoing ability to meet and control pest infestation that get out of hand - for instance in a row of terraced houses."

"There is a significant likelihood that the number of pests will increase dramatically."

"When councils stop providing a service either the local population do nothing, then the problem increases, or they will try and go down the DIY route. We are hearing of almost a third carried out by east London councils such as Tower Hamlets, Newham and Southwark. The reports states: "We could be facing much larger rat infestations."



Olympic size bug issue is a real pest!

HERE'S the real legacy of the London Olympics 2012 - an influx of BED BUGS!

And the number of mattress mites in the capital is set to rise - thanks to the tourists who piled in for the great sporting event.

Britain also faces a dramatic increase in "pest plagues" and rat infestations as councils axe their pest control teams to cope with Government cutbacks.

A new report warned that 15 per cent of our local authorities have discontinued their pest services and will rise "considerably".

A spokesman for the British Pest Control Association said a big rise in the rodent population and the number of bed bugs was likely to rise in London because of the "influx of tourists" after the Olympics.

Mr Forrester said: "There is a significant likelihood that the number of pests will



Telegraph

No holds barred

Andy McLachlan, Business Consultant for BPCA's BusinessShield explains the new Disclosure and Barring Service and its impact on our industry.



BusinessShield

BPCA members requiring DBS checks on staff should contact BusinessShield for free assistance.

From 17 June 2013 England's Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) have merged into the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). From now on CRB checks will be known as DBS checks.

A DBS check will be required when:

- Working in certain jobs or voluntary work i.e. working with Children or the Care industry
- Applying to adopt or foster a child.

Note that there are different rules for getting a Criminal Record check in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

When are DBS checks required?

Normally, employers should not ask applicants about spent convictions, but for jobs that require DBS checks they may do. The DBS has produced an eligibility guide that list most roles that will require a DBS check (see below). However the guidance is not comprehensive; therefore if as an employer you are unsure please contact the DBS directly.

Types of check

There are three types of check. The employer running the check should provide the applicant with more information about the level of check required. Criminal record check applicants must be 16 or over.

Checks for volunteers will be free of charge.

A DBS doesn't have an expiry date, and any information will be accurate at the time of the check taking place. Applicants and employers can use the DBS update services to keep a certificate up to date or carry out checks on a potential employee's certificate.

Type of check	What will it check for?	How long does it take?
Standard	Spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings	About 2 weeks
Enhanced	As above plus additional information held by local police forces that's reasonably considered relevant to the post applied for	About 4 weeks
Enhanced with list checks	As above – plus a check of the DBS barred list	About 4 weeks

BPCA members can obtain free advice on this or any other aspect of health and safety or employment law by contacting andy@skalt.co.uk

- <https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check>
- <http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/>
- <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni-checks>

DBS in detail

Why are clients now insisting on DBS checks when they haven't before?

Some clients want to manage risk by insisting every visitor or contractor has been checked – but this is no longer allowed under DBS, except in certain circumstances.

I don't visit any sites with children, but I do look after a home for vulnerable adults – does a DBS still apply?

Yes, a list of jobs that require a DBS check can be found at <http://goo.gl/314jEM>

I have a contract with a school, and am on site only a few times a year, accompanied by a caretaker or teacher – do I still need to be DBS checked?

No, and if the school insists on a DBS, ask them to which section of the annex this employment relates. Schools sometimes think section 7 applies, but the specific wording states "where the normal duties of that work involve regular contact with children."

Do I need a DBS check on all technicians?

No, it would entirely depend on their job role, and the types of sites that they visit.

If a client insists on a check, can I refuse?

Absolutely, again the checks are only required in certain roles, therefore if the role undertaken does not fall under one of these, then the company (ie you) can refuse.

I haven't been DBS checked. What can I do if a client refuses to let me on site?

There's not a lot you can do. If it is a job role that requires a DBS check (see the job roles list) we would advise you to have the relevant employees checked. If it isn't, then the DBS service will not allow a check to take place. Before a company considers asking a person to make an application they are legally responsible for ensuring the individual is entitled to submit a check. Inform your client that new DBS rules are different, and they should contact DBS for advice.

Can I put something in my contract that prevents me having to DBS check my employees?

No, if it is required because the type of work you do, this cannot go in a contract.

I carry out work in a prison, do I need to be checked?

Yes – prisons (like courts) are one of the premises that require everyone to be checked.

Can I get some sort of ID card that shows I have been DBS checked?

