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PROFESSIONAL PEST CONTROLLER SEPTEMBER 2023
THE JOURNAL OF THE UK PEST MANAGEMENT COMMUNITY

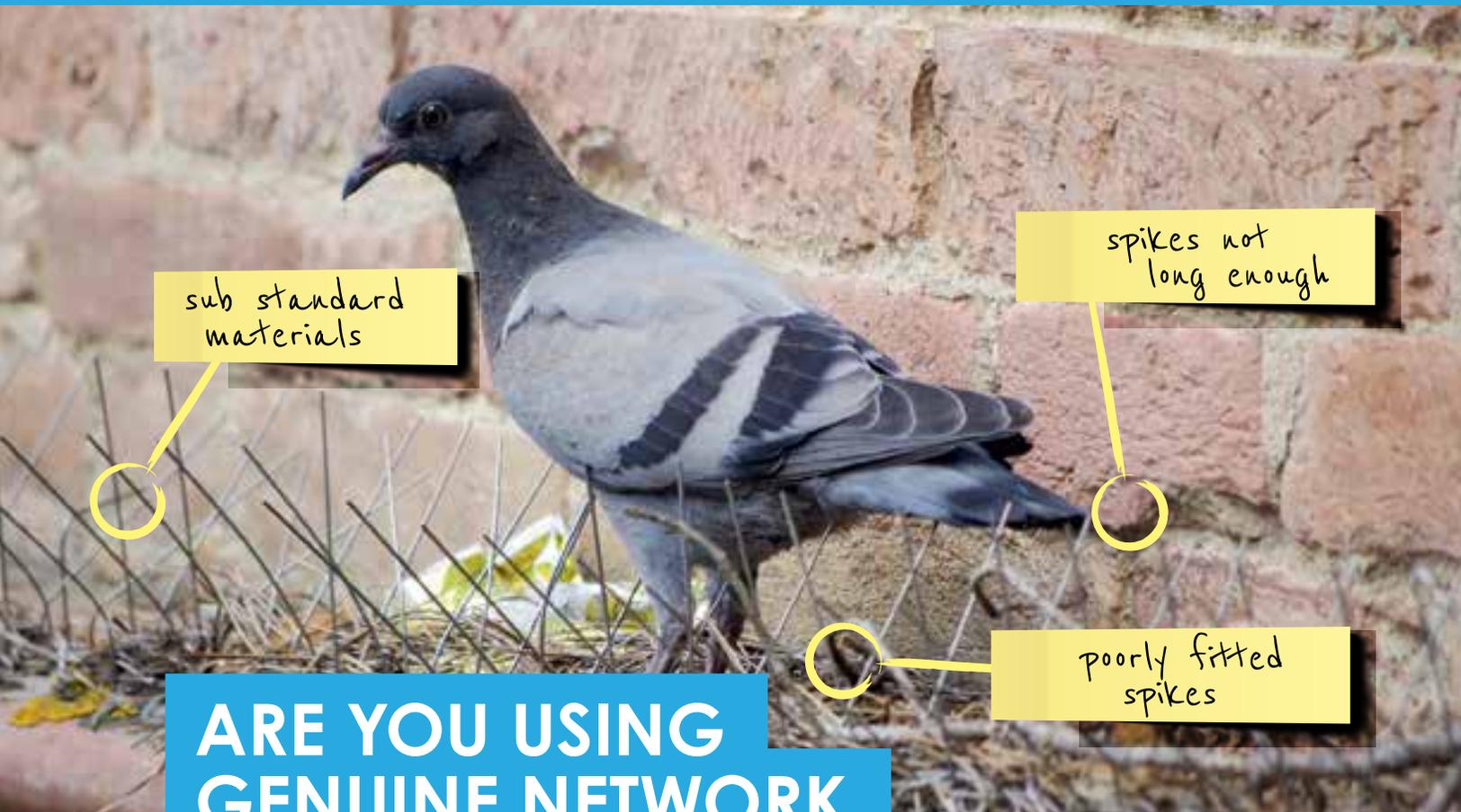


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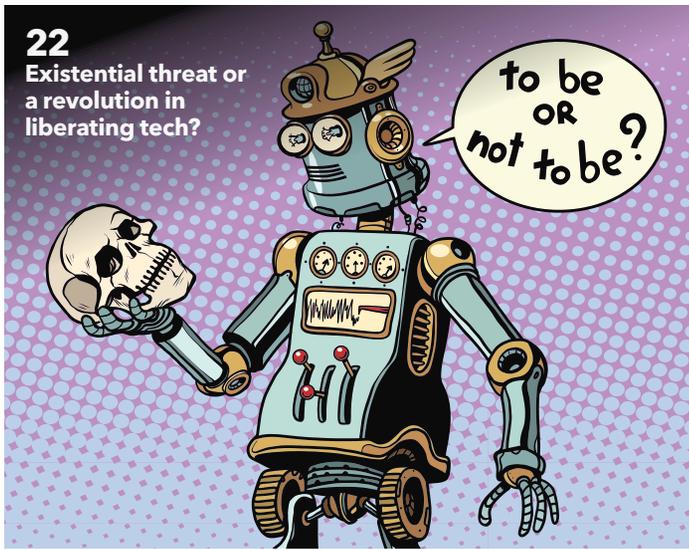


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Online CPD quiz = 1 point each

Remember to log anything else you've learned in your CPD diary for even more points. bpca.org.uk/add



Basis Prompt point allocation
Reading PPC mag = 2 points
Online CPD quiz = 1 point each
bpca.org.uk/cpd-quiz

EDITORIAL

Opportunity or apocalypse?

AI is taking the world by storm and it's the topic of the moment; are our careers at risk of being lost to smart algorithms and tech like ChatGPT?

It's a very real worry for many people, particularly when we're in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis. And in the world of pest control, we're seeing more and more digital options for pest management appear on the market.

In March, investment bank Goldman Sachs reported that AI could eventually replace around 300 million jobs globally.

But we're going to remain optimistic and, to stay on theme, quote Terminator 2: "The future is not set. There is no fate but what we make for ourselves."

Automation has always been a point of worry for the working class, from car production to self-service checkouts. But more often than not, people progress alongside technology and we develop new skills as a result.

Our advice? Lean into it. You've heard the phrase 'work smarter, not harder'? We can choose to fear AI, or we can embrace it to help make us more efficient and better at our jobs.

That's why this issue's big feature is all about how AI can be integrated with pest control to advance the industry.

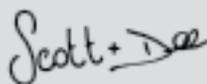
With product and label changes continuing to pile up, it might sometimes feel like the end of pest control as we know it. In reality, products and their conditions for use change all the time and have done for many decades now.

Successful pest management companies will always find the opportunity amidst the doom and gloom.

We've got articles on pricing structures and marketing, because as the landscape changes you'll need to keep up with it and more importantly, make sure you're still being paid what you're worth.

And if you're still concerned the apocalypse is nigh - get in touch. We might discuss your concern in future issues.

Take care.



Scott and Dee

PPC editors
hello@bpca.org.uk

INDUSTRY MOURNS PASSING OF RICHARD LAMB

The BPCA Staff team and Executive Board are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of 1env team member and dependable industry presence, Richard Lamb.

Richard passed away on 26 June 2023, following a battle with liver disease. He is survived by his loving wife, Lyn.

A member of the 1env Technical and Sales Team, and a BPCA volunteer, Richard was a dedicated and knowledgeable pest professional. He had more than 30 years of industry experience and he was always happy to share it.

"Richard was a familiar face at PestEx, PPC Live and BPCA Forums, and was also never too busy to help with a PPC magazine article if asked," says Lauren Day, BPCA Events Manager.

"His technical knowledge was vast and he was a willing teacher, always helping people in the industry to learn and grow. He was passionate, committed and reliable, and we'll miss speaking with him and seeing him at events."

BPCA Chief Exec, Ian Andrew, added: "Richard was also a member of the BPCA Manufacturers and Distributors Committee for five years. He was always ready and willing to support BPCA and always had a cheery word for all our members who he engaged with. He will be sorely missed by BPCA and the wider pest management sector."

Sarah Holland, BPCA Events Officer, also paid tribute to Richard. She said: "Speaking with Richard was always a pleasure. He loved his footie, especially Leeds, and we used to rib each other (as I'm a Derby supporter).

"He also loved cricket and used to tell stories about his trip to the West Indies with Jim Kirk. He spoke incredibly fondly of his wife, Lyn, and of course, his cat which he adored!"

Richard will be missed by his colleagues and friends throughout the pest control industry.

Rest in peace, Richard.

Donations

Richard's wife Lyn has asked that if anyone would like to make a donation in his memory, it should be to one or both of these organisations:

- Liver Trust
[justgiving.com/fundraising/1env-richard-lamb](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/1env-richard-lamb)
- Allerton and Bywater CC
[justgiving.com/crowdfunding/1env-richard-lamb-cricket](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/1env-richard-lamb-cricket)



LNPS BUILDS STRONGER TIES WITH EAST LONDON-BASED YOUTH CHARITY



London Network for Pest Solutions (LNPS) has agreed to sponsor specialist pest control services for the world-famous Little Imps motorcycle display team based in East London.

As part of the sponsorship deal, LNPS will survey the team's headquarters, provide five electric fly killing units, carry out internal and external rodent monitoring and deal with their squirrel problems.

Little Imps is a charity that gives children from deprived areas the opportunity to perform in motorcycle displays all over the world, including tattoos in Canada, Norway and Edinburgh.

There are currently 38 display riders and a further 20 in training. Riders must be disciplined, dynamic and hardworking, and the team has built a global reputation for excellence.

The new sponsorship deal follows LNPS's funding of 36 new open-faced helmets for team members in 2022.

Managing Director Paul Cooper explained: "Having lived and worked in East London all my life, I've always known about the Little Imps and marvelled at their abilities and bravery. It is truly inspiring to watch young people who are so dedicated to such a worthwhile pursuit.

"As a local company, LNPS is keen to help charities in our community in whatever way we can. One example of this is pest control. Little Imps is a charity that does great work and the more we can do to help reduce their overheads, the better. Taking away the burden of pest control means more of the money they generate can be put back into training the next generation of display riders."

NEW TRAINEE FIELD BIOLOGIST JOINS VERITAS

Veritas Pest Consultancy is delighted to announce that Sam Dumsday joined the company in May as a Trainee Field Biologist. Sam's goal is to progress in a technical role within the pest management and training industry.

In the short time that Sam has been with Veritas, he has already obtained his Technical Inspector qualification and is well on the way to passing his certificated Field Biologist qualification.