No official cards exist, though some companies like to state on their ID cards that the person has been checked.

Should I have every member of my staff checked, just to be sure?

No – employees should only be checked if their job role requires this.

Tightening the controls on aluminium phosphide

In just over two years time the regulations regarding aluminium phosphide will have significantly changed. Kevin Brown, Chairman of RAMPS explains how these changes will affect the industry.

After 26 November 2015 it will be a requirement of the Plant Protection (Sustainable Use) Regulations 2012 that all users of aluminium phosphide possess a nationally recognised certificate in the safe use of the product. Anyone found using aluminium phosphide after then without such a certificate will be liable to prosecution. Most professionals in the industry believe this is a long overdue tightening of controls, for one of the more hazardous materials in a pest controller's armoury.

To meet the requirements of the new law the industry has been working over the past three years to ensure that a framework for providing and promoting this training exists. Several significant developments have taken place:

- A wide ranging industry body – RAMPS was formed to work with government and identify how the requirements of the Act could be met
- A nationally recognised syllabus was developed and approved by government
- A network of trainers has been established and trained to deliver the courses

- Awarding bodies were approved to assess candidates for certification.

One of the first deadlines within this scheduled act was that by November 2013 suitable training should be available to the market. At present there are in the region of 30 trainers spread nationally who can deliver the Ofqual approved course and direct candidates to approved assessment centres. BPCA Technical Manager, Richard Moseley commented "It is great that the industry can access the required training and qualifications from multiple sources." Richard added "This means that there will be a better chance of the industry meeting the demand when a qualification becomes a legal requirement."

With this first hurdle successfully met the next process is to inform and encourage as many users of aluminium phosphide as possible to seize the initiative and get trained as early as possible. With many thousands of users across the country requiring this qualification and little more than 24 months until enforcement, it is predictable that demand will grow steadily, with a bottleneck expected in the autumn of 2015.



To support users of Aluminium Phosphide with continuous professional development, an online CPD quiz based on Phostoxin is now available on the BPCA website. Register to take this quiz worth three PROMPT CPD points at www.bpca.org.uk/affiliate

Although this might appear to be yet another round of European legislation, for the pest controller it should also be seen as a significant business opportunity. For many years pest controllers have complained of the imbalance between approvals that they need to apply treatments and farmers who by nature of their work could apply the same products on their land but without the same training. In this instance all users must meet the same standard, and early research suggests that many in the agricultural community will choose not to undertake this training, but instead leave it to outside professional contractors like us.

Further information about the changes to legislation regarding the use of aluminium phosphide will be discussed at the forthcoming BPCA Fumigation Conference. You can also find further information on the RAMPS website.

www.ramps-uk.org

FUMIGATION EVENT | feature

Fumigation Conference 2013

Following on from the success of the newly launched 2012 Fumigation Conference, this year's event is aimed at reviewing some of the issues that arose at the 2012 Conference, and addressing the serious issue of cargo containers that are regularly fumigated for pests, without being satisfactorily labelled to indicate this.

BPCA's FaCE forum is aware that the lack of information on thousands of containers fumigated every day globally, could be a serious risk to the health of those involved in shipping, storing, hauling and handling. Containers without correct documentation could make it all the way to the major retailers store without them being

aware of the risk – an issue that must be drawn to their attention.

The one day event will feature keynote speakers to raise awareness of best practice, starting off with the very well respected and fumigation industry trainer Mike Kelly, along with the Marine Accident Investigation Bureau, the proposed new RSPH Level Two qualification in fumigation, Port Skills Safety and product manufacturers Detia Degesch GmbH.

Richard Moseley, Technical Manager for BPCA and part of the FaCE forum explained "The Conference promises to be an incredibly informative and interesting event. All parties, from fumigator to retailer and end user, will have an opportunity to improve their knowledge, their safety, and perhaps even put measures in place to manage the risk from fumigated containers."



Book your place by completing the booking form on the BPCA website

www.bpca.org.uk/fumigation

**Wednesday 27 November 2013
10.00am to 4.00pm
BPCA Office, 4a Mallard Way
Pride Park, Derby DE24 8GX**

Cost £50+VAT per delegate, including lunch and refreshments

On top down under

Competitive Pest Services, with branches in Sydney and Brisbane have won AEPMA Australian Pest Manager of the Year in both 2012 and 2013. Simon Forrester investigates the unique challenges and opportunities faced by the company, and asks what UK pest professionals can learn from this award-winning outfit.