Sam is passionate about pest management and committed to continuous professional development.

Sam holds a BSc (Hons) First Class degree in Criminology and Forensic Investigation, and applies his forensic investigation education to the world of pest management, to highlight the link between thorough investigation and problem-solving.

Sam is committed to developing and delivering interactive and engaging pest-related training, to help the industry safeguard public health and the environment.



PESTWORLD 2023 PROGRAMME ANNOUNCED

17-20 October 2023
Hawaii Convention
Center, Honolulu,
Hawaii, USA



The full programme, details of exhibitors and registration information for PestWorld 2023 in Hawaii are now available.

Held each year, and organised by the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) in the USA, PestWorld is one of the largest and most international gatherings in the professional pest controller's calendar.

It provides an ideal opportunity for individuals from every facet of the pest management industry from around the world to share their knowledge, hear different perspectives on business trends, learn the latest technical research and form lasting bonds within the industry.

"PestWorld 2023 brings together individuals from every facet of pest management to share tactical knowledge, hear different perspectives on business trends, learn from the latest technical research and form strong relationships," said Dominique Stumpf, CAE, NPMA's Chief Executive Officer.

There is a special discounted rate for international delegates, including an early bird registration that runs until 6 September 2023. Special delegate rates are available at the conference hotels until 20 September, or until space sells out.

If delegates fancy adding some optional tours or a few days vacation onto their trip, details can also be found at pestworld2023.org



CLEANKILL TEAM REAPS REWARDS FOR TOP SERVICE

Cleankill Pest Control Team Leader Dan Parsons recently took his team of technicians for a day of shooting in recognition of their outstanding achievements.

The team exceeded their 95% state of service (SOS) target in both Q3 and Q4 2022.

Commenting on the incentive day, Dan said: "The guys really love doing these activities and combining it into a whole day was brilliant. It gave everyone a better chance to interact on an equal footing.

"My team of technicians ranges in age from 19 to 50+, including a father and son, and so these events give us an opportunity to communicate and interact as equals."

Previous rewards have included meals out with partners, axe throwing, indoor skydiving, golf, bowling and gift vouchers.

During the shooting day each member got the opportunity to try a wide variety of different weapons – always under expert tuition. These ranged from assault rifles to lever action repeating rifles, like those used in the Wild West!

Dan is rightly proud of his team, and they have done remarkably well over the last two years. Since failing to reach their target in Q2 2021, they have managed to exceed each quarter target, and in Q1 2023 achieved 97%.

If they manage to reach their target again in Q2, that will be two years of success – a real achievement.

The last word goes to Dan: "I am very proud of the guys and what we have achieved as a team."

ORKIN EXPANDS INTO THAMES VALLEY WITH ACQUISITION OF VERMATECH



US-based Rollins Inc., best known for its subsidiary pest control brand Orkin, has again expanded its presence in the UK. In May 2023, one of the company's UK subsidiaries finalised the acquisition of Vermatech Pest Control Ltd based in Oxfordshire.

Husband and wife, Andrew and Deb Green, first established their pest control company in 1995, which has since expanded through both organic growth and acquisitions.

Based near Henley-on-Thames, Vermatech covers the Thames Valley area from Newbury in the west to High Wycombe and Basingstoke and into West London.

Commenting on the sale, Mr Green said: "Deb and I are very proud of everything we have achieved over the last 28 years. It has without doubt been a journey of determination and hard work.

"We would like to thank everyone in the industry who has been involved with us, past and present. Without their effort and support over the years we would not be the successful company we are today.

"Deciding to sell our company was a natural decision and joining the Safeguard/Orkin family of companies is a huge privilege for us. I am confident the business will continue to flourish and I will remain involved in the pest control industry."

Pennie Gadd, managing director of Safeguard in the UK stated: "The acquisition of Vermatech extends our coverage in the Thames Valley area and fits well with our existing companies working within the Safeguard family.

"Vermatech shares the same high standards and core values which are much appreciated by all our customers. The whole team looks forward to working with Vermatech and developing the business."

This acquisition further expands the Orkin presence in the UK following rapidly on the heels of the acquisition of NBC Environment and Europest in 2022 and PestProof earlier this year.

Vermatech is just the latest addition to the growing number of Orkin companies in the UK. This began with the acquisition of Safeguard Pest Control in 2016.

Since then, the AMES Group, Kestrel Pest Control, Enviropest, Baroque Pest Services, the Guardian Group, Albany Environmental, Van Vynck Environmental, IPM, NBC Environment, Europest and PestProof have all been added to the Safeguard/Orkin family of businesses.



NEW MEMBERS

Full servicing members

- Commercial Services Trading, Kent
- DJB Pest Control, Staffs
- Eco-Trap Services, Kent
- Greencare UK, Lancs
- Insuraclean, Worcs
- Mid Devon Pest Control, Devon

- Old Bill's Pest Control, Bucks
- Peledex, Beds
- Peskys Pest Control, South Yorks
- Pest Dominion Ltd, Berks
- Protecta Pest Control, South Yorks
- Rattraxs Pest Control Services, Derbys
- Secure Pest Management, Oxon

- Sheffield City Council, South Yorks
- Wyre Forest Pest Control, Worcs

Observer members:

- AP and G Co, Inc, USA
- Bio Pest Kuwait Co, Kuwait
- WildDetect ApS, Denmark

M&D members:

- Parkers Pharma, Mancs



FINALISTS ANNOUNCED FOR 2023 NATIONAL PEST AWARDS

The shortlist of finalists for this year's National Pest Awards has been announced by organisers Pest magazine.

Organised by Pest in conjunction with the British Pest Control Association, the National Pest Technicians Association and Basis Prompt, the National Pest Awards are aimed at recognising and rewarding the best in the industry.

The judging panel is headed by Simon Lewis, group managing director of Lewis Business Media, the publisher of Pest magazine.

You can read the full shortlist by visiting nationalpestawards.co.uk

Dee Ward-Thompson, BPCA Head of Technical and Membership, commented: "Well done to all who have been shortlisted; it wasn't an easy task to judge the nominees this year as the quality was outstanding. We're pleased to see that so many of the shortlisted entries are BPCA members, a testament to the professionalism and quality of our membership."

LANCASHIRE BIRD CONTROL FOOTBALL CLUB'S NEW COMMERCIAL PARTNER

Lancashire Bird Control is delighted to announce joining Fleetwood Town FC as a brand new official club partner.

The company will aid the club with over 60 site visits over the course of the upcoming season, to meet all of the club's bird control needs.

Sam Heaney, Commercial Manager at Fleetwood Town, commented: "I'm thrilled to invite Lancashire Bird Control to our ever-growing list of Club Partners. We look forward to hosting them in our hospitality throughout the season and having their branding throughout Highbury."



As part of the arrangement, the company will be the new dugout sponsor for the 2023/24 season, with branding also around the stadium.

Richard Cookson from Lancashire Bird Control added: "Fleetwood Town Football Club is a family-orientated club and with a focus on local business and community. Every year the club moves forward with improvements and progress, and we look forward to being part of that continued journey."

NEW FROM PESTFIX: BIRDALERT 2.0 HAS LANDED

Smart pest control technology continues to push forward and PestFix are pleased to confirm the new BirdAlert 2.0, previewed at PPC Live for attendees, is now live.

This new piece of kit takes audio bird scaring to the next level, as it's programmed to listen to its surroundings and pick up bird calls in the area with the specialist weatherproof microphone.

Taking it one step further, it analyses and identifies the calls of the species present, and then emits the distress call of that specific species.

But that's not all – if it continues to pick up calls after its first emission it will move to an alternate call of that species. No longer do you have to worry about a bird's dialects and accents, which have been recorded across species throughout the UK.

All of this means that the standard habituation you find comes with audio scarers is no longer an issue. And your client is happy knowing that they won't have to hear a unit screeching out every call in its library every hour of the day.

The BirdAlert connects wirelessly over a phone network so that the pest management professional can monitor its rate of activation, species, time of day, control the units settings remotely and more.

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VERGO PEST MANAGEMENT UNVEILS AI RODENT DETECTION

vergo BPCA member Vergo Pest Management is thrilled to announce the launch of Pest Alert Sight, an innovative, intelligent thermal imaging AI rodent detection solution.

With state-of-the-art technology and advanced artificial intelligence capabilities, Pest Alert Sight revolutionises traditional pest control methods by offering non-invasive detection, real-time alerts, and actionable insights for effective rodent management.

Aiming to cut out invasive procedures and unreliable detection methods, Pest Alert Sight utilises cutting-edge thermal imaging technology to detect heat signatures and movement patterns specific to rodents.

"We are delighted to introduce Pest Alert Sight, our intelligent thermal imaging AI rodent detection solution," said James Gilding, CEO of Vergo Pest Management.

"With Pest Alert Sight's cutting-edge technology and AI-driven analytics, we can provide our clients with a future-proofed swift, effective, and data-informed rodent control solution, ideal for high risk and hard to reach areas."



SRI LANKA'S EXTERMINATORS CELEBRATES 25 YEARS IN BUSINESS

BPCA Observer member Exterminators Plc is celebrating a quarter of a century in business.

Way back in 1998, Exterminators embarked on a journey to build a brand to determine its own destiny, with a small initial investment (the equivalent to £1,000) and just one man with a spray gun and a motorbike.

Today, the company is recognised as a leader in innovation, technology, sustainability and governance in the SME sector in Sri Lanka and emerging and developing markets, employing 40 employees and operating from four locations throughout the island.

In 2022, the company created history by becoming the first pest management company in emerging and developing markets to be stock exchange listed, and repeated history once again by migrating to the 'Diri Savi Board' in just eight months after listing.

Since going public, the company has created immense value for all stakeholders, paying out dividends in the millions.

The company also has a facility which includes simulated environments for training in pest management, termite management, mosquito management, sanitation and disinfection, health and safety for new recruits, and continuous professional training and development for existing employees.

They plan to provide training for international pest management professionals in emerging and developing countries, as well as serve as a training facility for strategic franchising partners in the region.

With a legacy spanning 25 years as a specialised pest control service provider, Exterminators has helped prevent diseases, control pests, and protect homes and businesses. Well done, Exterminators!



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FIELD BIOLOGY REPORT NEW TEMPLATE FOR BPCA MEMBERS



A brand new report template for field biologists is available for BPCA members and their employees to use. The new template is fully customisable and gives field biologists guidance on the best information to include in an inspection report.

Natalie Bungay, BPCA Technical and Compliance Manager, said: "Field biology inspections are a specialist area of pest management, so it's important to make sure you're providing the most useful, honest service you can.