When a company wins repeated plaudits from industry, it's worth taking note. When they get approached by airlines and telecommunication companies then it's time to sit down and analyse exactly what they are doing to get these results.

Gary Journeaux started his working life as a media planner, but decided to join the family pest control business alongside Dad, Mum and an older brother. Eventually Gary branched out and set up his own company – in direct competition to the family firm.

The company Gary bought had been in business for over ten years, but it was only when he took over the reins and rebuilt the company structure from scratch (including a name change) that things really took off.

Gary says "My experience showed that what customers want is peace of mind and security. Pest control is a difficult emotional state for most people, so helping them through that with minimal fuss and maximum delivery is key. We aim to manage our clients' emotions – their experience is primary in terms of satisfaction, repeat business and those all-important referrals. Being blunt about it, pest control is secondary, anyone can do that bit if well trained. When we look at our customer service program, we review the best in the world, in any industry.

We're committed to being the best company on the planet, so that both clients and staff enjoy dealing with Competitive".

This outstanding customer service has won Competitive some choice government, health care and industrial contracts, growing from a one man pest business to sales of over a million dollars in just five years.

One of the key ways Competitive has supported the development of this customer base is through distinctive branding, and being just that little bit different. They use converted ice-cream trucks in distinctive colours, the website is tongue-in-cheek, and all staff are issued with snappy uniforms in black and white.

One innovation that few have taken up in the UK is the peace of mind of a money-back guarantee on services. But Competitive has gone one further, and offers a staggering 200% money-back guarantee on domestic work – basically if the customer is unhappy in any way, Competitive will refund the client's money and pay for a competitor to come in and sort it out. The guarantee does exclude bed bugs, possums and termites, Gary commented "This is because to gain control we need the client's full cooperation and assistance, and sometimes they may not share all the required information."

Because of the commitment to customer service, not many have taken them up on this pledge. Gary adds "Our undertaking keeps us determined to keep the client happy in any way and every day. This guarantee is the core of our whole customer service program."

Another way Competitive differentiates is through corporate social responsibility. Competitive is a proud and vocal sponsor of Cambodian and Burmese orphanages, and donates 10% of company profits to charities

for children, along with their \$5,000 (£3,000) award for PCO of the year.

Many of the issues facing the Australian industry are familiar. Finding good staff is an issue, but keeping them is more difficult. Gary reports that "As a result of the mining boom in Australia, our technicians have been sent to work solely on a big extraction operation in the middle of nowhere. Every guy sent is offered a job on site earning up to three times the salary – that's difficult to get past. We ended up trying to offer the best conditions to pest controllers in Australia: massages every fortnight, profit share, annual overseas trips, lunch delivered on-site on Fridays, and offering six weeks annual leave to every employee." Competitive has a refreshingly positive attitude to rewards too. Gary's experience in other industries informed his decision to 'share the wealth' as he puts it: "After working in advertising for many years, it used to irk me when the company would advise that they were making big profits, but still had wage freezes in place. When I bought Competitive I ensured that if the company was doing well, then the team should be rewarded. That was how our annual trips to Hawaii, Thailand and Bali came about. But I've offered profit share to long term employees too." This has resulted in Gary being able to build a team of loyal staff who are 100% committed to the success of the company, and helped them grow rapidly, taking on new staff each year.

When interviewing new personnel Gary always asks himself 'would I feel happy letting this person in my home?' Trust is a key part of the Competitive offering, and is a central to the training, which begins with distance learning (not unlike BPCA's online learning for the Level 2), backed up with on-the-job



“Being blunt about it, pest control is secondary, anyone can do that bit if well trained.”

training accompanied by a supervisor, and regular CPD activity. After four weeks, the technician is ready to convert their trainee licence issued by each state into a full one.

Travel is an issue, but instead of congestion, problems include distance to jobs and also access. Gary says “Some service managers have to fly or drive for hours to reach sites, which adds days of time and lots of expense to contracts. We have to price very carefully, and know when to walk away.” Some business districts limit vehicle access or impose additional fees, which causes headaches and also mean cost increases, which some clients are not willing to bear.

Competitive makes full use of technology, with all field service personnel linked to HQ by remote data links, and able to take payment on site. Vans are tracked and fitted with satnavs, which helps direct resources efficiently. “The technology pays for itself very quickly” says Gary.