"This template has come as a request from a BPCA member, so we've put something together that we think will be really useful for field biologists carrying out their routine visits.

"It's important to note that this template is not something that is mandatory for members to use; it is up to you which format or template is suitable for you. This is simply for reference and use if needed."

Visit the Member Library (login required) to access the new field biology report template bpca.org.uk/library

Join the club

If you'd like access to documents and codes created exclusively for BPCA members, why not join the Association?

bpca.org.uk/membership



BEAVER PEST CONTROL PLANT TREES IN NATIONAL FOREST

Each year Beaver Pest Control plants trees on behalf of

customers in The National Forest, as part of a commitment to support the environment.

David Lodge, director of Beaver Pest Control, said: "Corporate social responsibility and sustainability are extremely important at Beaver. Planting trees and hosting charity events not only pulls the staff together by doing something worthwhile, but these activities also create a feel-good factor.

"We try hard to do our bit for the planet by reusing, recycling, reducing and now replanting our depleted UK treescape. Our clients also greatly appreciate our efforts.

"UK beavers do fell a few trees, so surely Beaver Pest Control should plant a few on behalf of our namesake!"

BPCA URGES GRADUATES TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH WITH PEST CONTROL CAREER

On World Pest Day (6 June), BPCA highlighted careers in the industry to school leavers and students planning their next steps for September.

Pest professionals have a key role to play in protecting public health, supporting businesses and safeguarding wildlife and natural environments.

The industry offers a variety of career opportunities and specialisms, such as falconry, field biologist and product development – and BPCA members are sharing their own thoughts on careers in the industry in a new series of videos released for World Pest Day.

Ian Andrew, Chief Executive at BPCA, said: "There are many routes to a successful career in professional pest management, open to students just leaving school and awaiting exam results this summer, as well as university graduates considering their next steps."

bpca.org.uk/careers





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WINNERS ANNOUNCED FOR THE BPCA MEMBER AWARDS 2023

The BPCA Member Award winners were announced at the World Pest Day Digital Forum on 6 June 2023.

The Awards celebrate positive contributions made by members to the Association and the wider pest management sector.

A number of awards were presented to winners of six different categories, as well as some highly commended entries.

The awards were open to all BPCA Members, free of charge, regardless of the size of the company or how long a business has been in BPCA membership.

Some of the awards were nominated by the membership, others were put forward by the BPCA Staff team.

This year sees the previous award for Business and Innovation split into two separate award categories, and the introduction of two new awards for sustainability and leadership.

BPCA Head of Technical and Membership, Dee Ward-Thompson said: "We had fantastic nominations from a wide variety of individuals and companies, and it was especially great to see a lot of new nominees among some regulars.

"We know that the people in this sector go above and beyond every single day, making a real difference to public health, safety and wellbeing. The awards are our way of trying to highlight just some of the amazing work done across the UK by pest management professionals."

Looking ahead...

Lauren Day, BPCA Events Manager, commented: "The award nomination process is open all year round, meaning nominations for the awards will never close.

"Whenever you see something in the membership community that you think deserves recognition, you can submit a nomination; we encourage you to start applying for next year's awards straight away!"

bpca.org.uk/awards

BPCA Leadership Award recognises business owners, managers and supervisors that support amazing teams and fantastic pest management companies.

▪ **John Knight (Vergo Pest Management)**

"Strong leaders always lead by example. There are many early mornings and late nights where John can be seen loading his service bag into his car and working on technicians' patches to support them rather than from just behind a desk.

"He has taken struggling teams and grown them into slick-performing units that deliver time after time. He runs incentives and fun events which help him build high performing teams.

"John is a fantastic ambassador for our business and the industry, and shows how hard work and commitment truly pay off."

▪ Gabrielle Hogg (Pest Solutions) was highly commended.

BPCA Spotlight Award recognises those working behind the scenes to keep the industry going – support, office and warehouse staff, and anyone else rarely seen or given the opportunity to be in the limelight.

The quality of nominations was such that this award needed two winners this year. They are:

▪ **Melanie Kemp (Beaver Pest Control)**

▪ **Gary Morris (Vergo Pest Management)**
Melanie joined Beaver Pest Control as their first administrator in 1999 when the company was operating from a spare room. For over two decades, Mel has been the backbone of the company's administrative and finance team.

Gary has worked in the industry for over a decade and is currently Head of Customer Services for Vergo Pest Management in the UK. He is responsible for leading and managing a team of 29 administrators and supporting key account managers. He is crucial to ensuring that the business maintains focus on providing public health services and high-quality customer service.

Charles Keeble Award is awarded to the person who achieves the highest score in the BPCA Certificated Advanced Technician (CAT) accreditation for the previous year.

▪ **Mary Rudgard (Rentokil)**

BPCA Special Contribution Award

recognises a significant and outstanding contribution to the Association in 2022, exceeding what might usually be expected from members.

This may be based on a single but very important action or a continuing series of actions that have impacted others.

▪ **Philip Halpin (Countrywide Environmental Services and former President of BPCA)**

Phil's contributions to the Association, plus his commitment to ensuring that members are well represented, earned him his nomination. His supportive nature and service has been significant over a prolonged period of time.

Phil was the Board champion behind the BPCA Registered CPD scheme, which should pass 3,000 enrolled pest controllers in 2023 and is a significant success, highlighting the focus of the Association

and its members on training for professionalism.

Phil helped steer the Association through the appointment of a new CEO, stewardship, general licensing issues, Covid, and the Association's 80th anniversary.

BPCA Outstanding Continuing Professional Development Award

CPD is critical to great pest management. The team looked for those who had made the most of 2022 and excelled in their CPD journey. They gained points from various activities and across different subject areas showing real creativity and passion for their development.

▪ **Louise Grant (NBC)**

Louise learned new skills through mentoring provided within her organisation and then expanded those skills further by classroom training. She has demonstrated an integrated approach to CPD with a focus on areas that she wanted to develop.

▪ Iain Rodgers (Pest Solutions) was highly commended.

BPCA Commitment to Training Award recognises a BPCA member committed to upskilling their employees.

▪ **John O'Conner Pest Control**

In addition to regularly enrolling employees in a variety of BPCA's core technical training courses, this organisation has vigorously supported our Onboarding programme and shown commitment to embedding new recruits.

BPCA Business Growth Award

Since 2004, this company's pest control provision has grown in all areas including financial, number of employees and customers, seeing a huge growth during the pandemic. This continued into 2022, with a 97% increase in turnover and a staff team growing to eight from their initial one technician.

This company made the most of initiatives such as the BPCA trailblazer group, working with APHA, and investing in staff and the programmes they use to help them to grow, while maintaining their core values.

▪ **John O'Conner Pest Control**

▪ Vergo Pest Control and Pest Solutions were highly commended.

BPCA Innovation Award is for companies that have innovated services, products or business structure.

▪ **National Pest Control Network, made up of Pest Solutions, Beaver Pest Control, Harvey Environmental and Bounty Pest Control**

These four companies have demonstrated that innovation is not just about products. This award was won for their contract sharing initiative, and is the first time an award has been won by four BPCA members.

▪ Contego Pest Control was highly commended.

BPCA Sustainability Award is new for 2022 and recognises a company that has made a deliberate effort to reduce its impact on the environment and become more sustainable.

▪ **Cleankill Pest Control**

Cleankill submitted a fabulous entry demonstrating the hard work done to ensure their company is sustainable, while protecting public health and safeguarding the environment.



TRACEY GORMAN AT WOWNOW



WowNow Hire, part of Nationwide Hire, is pleased to announce that Tracey Gorman has joined them as Sales and Marketing Director.

Tracey has 25 years of experience in the hire industry, previously working for Sunbelt and latterly at HSS, where she helped transform the business from a traditional tool hire company to a comprehensive outsourcing solution provider. Recently, Tracey has been at Reactec, a specialist equipment business.

Anthony Pearlgood, CEO of WowNow Hire, said: "Our plan is to revolutionise the hire industry, and Tracey's knowledge, experience and enthusiasm will play key roles in helping us to achieve this."

Tracey is delighted to be back in the hire industry, saying, "It's important that WowNow Hire has the same focus on customer excellence that I've always had. The business has got a great foundation and I'm confident that we can show significant growth in the future."

WowNow Member benefit

Did you know that BPCA members get discounts with WowNow Hire? Just contact them on their dedicated BPCA email and phone line.

BPCA@wownowhire.co.uk

01329 640 263



NETWORKING WITH A TWIST

The first ever Adventure Networking Event, hosted by BPCA member Lodi UK, launched on 4 May 2023.

Lodi wanted to create networking events with a difference, and realised that customers don't want to sit in 'boring meetings' talking about products. So, the team came up with 'Adventure Networking Events'.

Matt Towler, Lodi's UK Business Development Manager, said: "We wanted to create a space for our customers to meet and network, share ideas and discuss best practices, while having some fun along the way! The first event was a great success. We hosted it in Scotland and took a group of customers for a morning of action-packed paintball, followed by lunch.

"Adventure Networking Events are designed exclusively for Lodi UK customers, with attendees randomly selected. We thought it was a great way to reward those loyal to our products and brands."

Save the date

Adventure Networking Events will take place twice yearly at locations across the country.

Keep your eyes on Lodi's social media for the next event!

SHIELD WINS TOP LONDON CLIENT

BPCA member Shield Pest Control has been appointed to help protect public health for a high-profile new client, The London Clinic – London's world-class independent private medical hospital and charity.



Shield Pest Control began service for The London Clinic in February 2023 to ensure its high standards of hygiene are maintained across multiple sites in and around Harley Street, London's medical district.

Shield Pest Control has held a Royal Warrant since 2008, and its high standards, dedication, and efficient delivery of services has built a positive reputation recognised around London, and across the UK.

Speaking on the newest contract win, Shield Pest Control's Managing Director, Daniel Steward, said: "We're proud to celebrate this new client partnership, providing services to a world leading private hospital such as The London Clinic, where sanitisation and hygiene control management is critical for patient safety."

The London Clinic's Chief Operating Officer, Cathy Walker, commented: "Shield Pest Control is renowned for its exceptional standard and quality of pest control service provided in London. It was an obvious choice for us to appoint the company to manage our premises, to maintain optimum cleanliness and sanitation in all of our business properties."

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PESTS IN POLITICS: SPRING TO SUMMER 2023

BPCA's lobbying work continues. Stay up-to-date with all things pest in the UK parliament and devolved administrations. PPC helps keep you firmly in the loop.

BPCA becomes UK registered lobbying organisation

BPCA has joined the UK Lobbying Register (UKLR), operated by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR).



This means that the Association is:

- Accountable to a recognised industry code of conduct
- Committed to conducting lobbying in plain view
- Committed to the common good of the lobbying profession.

BPCA lobbies on behalf of the pest management sector and has actively influenced legislation and policy.

BPCA Chief Exec, Ian Andrew, said: "Engaging with politicians and influencing policy is an area in which BPCA expend a lot of time and energy on behalf of our members.

"Signing the voluntary register was important to us as it holds us to the highest ethical and best practice standards.

"When we're out and about representing the sector to MPs, ministers and civil servants, we want our members to know we're conducting ourselves in a way that will make them proud."

BPCA is the only registered lobbying organisation focused entirely on raising the profile of pest management and influencing policies that affect pest professionals.

BPCA's lobbying work includes:

- Achieving acknowledgement of key worker status during the Covid-19 pandemic
- Getting an amendment in the Glue Trap (Offences) Act 2022 allowing pest professionals in England to continue to use rodent glue boards under licence (due to come into effect in April 2024).

Most recently, BPCA represented the pest management sector in the Scottish Parliament session on glue boards. Ian Andrew was the only representative from the pest management sector in attendance.

Ian continued: "The pest control sector needs a strong, clear voice to drive professionalism and protect our toolkit.

"Our public affairs and lobbying strategy has been focused on fighting emerging issues; however, this is just the beginning.

"BPCA will continue to champion the role of pest professionals and BPCA members at every level of society. Watch this space!"

Glue board ban in Wales receives Royal Assent

The Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023 was passed by the Senedd on 27 June 2023 and given Royal Assent on 17 August 2023. Part of the Act covers banning the use of rodent glue boards in Wales.

Rural Affairs Minister Lesley Griffiths said: "A complete ban on the inhumane use of glue traps and snares is included in the Bill and means we will become the first nation in the UK to introduce such a ban."

BPCA understands that the Welsh government intends to have a two-month transition period which means the ban on the use of glue boards in Wales will become effective on 17 October.

This date has yet to be confirmed, and we are seeking clarification.

The penalty for this offence will align with most of the Part 1 offences within the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Namely, on summary conviction, imprisonment for a term not longer than six months or an unlimited fine (see section 22(1) of the WCA).

BPCA Chief Exec, Ian Andrew, said: "It is essential that all pest professionals working in Wales are aware of the impending ban and their customers are also informed, as rodent infestation management will need to change."

Ian continued: "We have no doubt that this piece of legislation will adversely affect Welsh businesses and the public health of the people of Wales.

"We've done everything within our power to influence this legislation. However, much of our work has fallen on deaf ears. We hoped to get an amendment that promised a licensing scheme for professional pest management work, just as we achieved in England.

"Despite providing compelling evidence and answering questions in a select committee meeting, our work was disregarded in the committee stage report. Much of the report's findings were based on inaccurate information, which again, we challenged.

"The Welsh government has been entirely disinterested in protecting public health, even in the most high-risk situations.

"Rodent welfare has priority over human health in Wales – at least according to the government."

BPCA will continue monitoring the implications of the ban and encourage pest professionals to keep us informed of situations where the ban has had an adverse effect.

For example, we want to hear about facilities being closed for extended periods while infestations are controlled.

Send your reports to hello@bpca.org.uk



THE FUTURE OF PEST MANAGEMENT SURVEY

Never before has the pest management sector been under greater scrutiny than now. Legislators, researchers and animal welfare groups are watching us closely.

BPCA seeks UK-based pest professionals and business owners to feed into our 'future of pest management' research project.

The information you provide will be used to help protect your toolkit, set our direction and improve our services.



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PESTS IN THE PRESS: APRIL TO JUNE 2023

With sightings of Asian hornets in early spring, followed by a media spotlight on 'Dracula' horseflies and the launch of Direct Line's 'rat map', it's been a bumper time for BPCA in print, online, over the airwaves and on TV.

Activity in Q2

Squirrels and seagulls stepped into the spotlight as spring got underway. As schools across the UK broke up for Easter, regional and national press featured BPCA's press release highlighting the start of gull breeding season and encouraging people to be aware that gulls might be defensive around breeding sites.

The Scottish press picked up on a case of a woman 'terrorised' by squirrels in her kitchen, with BPCA's Natalie Bungay interviewed by BBC Scotland.

As April ended, three sightings of Asian hornets were reported, and BPCA quickly issued advice to gardeners on how to report a sighting via the Asian Hornet Watch app. The advice also set out the differences between Asian hornets and Asian giant hornets, in a bid to prevent any conflation between the two in the press.

Working with Direct Line Insurance, BPCA featured in a project led by the insurers examining and mapping UK rat call-outs. This work was effective in promoting BPCA as the voice of authority and first choice for comment, resulting in headlines such as: 'The rat map

of Britain: rodent infestations reach 618 a DAY appearing across the country'.

Again, Natalie Bungay was in demand for television and radio interviews towards the end of May and into June.

On 6 June, BPCA focused on careers in pest control for World Pest Day, with videos shared on social media and press releases showcasing opportunities in the industry.

During PestEx in March, BPCA caught up with a number of members and discussed career progression on camera ready for this #WPD2023 event. Thanks go to Anna Mollins (PestFix), Charles Murahwa (Intercleanse Pest Control), Gemma Sutherland (Pest Solutions) and Ian Adamson (Precision Consulting) for taking part!

Unexpectedly in mid-June, an article from an old PPC issue suddenly re-surfaced and sparked another media storm around 'Dracula horseflies that can tear flesh', this time propelling John Horsley into the spotlight.

Further BPCA-led press activity in May and June included Invasive Species Awareness week, wasp awareness and further broadcast activity, including interviews or providing information to BBC's The One Show, ITV, LBC Radio, Channel 5 and the Stephen Dixon and Anne Diamond Breakfast Show for GB News.

As always BPCA has also been working with trade or



TOP 3 HEADLINES

BRIT SUNBATHERS WARNED OVER HORDES OF HORNY 'DRACULA' HORSEFLIES WITH KILLER FANGS
Daily Star (web)

BOOM IN TOWN RATS!
Daily Mail (Scotland)

NICE WEATHER FOR NASTIES!
Daily Star

TOTAL ARTICLES 2023 211

TOTAL CIRCULATION 65,783,319

sector-specific titles in a bid to reach markets and sectors that align with, or could benefit from, pest control.

In Q2, these titles included Conservation and Heritage Journal, Facilities Management Journal, Landlord Focus and Government Business Magazine.

Read all about it!

Spot something in the press? Idea for a press release? Tell us.

hello@bpca.org.uk

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FREE CPD EVENTS AND WEBINARS

Event type **Webinar – Members only**  **Local forum** **Virtual forum**

Name	When?	CPD	Sponsor
BRISTOL	20 September	6	Lodi UK
CIEH Pest Control Conference	26 September	TBC	BPCA
Drains and rat control for pest professionals	27 September	1	
DIGITAL 20	4 October	3	Envu
Rodenticide stewardship and ERAs	18 October	1	
Breakfast networking / Newry, NI	19 October	7.00-9.00am	
Evening networking / Antrim, NI	19 October	6.30-8.30pm	
MANCHESTER	22 November	6	1env + PelGar
Non-pest mammals in the UK	29 November	1	
COSHH for pest control	20 December	1	
Mouse control	10 January '24	1	
DIGITAL 21	31 January	3	Pelsis
7 simple proofs: proofing for rodents part 1	7 February	1	
SCOTLAND	14 February	6	Deadline

Pssst! ^{NEW}

5pm –
23/11/23

Non-member 'open day'
Special online event for pest management companies that are NOT members of BPCA. Learn about membership, meet Board members and ask questions. Learn more and book at bpcanet.org.uk/secret

Name	When?	CPD	Sponsor
7 simple proofs: proofing for rodents part 2	6 March	1	
DIGITAL 22	8 March	3	Pelsis
Best practice update 2024	10 April	1	
DIGITAL 23	17 April	3	Syngenta
Integrated insect management part 1	8 May	1	
MIDLANDS	22 May	6	PestFix
DIGITAL 24	6 June	3	Purean
Integrated insect management part 2	12 June	1	
Integrated insect management part 3	3 July	1	
DIGITAL 25	10 July	3	Purean
Lead generation and marketing	7 August	1	
DIGITAL 26	14 August	3	PestFix
Controlling rats in drains	4 September	1	

bpcanet.org.uk/events

Registration opening soon!

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ASK THE TECHNICAL TEAM

Can we use deterrent systems to prevent nesting gulls from feeding in outside dining areas?

Remember that all birds, their eggs and nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and can only be controlled under licence.

Gulls can cause significant problems in general, like noise, damage to property, drainage blockages due to nesting, and a serious health risk from their droppings.

But outdoor dining areas are a particular target for gulls, and they have a fierce reputation for diving and swooping on people to steal food.

As long as you don't disturb a nest or prevent the gulls from accessing their nests, deterrent systems for this scenario are likely to be okay and you won't need to apply for licences.

But you need to make sure you don't do anything that causes undue stress that may result in the gulls leaving their nests. Select your treatments carefully. And, if in doubt - ask!

Can horseflies be controlled?

Horseflies are commonly found in rural areas with damp woodlands, rivers and lakes nearby.

Unlike mosquitoes, which extract blood through a needle-like tube, horseflies have well-developed mouth parts that are designed to rip flesh apart to gain access to a blood meal.

As this can be particularly painful and become infected, you may get asked if you can treat horseflies that cause problems for members of the public.

As horsefly eggs are fixed to leaves and the larva drop off into damp soil of waterlogged areas, controlling them on large areas of land and woodland is almost impossible.

You can advise customers to try and protect themselves from bites when outdoors, by wearing baggy clothing and covering all exposed skin, or by using an insect spray suitable for use on the skin.

These are only a deterrent and won't necessarily be 100% effective.

If they are having problems in gardens, removing standing water (like with mosquitoes) could reduce numbers.

If indoor areas experience horsefly activity, the usual fly deterrent measures may help, such as EFks, fly screen and /fly tape. However, this isn't as likely, as horseflies prefer to be around cattle, horses and other large animals.

I'm struggling to dispose of rodent carcasses - do you have any tips?

In recent years we have seen a reduction in options for rodent carcass disposal, with hospital and local authorities removing their inhouse incinerators.

In waste terms, rodent carcasses are not classed as hazardous, regardless of the cause of death (rodenticide, trapping etc). It's important to have a procedure in place to dispose of these carcasses to prevent accidental ingestion by a non-target species.