The market is driven primarily by cost, with green issues a close second. Australian clients want minimal pesticide use, but expect control. Managing this expectation is a challenge. Competitive offers customers a guarantee when biocides are used, and is looking at a second alternative of a ‘green’ treatment but no guarantee of efficacy – putting the onus back on the customer.

Threats to the pest control industry include the emergence of service offerings tacked onto window cleaning companies, and internet sales of products, with many consumers now buying cockroach gel online from overseas rather than recruiting a professional. Another issue is significant increases in requirements for documentation, for example method statements have doubled in size from client demand.

I asked Gary what benchmarking he carries out: “We compare ourselves with the biggest, most successful and those with the best reputations, not our geographical competitor.” The results of this are a 20% growth in business year-on-year, maintaining the 50:50 split in work between residential and a team that is committed to the business.

And what of the future? Gary would like to see certification to carry out work, and welcomes a benchmark not unlike Europe’s CEPA-led standard so clients know which the professionals really are.

Want to find out what it’s like to move and work in Australia? Read an interview with Brit, David Leech who moved out to Australia in 2012.

www.bpca.org.uk/ppc

Fancy doing this?

BPCA is working with Competitive to give one lucky pest controller the opportunity of a lifetime – to go to Australia and spend the Summer (September to April) working as a pest controller. To find out more email summerinoz@cpests.com

Gary’s ten key ways to set yourself apart

- 1 Offer cast-iron guarantees.** If you believe in your workmanship, you can promise to deliver. Few competitors will do this.
- 2 Promote what distinguishes you** from your competitors, not what everyone out there does already.
- 3 Get noticed.** Do things in a striking way, and get local press involved. You don’t have to convert an ice cream van, but do differentiate your business (BPCA can help).
- 4 Try different marketing methods** such as Groupon, local advert papers or get listed on price comparison sites.
- 5 Innovate, don’t follow.** Do something different to your competition – suddenly they won’t be your competition anymore!
- 6 Ensure your customer feels valued.** Measure their perception of your service (have someone call them back after each job), and ensure you deliver more than what you promised.
- 7 Embrace technology** to help get you in front of new customers. Online systems can track orders and take payments, and van tracking keeps your office aware of locations at all times, increasing efficiency.
- 8 Use customer feedback to promote yourself.** Genuine testimonials are powerful, and can work for both domestic and commercial jobs.
- 9 Branding – people will pay more for a professional.** It’s important to maintain brand consistency and use it on everything you send out.
- 10 Re-evaluate what you are doing** – look through clients’ eyes on a regular basis to see how things could change.

Sometimes described as the 'forgotten pest', mice are at risk of being overshadowed and underestimated by the perceived threat of rats. With their 'pet-like' appeal, mice are often seen with less alarm by customers, who risk overlooking the potential threat that this small, inquisitive rodent presents, particularly when compared to rats.

Don't roll the dice with mice!



However, the reality is that severe mouse infestations can actually prove far more problematic. Bayer's Alan Morris explains all.



As winter approaches and rodents look to migrate indoors, thoughts typically turn to rats. However, mice can be a much more persistent pest and have become a somewhat forgotten problem. Mice are less visible, less obvious and deemed not to be as dirty or damaging as rats. Although, with one mouse able to produce over 30,000 droppings and 0.75 litres of urine a year, we shouldn't forget mice pose a real threat to public health and hygiene.

Mice can be more difficult to manage than rats, and given their ability to multiply so rapidly (a female mouse and her offspring can produce 15,000 mice per year under perfect breeding conditions) and squeeze through gaps as small as the width of a pencil, all means that they can keep returning if appropriate rodent proofing isn't applied. Danny Beginn of Shield Pest Control based in North Yorkshire agrees. "Many people associate rats with dirt and disease, but do not see mice as such a problem. They therefore have a much more relaxed attitude towards

them, effectively rolling the dice on their health." However, Danny insists that more awareness about mice is needed, as they have the potential to spread disease much further. "Around 80% of my rodent-related callouts are for mice, however many customers do not realise the potential severity of the threat they pose."

"We could be in for a bumper year for mice and rat infestations."

Recent reports suggest that both rats and mice have come earlier than usual this year due to the good weather we've had this summer. Danny explains "Rodents have bred well over the past few months and are now looking for somewhere to shelter for the winter. I'd normally have had a slight lull in

callouts during early autumn, but, unusually for the time of year, I have received a number of calls about rodents through September and into October." He warns, "I think this will have an impact further down the line, given how rapidly they reproduce. We could be in for a bumper year for mice and rat infestations."