For residential premises, disposal of low numbers in an onsite general waste bin is okay if the customer permits it. But be mindful, as this can create a bad smell if bins are not emptied regularly, leading to a perception of poor customer service, or even a secondary infestation of flies.

For commercial sites, you must take the carcasses away and dispose of them via a licensed waste handler/incinerator. There are some BPCA member benefits available in that regard, which you can find in the member benefits section of the BPCA website.

bpca.org.uk/benefits

What do I do if I come across oak processionary moths?

The oak processionary moth (OPM) was first found in the UK in 2007 in London, but has spread over the south east of England and was recently found in the midlands. The chances are that you may come across these more frequently.

For identification purposes, they have the classic caterpillar look with a long black/grey body completely covered in sharp-looking white hairs. They move in clusters and are normally found in early summer, on trunks and branches of oak trees.

Critically, this is a specialist area of work and should only be done by those who are well versed in their treatment, and only after you've reported any activity to the relevant authorities, as they may want to set up an OPM management zone

gov.uk/guidance/managing-oak-processionary-moth-in-england

If you find OPMs, it's important to report any sightings to Forest Research, the research branch of the Forestry Commission (pun intended) via the Tree Alert online form.

You can also contact them on 0300 067 4442 or OPM@forestrycommission.gov.uk



Are you a BPCA member with a technical question? Get in touch...

technical@bpca.org.uk
01332 294 288

twitter.com/britpestcontrol



WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

The members of our technical team are happy to come out to visit sites with BPCA members who are struggling with a tough infestation and need hands-on advice. Get in touch!

ENDING SGAR USE 'AWAY FROM BUILDINGS'

PRESS RELEASE

This release was posted by the UK Rodenticide Stewardship Regime (CRRU) on Monday, 12 June 2023.



The legal authorisation is being withdrawn

for open area and waste dump use for the only two second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) currently allowed to be used that way, bromadiolone and difenacoum.

This will take effect in July next year.

The change was instigated voluntarily by the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use UK, with support to make the necessary amendments from UK biocides regulator, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

CRRU Chairman Dr Alan Buckle states that the change was a unanimous decision by all CRRU Directors to help meet rodenticide stewardship's environmental targets.

Dr Alan Buckle, CRRU Chairman, said: "A primary factor leading to this is the stubbornly static incidence of rodenticide residues in around 80% of barn owls, the HSE-nominated sentinel species for annual surveillance. This change will enable a single clear message about SGAR use: none of these products can be applied away from buildings."

Sales of products containing bromadiolone and difenacoum for use in open areas and at waste dumps will cease on 4 July 2024.

These products purchased on or before that date will be authorised for use in open areas and waste dumps until 31 December 2024.

After that, it will be illegal to use any SGAR product to treat a rodent infestation not associated with a building.

Manufacturers will change product label instructions accordingly and will continue to promote the application of integrated pest management practices among all rodenticide users.

The CRRU Code of Best Practice offers a range of effective methods for rodent management away from buildings, including the elimination of harbourage, food and water; lethal non-anticoagulant baits; and trapping, shooting and dogs.

Questions about this release?

Send in your queries and BPCA will aim to answer them for you.

hello@bpca.org.uk

ASK CRRU UK

PPC Who runs CRRU UK?

CRRU CRRU decisions are made by a Board of Directors, one director coming from each of the fourteen CRRU funding member companies*.

The Board is guided by six CRRU stewardship Work Groups and by the CRRU Task Force of representatives from a wide range of stakeholder organisations.

PPC Who decided to change labels on bromadiolone and difenacoum to end their use away from buildings?

CRRU This decision was made voluntarily and unanimously by the CRRU Board.

PPC Doesn't HSE normally tell you what should be on a rodenticide label? Would HSE have made the changes anyway?

CRRU Product label text is determined through dialogue between the applicant for an authorisation and the UK Competent Authority for Biocides, in this case, HSE. The text is specified on the product authorisation certificate.

CRRU does not know about, nor can it comment on, HSE's intentions with respect to rodenticide authorisations.

PPC Why didn't CRRU consult with professional rodenticide users about the change?

*CRRU funding member companies

Babolna Bioenvironmental Centre Ltd
 BASF plc
 Bayer CropScience Ltd
 Bell Laboratories Inc
 Killgerm Group Ltd
 Liphatech S.A.S.
 LODI UK Ltd
 Pelsis Ltd
 PelGar International Ltd
 Quimica de Munguia S.A.
 Rentokil Initial plc
 Syngenta Crop Protection AG
 Unichem d.o.o.
 Zapi SpA

thinkwildlife.org/about-crru-uk/stakeholders/



“...it will be illegal to use any SGAR product to treat a rodent infestation not associated with a building.”

CRRU After seven years of rodenticide stewardship, environmental targets had not been met. It was decided by CRRU directors that change was urgently required.

PPC What classes as ‘in and around buildings’? Is there an official description? Are barns, silage pits, machine sheds and grain stores buildings for the purposes of the label?

CRRU This is a question to be discussed by the CRRU Best Practice Work Group. More information will be provided after those discussions.

PPC These changes will affect farmers more than pest controllers. How are label restrictions enforced? Does anyone really get prosecuted for not following a label?

CRRU The label instructions, and failure to apply them, are enforced by HSE [hse.gov.uk/biocides/enforcement.htm](https://www.hse.gov.uk/biocides/enforcement.htm)

Investigations may be carried out by Natural England and other agencies [hse.gov.uk/pesticides/reducing-environmental-impact/wildlife/wildlife-incident-investigation-scheme.htm](https://www.hse.gov.uk/pesticides/reducing-environmental-impact/wildlife/wildlife-incident-investigation-scheme.htm)

Individuals are prosecuted when there is sufficient evidence to bring them to court.

PPC Why not just ban rodenticides from untrained users? That would stop wildlife from dying from

rodenticides. People don't read the label on their prescription medicine, so they won't read it for rat poison.

CRRU It is the opinion of CRRU that removal of all authorisations for use of rodenticides by the general public would not “stop wildlife from dying from rodenticides”. HSE has not required such use to be included in the UK Rodenticide Stewardship Regime, coordinated by CRRU.

The regulatory foundation of all sales of rodenticides, and of chemicals more widely, is that labels are read and instructions on them are followed.

PPC From your research, how many barn owls have died from ingesting SGARs?

CRRU Very few barn owls are killed by SGARs, but that is not the point. UK wildlife, especially avian and mammalian predators and scavengers, is very widely contaminated by SGARs. This widespread exposure is a grave cause for concern and what the stewardship regime is required to reduce. The barn owl is chosen as a ‘sentinel species’, whose levels of exposure are indicative of a number of species with similar ecology and behaviours.

PPC When label restrictions and non-chemical products are being scrutinised so much, is it really wise to be reducing our toolkit further?

CRRU The CRRU Directors took this decision after a great deal of careful consideration, including alternative options for control. It was felt that this change offered the best

chance for CRRU to meet its environmental targets relating to wildlife contamination. This in turn would help to protect the essential and most important use of SGARs, which is application ‘in and around buildings’.

PPC When is the next impact assessment for SGARs by HSE? Could they ban the use of SGARs altogether?

CRRU HSE has plainly said that, unless stewardship environmental targets are met, there will be a need to review who can use SGARs, how they are used and where they can be applied. The effectiveness of the UK Rodenticide Stewardship Regime has been under review by HSE since May 2021. A major review of all SGAR authorisations by HSE, the procedure known as ‘authorisation renewal’, is also ongoing.

CRRU cannot speculate on the future intentions of HSE. However, few regulatory jurisdictions have implemented an outright ban on SGARs, because it is widely accepted that safe and sufficiently effective alternatives do not currently exist. An outright ban would involve very substantial, and many would say unacceptable, risk of exposure of humans and animals to a wide range of serious diseases, carried either by the rodents themselves or by the parasites that live in or on them.

Ask the difficult questions

Got questions for CRRU or any other industry group? Let us know and we'll interview them on your behalf. No questions is too big or too small. hello@bpca.org.uk



OPINION

RODENTICIDES PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES

Richard Faulkner, Envu

Pest managers play a crucial role in maintaining public health and ensuring the safety of our homes and businesses.

In the battle against rodent infestations, the responsible use of rodenticides stands as an essential tool to effectively manage these widespread pests.

Targeted and efficient control

As pest professionals know well, rodents pose significant threats to human health and property. They carry diseases, damage infrastructure, contaminate food sources, and reproduce rapidly. Traditional control methods, like trapping, can be effective but often fall short in dealing with large infestations. Rodenticides, on the other hand, provide pest managers with a highly targeted and efficient means of controlling rodent populations. They can be strategically placed in areas where rats and mice frequent, effectively reducing their numbers and limiting the spread of diseases.

Increased safety and reduced health risks

Modern rodenticides are designed with a focus on safety, both for humans and non-target species. The industry has made significant advancements in formulating rodenticides that minimise the risks associated with their use. Many products available today have lower toxicity levels, are designed to prevent non-target poisoning, and further safety measures can be put in place, such as securing the bait inside of fixed and locked tamper-resistant bait stations. Pest managers, with their expertise and knowledge, can effectively select and apply these rodenticides in a manner that reduces potential hazards, making them an indispensable tool for effective, safe and responsible pest control.

Time efficiency and cost-effectiveness

In pest control, time is of the essence. Rodenticides offer a distinct advantage



in terms of time efficiency. When used properly, they provide rapid reductions in rodent populations, preventing further damage and contamination. The use of rodenticides allows pest managers to efficiently address infestations without the need for extensive labour-intensive efforts. Furthermore, rodenticides are often cost-effective when compared to alternative methods, particularly in scenarios where large-scale rodent control is necessary. They offer a practical solution that delivers results, saving both time and resources.

Long-term prevention and maintenance

A fundamental aspect of IPM is the focus on long-term prevention and maintenance. Rodenticides, when integrated into an IPM programme, contribute significantly to achieving this goal. By effectively managing rodent populations, pest managers help prevent future infestations, minimising the need for reactive control measures. Rodenticides act as a crucial component in breaking the breeding cycle and disrupting rodent behaviour patterns, thereby maintaining a pest-free environment over the long term.

Complementary role with other IPM strategies

Rodenticides do not operate in isolation but work synergistically with other IPM strategies. They complement preventive measures such as exclusion, sanitation, and habitat modification, creating a holistic approach to pest management. By integrating rodenticides into an IPM programme, pest managers can achieve greater success in controlling rodent populations. This integrated approach minimises the reliance on chemical treatments and maximises the use of non-chemical methods, ensuring sustainability and environmental responsibility.