Year on year rodent numbers continue to rise, and the problem is compounded with the ever increasing challenge of resistance to many traditional baits, making the battle against rodents all the more difficult. Difethialone-based rodenticides such as Rodilon® currently have 'no known resistance in rats and mice' and so can offer support in particular circumstances where resistance has been noted.

We all know the best approach to solve rodent infestations is a strategic and integrated one. While it may seem obvious that good proofing, environment management and educating the customer are essential steps every pest controller should employ, taking this 'integrated approach' can

“It isn’t a simple case of throwing some bait down and leaving it to take effect.”

sometimes be forgotten and should not be underestimated when dealing with an infestation. Danny explains “I believe it is important to take steps towards mouse control that not only rids the customer of the current problem but also prevents mice returning to the building. I initially assess the customer’s property for entry points, such as holes around pipes, and then fill or cover them up. I also offer customers some hints and tips for preventing future pest problems.”

After assessing the property, Danny determines the best method for removing the pest. “Often, this depends on the



Fussy eaters

Bayer's Rodilon® Trio is a highly palatable mixture of oats, sunflower seeds and maize specifically designed to appeal to mice. Bayer's Claire Matthewman commented, “Mice are fussy creatures and regularly nibble away the outer husk before eating the kernel. With Rodilon® Trio, a ‘Turbo impregnation’ technology is used to infuse the active ingredient right to the core of the bait, meaning that regardless of which part of the seed the mouse eats, it will still consume the active. Not only does this technology give pest controllers the confidence that the mice will be ingesting the active ingredient, it also means that unlike conventionally coated bait, Rodilon® reduces the risk of dust intake by the pest controller”.

location and severity of the infestation – every job is different. In cases where an infestation has been severe or the problem has needed clearing particularly fast, I’ve found more palatable baits to work best.”

In order to maximise the efficacy of any rodenticide, it is important to take an integrated approach and include other elements of pest control. To get the best effect from rodent control measures the true level of vermin infestation must be initially assessed, problem areas identified and monitored carefully, and an understanding of the rodent habitat is

vital. BPCA Technical Manager Richard Moseley said “The technical knowledge and the expertise of a professional pest controller is crucial in rodent control. We are a professional industry, and should be combining a mixture of control measures to reduce and prevent rodent infestations. It isn’t a simple case of throwing some bait down and leaving it to take effect.” With a potentially ‘bumper rodent season’ ahead of us, it’s always good to remind ourselves of the basics in rodent control, and remember – it’s not always about rats!

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First aid in pest control

Tamzin Thompson from Ringfenced Training explains the importance of first aid training, policies and procedures.

When running a business, health and safety is often overlooked. Like a boy scout, it's always best to 'be prepared' for any kind of emergency, and introducing effective first aid policies and procedures plays a huge part in minimising the potential risks to staff and the business.

First aid procedures only operate efficiently in an emergency where they are known, understood and accepted by all in the company. In the event of injury or sudden illness, failure to provide first aid could result in potential legal issues, serious long term effects or even death. Therefore, as an employer (or business owner) you should ensure that an employee who is injured or taken ill at work receives immediate attention.

Under the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981, employers are required to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to ensure their employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work. These regulations apply to all workplaces including those with less than five employees – and to the self employed.

There are eight simple steps to follow to keep you, your staff and business safe:

1 Implement first aid procedures

Your procedures should detail the first aid provision and explain how employees will be told the location of first aid equipment, facilities and personnel. The procedures should also identify who will provide the relevant information to new and transferred employees.

2 Regular notices to staff

A simple method of keeping employees informed is by using first aid notices. The information needs to be clear and easily understood by all employees, and those with reading and language difficulties should also be kept informed. Notices must be designed and worded carefully to ensure information is effectively communicated to employees. At least one notice in a prominent position at each site, including the base for travelling employees, should give enough opportunity for employees to see the information. The inclusion of first aid information in induction training or staff meetings will also help to ensure that current and new employees are made aware of first aid arrangements.

All employees should at least be aware of:

- Who the first aiders and/or appointed persons are
- Where they are located in the workplace
- How they can be contacted
- Where first aid equipment is situated
- Where the first aid room is situated
- The procedures to be followed if outside medical services are required (i.e. calling an ambulance)

- Where in the workplace such information is displayed (such as notice boards and first aid signs).

3 Train and support personnel

First aiders are employees who have volunteered for the role and have been assessed as suitable. First aiders have to be qualified personnel who have received training in accordance with HSE requirements, and should also be provided with refresher training every three years to keep their skills up to date and to comply with legal requirements.

4 Legal indemnity of first aiders

It is unlikely first aid personnel giving assistance to a colleague will become subject to legal action because of deterioration in the colleague's condition. However, the organisation can safeguard their staff against this possibility by providing, through its insurance policies, indemnification for any member of staff who assists an employee who becomes ill or is injured. If in doubt consult your insurance provider.

5 First aid boxes

First aid boxes should be provided within the workplace to ensure there are adequate supplies for the nature of the hazards involved. The location of first aid boxes and the name of the person responsible for their upkeep should be clearly indicated. First aid boxes should be well maintained and restocked when necessary. Make sure out-of-date items are replaced.

6 Provide portable first aid kits

Portable first aid kits should be available for staff members required to work away from base, where access to facilities may be restricted, or 'on the road' as most of us are.

7 Recording accidents

All accidents, however minor, must be recorded. The company should provide an accident book in which all incidents must be noted. The accident book will be housed in a central location, and signposted to employees. It is the responsibility of employees to ensure they complete an entry in the accident book as soon as possible after an injury.

8 Safety data sheets

Material safety data sheets (MSDS) are an important tool for your technicians and clients. They save time and ensure quick and appropriate treatment in case of accidental poisoning/spills. MSDS should be up to date,

current and available in every location they are in use or where products are stored, e.g. technician's vehicles. Staff should be trained in the safe use and storage of these products. If you change a product, new MSDS must be provided to replace previous ones in every location it is used or stored in. Specifications will often insist on product information being held on site, so make sure you have the latest version in your on-site folder.

What to look for when investing in first aid training

In October 2013, the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 were amended, removing the requirement for HSE to approve first aid training and qualifications. This gives businesses more flexibility in how they manage their provision of first aid in the workplace. Andy McGrory, HSE's Policy Lead for First Aid, explained "HSE no longer approves first aid training and qualifications. Removing the HSE approval process will give businesses greater flexibility to choose their own training providers and first aid training that is right for their work place, based on their needs assessment and their individual business needs." Andy adds "Employers still have a legal duty to make arrangements to ensure their

employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work."

Information, including the regulations document and a guidance document to help employers identify and select a competent training provider to deliver any first aid training indicated by their first aid needs assessment are available on the HSE website, but to summarise, businesses should choose a trainer that is regulated by an external body such as OFQUAL, or those who operate under a voluntary approval scheme. RingFenced training has gone through QALSAFE, an awarding body for OFQUAL.

Extra benefits to training

Training and equipping your personnel has other benefits. Although having first aid trained staff will not sell pest control contracts, it will enhance confidence and levels of professionalism to potential and current clients alike by ensuring that your staff are equipped for all eventualities. It means you meet all legal obligations and recommendations of the Health and Safety Regulations of 1981. Also if you intend to apply for IOSH accreditation, then it is one of their requirements you'll need to meet.

RingFenced Training ran a short 'first aid in pest control' training course on Thursday 26 September after the BPCA Regional Training Forum at Newbury. This course cost £25 per person, and was open to anyone working in the pest control industry. If you'd like us to run a similar session at a Regional Training Forum near you then please contact events@bpca.org.uk

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RingFenced Training has a reputation for engaging the trainee, by using a combination of learning mediums in an understandable and dynamic way. We are best placed to understand the unique needs of the pest control industry having gained 20 years pest control experience, and eight years on front line duties for the NHS ambulance service. All our courses meet the standards as set out by HSE and skills for life and we are accredited through Qualsafe awards, an Ofqual approved awarding body.

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“If you spot a single stand of Japanese knotweed you can generally bet that there will be a lot more nearby.”

A look into Japanese knotweed control

branching out

Just saying the name ‘Japanese knotweed’ (*Fallopia japonica*) is enough to send chills through anybody trying to buy or sell a property in the UK since the Council for Mortgage Lenders outlawed the plant, and now refuses to offer to lend on properties with a current infestation. With the National Biodiversity Network reporting an infestation every 10km² across the UK, this invasive pest plant is starting to take over our towns and cities. Mike Clough, Managing Director of Japanese Knotweed Solutions explains the what, where, why and how of Japanese knotweed.

So what is Japanese knotweed?