Conclusion

Rodenticides, when used responsibly as part of an IPM programme, provide pest managers with an effective, targeted, and efficient tool to combat rodent infestations. Their use contributes to public health, property protection, and long-term pest prevention. However, it is crucial for pest managers to employ proper training, adhere to regulations, and prioritise safety when working with rodenticides. By understanding their role in the context of IPM, pest managers can effectively manage rodent populations while maintaining a balanced and sustainable approach to pest control and pest prevention.



“Rodenticides do not operate in isolation but work synergistically with other IPM strategies.”

OPINION

WE SHOULD EMBRACE SUSTAINABILITY AND DIGITALISATION TO TRANSFORM PEST CONTROL

Daniel Schroeer, Futura Germany

Pest control is undergoing a significant transformation driven by the increasing demand for sustainability and digitalisation. While there are concerns about the potential ban on poison, these fears are largely unfounded.

In fact, the outlook for the industry is very promising, as companies like ours look to offer innovative solutions that align with evolving regulations and market demands. This opinion piece provides a bird's eye perspective on the industry, highlighting the shift towards sustainable practices, the advantages of digitalisation, and the positive future for pest control.

Embracing sustainability: moving away from poison

There is a growing global movement towards sustainability, and pest control is no exception. Regulations, such as the EU Green Deal, are driving the reduction of toxic chemicals, including rodenticides, in pest control practices. While some fear that this will lead to a complete ban on poison, the reality is that the industry is transitioning towards integrated pest management (IPM). IPM emphasises prevention, monitoring and physical control measures, with toxic control as a last resort. This approach not only protects the environment and non-target species but also improves the effectiveness of pest management strategies.

The role of digitalisation: enhancing efficiency and control

Digitalisation and the internet of things (IoT) are revolutionising pest control and innovative companies are at the forefront of this transformation. IoT-enabled devices and digital pest control solutions, such as Tubetrap, SMART, Digital Pest Management and ultra-low power cameras, offer real-time monitoring, data analysis, and rapid response capabilities. These technologies provide 24/7 surveillance, allowing for early pest detection and timely intervention. By leveraging the power of digitalisation, pest control companies can optimise their operations, reduce costs and provide more efficient services to their clients.

Dispelling the fear of poison bans: adapting and thriving

While there are concerns within the industry regarding the potential ban on poison, it is important to note that the aim is not to completely eliminate toxic control measures. Instead, the focus is on reducing reliance on poison as the primary method of pest control. This shift presents an opportunity for companies to develop and promote alternative solutions that are safer, more sustainable, and equally effective. By embracing IPM practices and adopting IoT technologies, pest control companies can adapt to evolving regulations and customer demands, ultimately thriving in this changing landscape.

The positive outlook for the industry: meeting future challenges

Despite the challenges and uncertainties, the pest control industry has a positive outlook. The increasing demand for sustainable practices and the adoption of digitalisation present new opportunities for growth and innovation. Companies like ours are keen to offer IoT-enabled solutions that enhance efficiency, reduce environmental impact, and improve pest management outcomes. By leveraging technology and embracing sustainable approaches, the industry can meet future challenges, like changing legislation around rodenticide use, and continue to provide essential services to a wide range of sectors, including food companies, retail, and logistics.

A commitment to innovation

While this article focuses on the broader industry perspective, it is worth noting that we do have some skin in the game at Futura. But that's what gives this opinion piece merit – we really do believe in having a commitment to sustainability and innovation, and that's reflected in the products we create and why we're so proud of them. They exemplify the benefits of IoT technology in pest



control and we think we're part of helping drive the industry's transformation. We create products that offer independent and scalable trapping and monitoring capabilities, cost reductions, real-time insights, comprehensive surveillance and analysis, and enhanced pest control efficiency. Any company with a similar commitment to providing digital solutions will position themselves as a leader in the evolving pest control landscape.

Conclusion

The pest control industry is undergoing a significant transformation, driven by the increasing demand for sustainability and digitalisation. While concerns regarding the potential ban on poison exist, the industry is shifting towards IPM practices that prioritise prevention, monitoring, and physical control measures. Digitalisation and IoT technologies enhance efficiency, control, and sustainability. This brilliant industry's positive outlook lies in its ability to adapt to evolving regulations, embrace innovation, and provide essential services to a variety of sectors. By embracing these changes, the pest control industry can thrive and continue to meet the challenges of the future.

“There is a growing global movement towards sustainability, and pest control is no exception.”





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RAT VIEW MIRROR

DID RAT POPULATIONS REALLY INCREASE DURING COVID-19 LOCKDOWNS?

Following the first lockdown of March 2020, research by Richard Warren, an MSc student at the University of Derby, investigated the effects on the population of brown rats (*Rattus norvegicus*) in the UK.

The research followed an increase in media reports of rat sightings across the UK. A questionnaire was distributed to pest controllers covering a range of issues, including the numbers of rat sighting calls and possible reasons for these sightings.

The survey also looked at the uptake of treatment baits at pre-lockdown locations, following the easing of lockdown.

It also asked if pest controllers believed there had been an overall increase in the rat population or if increased sightings were due to rats in search of new food sources.

Additionally, a Freedom of Information (FOI) request was sent to UK local authorities, requesting the number of reports of rat problems per year from 2018-2022.

Finally, pest controllers were asked if they believed there would have been an increase in reports even if lockdown had not occurred and, if so, the reasons for this.

The results

Over 70% of pest controllers experienced an increase in calls for rats since March 2020, with an increase of 30% during the spring and summer (a time which would traditionally see the least number of calls).

Twelve months on from the initial lockdown and pest controllers were still receiving an overall increase in rat-related calls.

The main reasons included:

- Increased domestic waste as residents remained at home
- Reductions in waste collections
- Reductions in local authority pest control
- Closure of food establishments
- Reduced footfall in busy areas, emboldening rats to seek out alternative food sources
 - Increased bird feeding as more people stayed at home or went to local parks
 - Closure of waste sites resulting in increased harborage.

Pest controllers were also asked if there was an uptake in poison baits close to food establishments since the lockdown.

45% had not experienced this, indicating that significant numbers had deserted their previous feeding grounds.

Regarding the overall rat population, approximately 60% of pest controllers felt there had been an overall increase.

Evidence included increased call outs, sightings of rats during visits, increased sightings in gardens, call outs to buildings not previously reporting rats, increases in pest control supplies being purchased and more rats being trapped.

When asked if there would have been an increase in rats if lockdown had not occurred, over 38% thought there would have been while 37% disagreed, with the remainder undecided.

Those believing there would have been an increase cite contributing factors such as less severe winters, popularity of bird feeding, reduced waste collections, reduced sewer baiting, reduced local authority pest control and increased immunity to poisons.

Examining the local authority data, rural councils tended to receive more rat sightings during the 12 months following the lockdown, while some urban areas observed a decline.

However, as the lockdown eased, these numbers reversed as food establishments re-opened. This further indicates that rats initially migrated for alternative food sources before some rats returned to traditional haunts.

Overall, it is likely that there was an increase in local rat populations in the UK, where rats have not had to rely on food waste and experienced less disturbance.

Conversely, there will be other areas where rats have been affected by lockdown measures, reducing the local population. Where rats had to compete for limited resources, muricide and cannibalism may have occurred – while other rats had to relocate, these may have been predated (particularly younger rats) or succumbed to pest control.

As lockdowns have ceased, the reasons outlined for any population increase (eg milder climate, continued bird feeding, reductions in waste and pest control services) will aid future populations.

Furthermore, local authority green schemes which result in less vegetation control may help rats to thrive.

As such, it is likely that in the next few years, independent wildlife organisations will provide data to confirm any actual increase in the UK rat population, as opposed to the current perceived increase.

Interested in pest control research?

BPCA is looking for members to join a new working group aimed at creating links with the academic community and keeping up-to-date with research. If you'd like to know more about getting involved, get in touch:

hello@bpca.org.uk



"...approximately 60% of pest controllers felt there had been an overall increase."

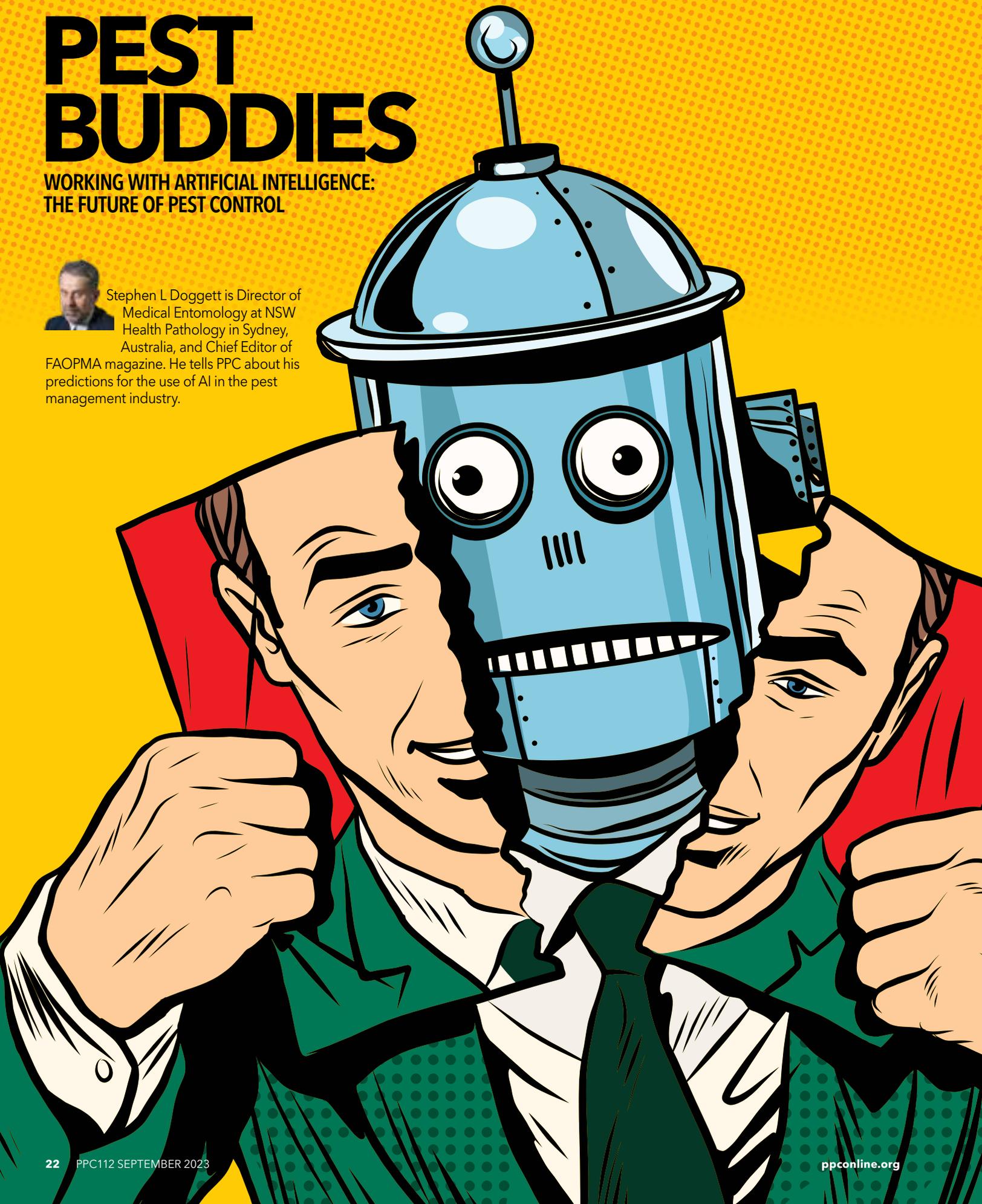
PEST BUDDIES

WORKING WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:
THE FUTURE OF PEST CONTROL



Stephen L Doggett is Director of Medical Entomology at NSW Health Pathology in Sydney, Australia, and Chief Editor of

FAOPMA magazine. He tells PPC about his predictions for the use of AI in the pest management industry.



“It is clear that AI is a rapidly evolving field that has the potential to transform virtually every industry and aspect of our lives.”

What is artificial intelligence?

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a broad field of study that deals with the development of intelligent machines that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as recognising speech, making decisions and understanding natural language.

It is a rapidly evolving field that has the potential to transform virtually every industry and aspect of our lives.

AI systems can be classified into two main categories:

Narrow or weak AI systems that are designed to perform specific tasks, such as recognising faces or playing chess. These systems are limited to the task for which they are programmed and do not have the ability to learn or adapt beyond their programmed capabilities.

General or strong AI systems have the ability to perform any intellectual task that a human can do. These systems are designed to be self-learning and adaptive, and can perform a wide range of tasks in a variety of settings. Generally AI, up until very recently, was in its early stages of development and had been limited to research and development projects. However, this year has seen the release of a range of AI platforms that have become both very powerful and extremely useful.

AI systems rely on a range of technologies, including machine learning, natural language processing, robotics, computer vision and speech recognition.

Machine learning is a subset of AI that involves teaching computers to learn from data without being explicitly programmed.

Natural language processing involves teaching computers to understand and interpret human language, while computer vision involves teaching computers to interpret visual information.

artificial intelligence

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noun Computers

- 1 a the capacity of a computer, robot, or other programmed mechanical device to perform operations and tasks analogous to learning and decision-making in humans, as speech recognition or question answering.
- 1 b a computer, robot, or other programmed mechanical device having this humanlike capacity
- 2 the branch of computer science involved with the design of computers or other programmed mechanical devices having the capacity to imitate human intelligence and thought.

Abbreviations: AI, A.I.

AI has the potential to revolutionise a wide range of industries and applications, including healthcare, finance, transportation, and education.

In healthcare, AI systems can be used to help diagnose diseases, predict patient outcomes and improve the accuracy of medical diagnoses.

In finance, AI systems can be used to analyse financial data, predict market trends and make investment decisions.

In transportation, AI systems can be used to develop self-driving cars and improve traffic flow, while in education, AI systems can be used to personalise learning and provide feedback to teachers.

However, there are also concerns about the potential impact of AI on society, such as job displacement and the potential for AI systems to be used for malicious purposes.

As AI continues to evolve and become more integrated into our daily lives, it will be important to consider the ethical and societal implications of its use.

It is clear that AI is a rapidly evolving field that has the potential to transform virtually every industry and aspect of our lives.

AI systems rely on a range of technologies, including machine learning, natural language processing and computer vision.

While there are concerns about the impact of AI on society, AI has the potential to create a positive impact and will continue to be an area of intense research and development in the coming years.

AI in pest control

AI has already revolutionised various industries by providing innovative solutions to complex problems. One such industry that can benefit greatly from AI technology is pest management.

Pest control companies face several challenges in controlling pest populations, which can cause

significant economic and health-related damages. However, AI-based solutions can provide pest management companies with valuable insights, leading to more effective and efficient pest control practices.

Here are some ways in which AI can be used in the pest management industry:

Predictive analysis

One of the significant challenges in pest management is predicting where and when pests are likely to appear. AI-based systems can analyse historical data, such as weather patterns, pest infestation rates and pest behaviour, to forecast when and where a pest outbreak is likely to occur. This information allows pest management companies to proactively take measures to prevent or control pest infestations.



/continued...



PEST BUDDIES

“By analysing data on pest behaviour and habitat, AI-based systems can identify the most effective control methods for a particular pest.”



Automated trapping and monitoring

Automate the monitoring of pest traps, providing real-time data on pest activity. This data allows pest management companies to react quickly to changes in pest activity, ensuring that infestations are detected and controlled early. Additionally, AI-based systems can provide alerts when traps are full, eliminating the need for manual checking.



Administrative support

AI is revolutionising administrative support in businesses by automating repetitive tasks and streamlining processes, thereby reducing working hours and allowing staff to focus on more meaningful duties. Through natural language processing and machine learning algorithms, AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants can handle customer enquiries, schedule appointments, and provide real-time assistance.

As you can see, the use of AI in the pest management industry can provide significant benefits, including more effective pest control, reduced chemical use, improved customer service and cost savings.

As AI technology continues to advance, we can expect to see even more innovative solutions to pest management challenges.

Pest management companies that embrace AI-based solutions are likely to have a competitive advantage in the industry, providing high-quality service to their customers while protecting the environment.

Targeted pest control

By analysing data on pest behaviour and habitat, AI-based systems can identify the most effective control methods for a particular pest. This approach reduces the use of chemical pesticides, which can be harmful to the environment and humans.



Remote pest monitoring

Provide remote monitoring of pest activity, allowing pest management companies to monitor pest populations without the need for physical inspections. This approach is particularly useful in areas that are difficult to access, such as attics or crawl spaces.

AI assistants can provide automated feedback to Google reviews and flag negative comments for human intervention. AI can be used to transcribe customer calls, which then highlights keywords for later review. Intelligent document processing systems extract information from various sources, reducing manual data entry and enhancing accuracy. Additionally, AI algorithms can analyse large volumes of data to generate actionable insights, aiding decision-making and optimising resource allocation.

With AI's ability to handle administrative tasks efficiently, businesses can focus on higher-value activities, enhance productivity, and deliver improved customer experiences. It has been estimated that two thirds of occupations could be partially automated by AI.

This article originally appeared in the July 2023 issue of the FAOPMA magazine faopma.com/Pages/FAOPMA/Journals.aspx

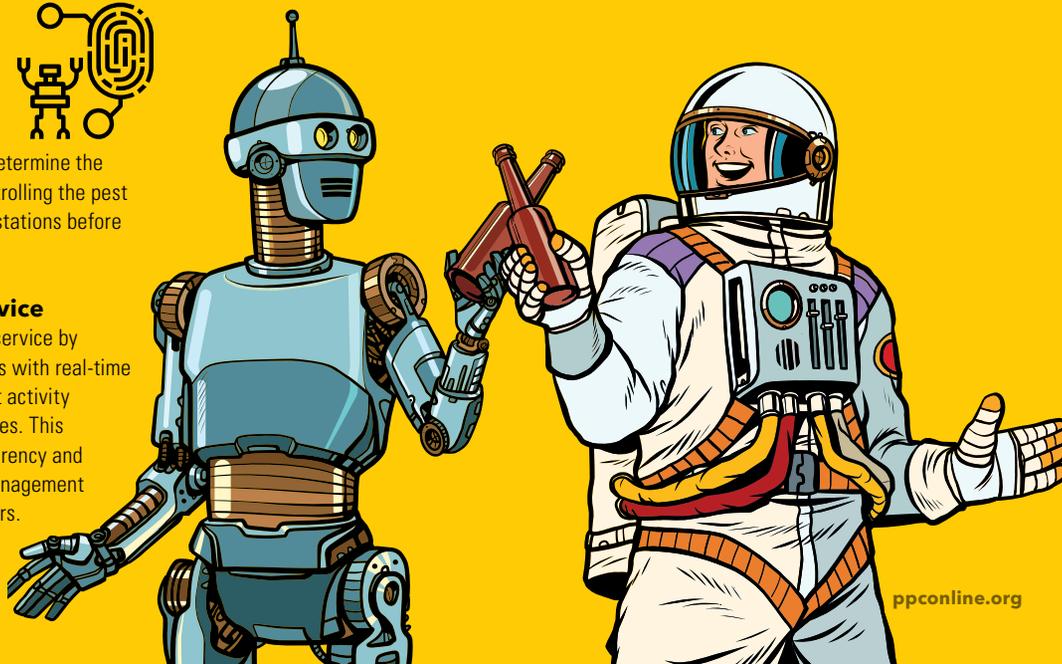
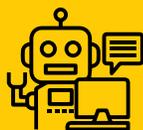
Pest identification

Identify pests accurately, even when they are in their larvae or nymph stage. This information allows pest management companies to determine the best course of action for controlling the pest and to identify potential infestations before they become a problem.



Customer service

Improve customer service by providing customers with real-time information on pest activity and control measures. This information improves transparency and builds trust between pest management companies and their customers.



What do you think of AI?

Are you already using it in your pest control job? Let us know about it in a letter to the editor and we might print your response in the next issue of PPC.

hello@bpca.org.uk

UNWELCOME VISITORS

SPORADIC PESTS AND HOW TO MANAGE THEM



Returning contributor, Partho Dhang, has a PhD in Zoology and is the author of 'Urban pest control: a practitioner's guide'. This time he's sharing tips on less common insects that occasionally concern our clients.



An online CPD quiz based on this feature is now available on the BPCA website. BPCA Registered members and affiliates can take a CPD quiz at any time [bpca.org.uk/cpd-quiz](https://www.bpca.org.uk/cpd-quiz) or sign up at [bpca.org.uk/affiliate](https://www.bpca.org.uk/affiliate)

A sporadic pest is one that is not seen on a regular basis. They appear under certain conditions, or at certain times or in certain localities. Therefore, sporadic pests necessitate only occasional control. Control of these pests is based solely on the tolerance limits of the complainant.