To give a brief history, Japanese knotweed is a rapidly growing herbaceous perennial plant first introduced in the 1800s by a Dutch nurseryman PF von Siebold. The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) planted it at Kew Gardens where it was very successful and was marketed for its ability to grow quickly in even the poorest of soils. Japanese knotweed was considered a useful addition to the gardeners list of plants and was so popular that it won awards from the RHS.

Victorian gardeners planted it as a screen to create privacy or block the view of the toilet in the garden. It was also used on embankments to stabilise steep slopes and was used by the rivers and railways authorities for slope retention and in some cases used as fodder for cattle. The rhizomes were recommended for their high levels of resveratrol and the plant was considered

highly beneficial for people with high blood pressure. However, some twenty years after it was first planted the RHS issued a warning that Japanese knotweed should only be planted under ‘carefully managed circumstances’ due to its rapid growth and the difficulties in eradication.

Why is it a problem?

The rapidity of its growth and spread which will first shock and astound you. Then its unflinching ability to spread quickly to the detriment of any native species will amaze you further. Combine this with a willingness to damage hard surfaces and ability to push its way through any weakness in solid objects – and you suddenly will realise what an awkward beast Japanese knotweed actually is.

One of its more amazing features is that Japanese knotweed does not spread by seed – in fact every plant that we currently have in

the UK is a clone of the original plant imported from Japan. It spreads through its crown, rhizome (underground stem) and stem segments, rather than its seeds. The weed can grow a metre in a month and can cause ‘heave’ below concrete and tarmac, coming up through the resulting cracks and damaging buildings and roads. Given that Japanese knotweed is now present in every 10km² in the UK – you will begin to get a picture of exactly how invasive this species is.

What do I look out for?

A simple description would be:

- Large triangular, leathery leaves
- Bamboo-like arching stems about two to three metres tall
- Red/purple flecked stems
- Close densely packed vegetation
- Red tipped stems appear in spring
- Clusters of creamy white flowers in August to September.

Typically Japanese knotweed will grow and spread rapidly in poorly managed sites. Any brownfield development that has been ignored will most certainly be highly likely to have Japanese knotweed. River and railway sites are high risk, as well as road corridors and footpath and cycleways.

What do I do?

Unfortunately at the moment there is no emergency number to ring when Japanese knotweed is spotted. The best course of action is to inform the landowner and to make them aware of their legal responsibilities. While it is not currently an offence to have Japanese knotweed within your site boundary, if it grows into an adjacent land owner's property then they could take action under laws relating to private nuisance.

The easiest way to record it is to download the PlantTracker phone app, which is free from <http://naturelocator.org/>

The app also allows you to create geolocated records of 14 of our most troublesome invasive non-native plants. From the same site, the Aqua Invaders app allows you to record invasive aquatic animals.

The business case – is it worth me 'branching out'?

The 'trick' (if there is one!) with Japanese knotweed is to be organised. You will not be able to kill an established stand of Japanese knotweed with one visit. Therefore any programme of works that you offer must take this into account. Roger Merry of BPCA Member RM Services, a company that deals with Japanese knotweed explains "Japanese knotweed is one of the most pernicious plant species in this country and the costs involved in allowing it to proliferate on any site will far outweigh the costs involved in controlling it, either by chemical means or by physical removal." Roger adds "We know of several instances where sales of property (both residential and industrial) have fallen through at the last minute due to the presence of Japanese knotweed which was only noticed at the survey stage. It isn't as simple as a one-size-fits-all approach to knotweed control. Each case is individual, and you really have to price each job on an individual basis."

/continued over...

What are the best ways to treat Japanese knotweed?

Japanese knotweed can be very difficult to control, and in most cases you'll need to consider a mixture of control methods.

1 Chemical treatments

There are a variety of chemical strategies that can be employed to eradicate Japanese knotweed - the choice is dependent upon how close the infestation is to a watercourse.

Non residual herbicides (glyphosate and 2,4-D amine)

If the infestation is 'in or near water' (includes 'drainage channels, streams, rivers, ponds, lakes, reservoirs, canals and dry ditches' within 10 metres) you will have to gain permission from the Environment Agency (03708 506 506 enquires@environment-agency.gov.uk). If permission is granted you'll be restricted to using non-residual herbicides such as certain formulations of glyphosate or 2,4-D amine. Glyphosate is the most commonly used herbicide and will typically take three to five years of repeat applications to fully eradicate the plant. Herbicide treatment usually makes the rhizome become dormant, and it may regrow years later, or after it has been disturbed. To completely eradicate it you usually need to deliberately disturb the soil and rake the rhizome to the surface, allow it to regrow and then retreat with a herbicide. Glyphosate based herbicides are most effective when applied towards the end of the growing season being rapidly absorbed by the plant prior to its over winter period. However not all clients are willing to wait for this time of year and require an instant spray to reduce the vigour of the plant.

Residual herbicides (Picloram and Triclopyr)

If the infestation is away from a watercourse then residual herbicides such as Picloram can be used. This is to ensure that groundwater quality is protected from contamination. Trevor Renals, the author of the Environment Agency 'Knotweed code of practice' explains "Do not use Picloram within an inner zone of Source Protection Zones (SPZs), which are areas of groundwater where there is a particular sensitivity to pollution risk, due to the closeness of a drinking water source and how the groundwater flows." He added "Information regarding the location of groundwater SPZs is available on the EA website." Picloram based herbicides will remain in the soil for up to three years and should not be used in close proximity to trees. Repeat applications of Picloram will still be required in well established stands and a continual monitoring programme is required to ensure that regrowth does not occur.

2 Excavation and removal

Wherever possible you should treat Japanese knotweed in its original location and you should only consider removal as a last resort. Japanese knotweed can be excavated and removed from site and taken to a licensed waste site/landfill. However, if not done properly this process can actually cause the plant to spread.

3 Excavation and burial on site

Knotweed can be buried on site, either below a depth of five metres or within a barrier membrane with a minimum of three metres of cover following the Environment Agency Code of Practice.



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The huge underground rhizome network associated with Japanese knotweed will require repeat visits and repeat applications of herbicides to fully eradicate the plant. Your clients may think killing off the surface growth will deal with the problem. However this has very little impact on the plant's ability to regrow season after season, and in fact if not done properly will cause the infestation to spread further. So typically you should allow a minimum of three years aftercare with larger areas requiring a five year package of works. Don't assume the knotweed is dead simply because it's not regrowing. The rhizome can remain dormant for at least 20 years and if you try to reuse that soil knotweed is very likely to regrow. This is why soil that has contained knotweed can only be reused on the original site, or taken to landfill.

Chemical control is most effective on the mature canes, from August onwards. A full season's spray programme will have two or three applications of glyphosate which would

“The price ranges vary considerably with the most costly options involving removal to licensed landfill.”

be priced on a labour 'day rate' plus an allowance for chemical used. Typically a minimum rate for a domestic garden initial spray (based on one man for a day) would be around £500+vat – which should include producing a risk assessment and method statement for the works. Obviously if you choose to employ a different method of control, then the price you charge should increase accordingly.

Aftercare packages

Aftercare packages following the first year can be sold on a 'pay as you spray' basis. More typically domestic clients want an insurance backed product with a 5/10/20 year warranty – as available through the Invasive Non Native Specialists Association (INNSA). An insurance backed warranty or site guarantee is not a guarantee that Japanese knotweed will not regrow, it is a policy which ensures that the customer has no cost implication in the event of future regrowth. INNSA members tend to offer a warranty aftercare package as a priced option, which covers the return visits to the site and any treatments as and when required.

Qualifications, equipment and chemicals

As with pest control, having the right skills, qualifications, equipment and chemicals are essential to administer professional treatments – this is exactly the same for Japanese knotweed. First of all operatives must have passed the National Proficiency

Test course in the Safe Use of Pesticides. You also need to purchase the right tools such as a separate sprayer, stem injector and herbicides to allow you to do your job properly. There is also a new Invasive and Injurious Weeds course from BASIS, supported by INNSA, which was launched in September 2013. Completion of the course and an annual inspection is required for members of INNSA. BASIS Managing Director Rob Simpson said “Those who have completed the BASIS Invasive and Injurious Weeds Course show they have the professional knowledge and understanding to identify the best methods for management and eradication.”

Prices

- Glyphosate 5L £25-50
- Picloram 5L £250-350
- Stem injector – starting from £100

Summary

There are a multitude of professional variations on control strategies but all involve either chemical treatment or mechanical separation and removal from site. If you are thinking of 'branching out' into knotweed then you need to consider if you'll get a return on your investment. Getting properly trained and prepared in the control of knotweed can be a costly process. However, the returns of £thousands per client can make knotweed control a viable and highly profitable service offering.

www.jksl.com

www.innsa.org

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

www.bpca.org.uk/members

A copy of the Environmental Agency Knotweed Code of Practice is available to download in the members area of the BPCA website.



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