Can we control sporadic pests?

Often, control is based on an emotional or aesthetic threshold rather than on financial or cost-benefit analyses. This happens because people are unfamiliar with these insects and think they may cause significant damage or endangerment through stinging or biting.

As Comont (2016) explained, in the UK, section 79(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as amended) states that "any insects emanating from relevant industrial, trade or business premises and being prejudicial to health or a nuisance" shall constitute a statutory nuisance and thus be subject to controls.

This wording indicates the two-limbed structure of legal nuisance: insects do not need to spread disease or provoke an allergic reaction to act as pests.

Often, the mere presence of insects within dwellings is enough to provoke a response (particularly those species seen as dirty or threatening in some way), and numerous papers report the increase in the prevalence of nuisance insects all over the world, including UK (Roy et al, 2009).

Sporadic pests fall in a grey area, as they are not severe or wide-ranging enough to be classed as statutory nuisances. The distinction between statutory nuisance and non-statutory nuisance will vary on a case-by-case basis; an insect will be a statutory nuisance in some scenarios but not others, particularly in relation to the source and abundance of the insects (Comont, 2016). A practitioner's knowledge and training are thus very important in this situation.

The key to solving problems with sporadic pests is to determine the source and cause of the problem and achieve control by physical or cultural means whenever possible.

Silverfish and booklice

The most common sporadic pests in the UK include silverfish (*Lepisma saccharina*) and booklice (*Psocids*), which are often discovered by homeowners. Both insects are strictly

indoor pests, stay in damp areas and can cause a nuisance.

Silverfish are found in damp areas, commonly in kitchens and bathrooms. They are nocturnal and often get trapped in baths, basins or crockery as they cannot climb smooth surfaces. The insect is capable of quick movement. They often damage paper items by feeding on residues of starchy substances such as glues, wallpaper paste and carbohydrate food debris.

Booklice also feed on mould caused by damp conditions. They are often seen on the glue of book bindings or on damp cardboard, damp food (especially cereals) or the surfaces close to damp plaster inside buildings, carpets and wallpapers.

Both these pests can be controlled by preventive measures (which can also achieve control). The method is to keep susceptible areas well-ventilated, lit and dry with adequate ventilation. Also, sanitation of indoor spaces such as cupboards and bookshelves will ensure future infestation from occurring.

/continued...



UNWELCOME VISITORS



“Normally, millipedes are satisfied staying under logs and feeding on decaying leaves and stumps. But when millions migrate through lawns, it can be a problem.”

Some of the pests pictured may be sporadic in places but regular in some other geographic regions of the UK. It is also interesting to note that changing climate can be a factor; some of them may shift from sporadic nature to become a regular nuisance pest (Roy et al 2009).

Sporadic pests can emanate from a wide range of sources, but it is expected that most complaints of nuisance will be from poultry and other animal houses, buildings on agricultural land including manure and silage storage areas, sewage treatment works, stagnant ditches and drains on relevant premises, landfill sites and refuse tips, waste transfer premises, commercial, trade or business premises, slaughterhouses and used car tyre recycling businesses etc.

Many of the sporadic pests originate in gardens or from fields around homes and houses. Ladybug beetles feed on aphids and mealybugs and are beneficial in controlling plant pests. However, they can become numerous and enter structures in large numbers during the fall of the year. At that time, they are looking for a sheltered place to overwinter.

Other insects like thrips, leafhoppers, types of stink bugs, boxelder bugs and many other beetles that invade structures are huge problems for customers and are often very complex to prevent, manage or control.

The method of control can be cultural or physical, wherein they are prevented from entering the structure by installing screens and sealing cracks around windows, doors, siding, and utility pipes, behind chimneys, and underneath the wood fascia and other openings.

Other sporadic pests originate in decaying organic matter on the ground. Many of these are rather slow moving but invade in huge numbers. For instance, millipedes have mass migrations from their breeding grounds when weather or soil conditions change. Normally, millipedes are satisfied staying under logs and feeding on decaying leaves and stumps. But when millions migrate through lawns, it can be a problem. The best way is to remove logs, woodpiles, dried leaves, mulches, etc, from the vicinity of structures. Caulking and sealing gaps in foundations and around windows and doors can help keep out millipedes. Insecticidal dusts can be somewhat effective against millipedes, but they should never be spread in areas where children or pets can contact them (always check the label!). At times, pitfall traps and sticky traps may be used.

Some aquatic insects have massive emergences during certain times of the year. Mayflies and aquatic midges are known to completely cover buildings close to water. For example, I've seen a paper manufacturing plant close to the water that had problems with aquatic insects being embedded into their paper products, making the product unusable. Mayfly outbreaks have made roads slick, causing accidents.

Water management in and around the building, proper lighting, installing screens and in case of high population, use of insecticidal space spray as well as killing the breeding population by using an IGR is recommended.

Sometimes people just stumble onto an insect and think it is interesting. A Buprestid wood-boring beetle is really

attractive. Another name for this type of beetle is a jewel beetle because it resembles many expensive metals and crystals, like gold and emerald. The Buprestids are usually a metallic iridescent colouration, and their wing covers (elytra) have been used in making jewellery. They may be brought in by collectors and later escape to become a sporadic pest. These situations can sometimes be overcome by physical collection and releasing them in a specific natural environment.

Some non-native invasive pests can also fall under the sporadic category simply because of their intermittent occurrence. A report lists 282 non-native species as currently invasive in Great Britain (Roy et al., 2009), and these are estimated to have a direct cost of £1.7 billion per year (Williams et al., 2010). As this cost is largely related to control measures, an increase in pest species could see a considerable rise in the financial burden of non-natives in the UK and around the world.

Sporadic pests can be just about any insect or arthropod people encounter either inside or outside. The variety of sporadic pests makes it difficult to prepare an answer to customers' questions. In such cases, a practitioner's awareness and training are essential to control occurrences.



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THE MODERN ERA

MAXIMISE THE VALUE OF ENVIRONMENTAL RISK ASSESSMENTS



BPCA Technical Manager, Natalie Bungay, tells us why it should be standard practice for pest professionals to carry out ERAs.

“Also, think about competitors ... they may inform the client of your lapse ... and use this to take the contract from you.”

The widely acknowledged purpose of an environmental risk assessment (ERA) is to determine which possible adverse environmental effects may occur at any specific site and to identify which measures are necessary to protect wildlife and the wider environment as far as possible.

When using any method (that’s right, not just rodenticides!), we need to consider how our actions may impact wildlife and the environment.

Location, location, location!

Each treated site will have different environmental risks associated with the use of traps or rodenticides. The extent of these risks will vary greatly depending on local circumstances but few sites will be entirely free from environmental risk.

For example, wildlife is present even in urban environments and may include feral pigeons, house sparrows, foxes and raptors, such as kestrels and sparrowhawks.

Suburbia is home to a much richer variety of wildlife and environmental risks are obviously even more severe in rural areas, where wildlife is more abundant, such as on farms and shoots, and in other rural locations.

Risks to non-target animals, especially wildlife, are greater when rodenticides are



applied outdoors. This is why we must always consider how else we can impact the rodent population without the immediate reliance on rodenticides.

Why bother?

Examining a little further into the reasons why ERAs are imperative, we need to realise that their importance is focused on two areas:

- Legal requirement by way of the rodenticide label

- Professional responsibility to work safely and respectfully, in relation to the environment and its local wildlife. Writing down and keeping records of ERAs will make sure that you are protected should you be challenged on any work you have done.

As with all the things we do professionally, write down all actions taken and, in the instance you need the evidence of this good work, you have it.

VALUE OF AN ERA

LEGAL

By providing an ERA, you justify the use of a treatment method. This confers a level of protection should the worst come to pass.

SAFEGUARDING

As a professional using professional tools you have a responsibility to ensure those tools are used correctly, and to safeguard the environment.

COMPETENCY

Undertaking an ERA is part of your due diligence. This showcases your competence, value and skills to your client.

The ERA shopping list

The key areas you need to survey and demonstrate that you have assessed the site properly are:

- What environmental and wildlife risks you may have found
- Is there a current infestation and if yes, why is it there?
- What can be done to control the infestation without using rodenticides (harbourage management, food source removal, proofing, trapping etc)?
- If you intend to use rodenticides, explain why
- If rodenticides are chosen as the preferred control method, you must indicate what is being used, where and for how long.

Permanent or long-term baiting is allowed on some rodenticide labels but, again, you have to explain why this is being used, and even then only after you have considered all other options.

Do you need another reason?

Also, think about competitors – if they see that you're not doing the proper ERAs for a site you have under contract, they may inform the client of your lapse in professional and legal responsibility, and use this to take the contract from you.

ERAs are also advantageous for your company image and customer relations. Developing and providing ERAs for your customers, whether they be residential or commercial, provides them with confidence. It shows that you represent a reputable company with high standards of application and pest eradication, as well as being considerate of the wider environment.

Who doesn't want customers to view their business that way?

Put it on paper

Assessing risk is something we always do in our minds, every day, at work and at home. In this industry, we're trained to analyse risk in every job we do. However, we need to get better at writing it down. It's no good if it stays in your head – how is anyone supposed to verify that you carried out your ERA with due diligence?

You can make notes of the ERAs you carry out by either downloading the CRRU template, or developing your own ERA.

Visit the CRRU website to download the ERA form template at thinkwildlife.org/download/environmental-risk-assessment-form/

As long as it covers the things it needs to, why not utilise treatment reports and record those day-to-day ERAs you are doing? If you undertake reports digitally, it's easy to add a few sections on environmental risk assessing. And, if you use a handwritten report, then make sure you reference ERA considerations in the 'actions' or 'risk assessing' sections.

ERAs reflect good pest control

By Philippa Codling, Ecolab Technical Manager

An ERA represents a decision-making process that we all should undertake before any pest control treatment.

1 IDENTIFY THE TARGET AND ASSESS LOCAL CONDITIONS

To decide how to control a pest problem we must first identify the target species and then assess the local conditions that contribute to and sustain this particular pest infestation.



Some contributing factors may need to be addressed before treatment commences – for example, any alternate food sources that reduce the effectiveness of a food attractant in a trapping programme.

Some local conditions should be left undisturbed until treatment is concluded – for example, a cluttered environment infested by rats should not be tidied up so that the treatment can exploit established rat runs.

2 DECIDE ON THE TYPE OF CONTROL

Once the infestation has been assessed you should use the hierarchy of control to determine what type of treatment is the most appropriate in that particular set of circumstances. Use your expertise and experience as a pest controller to evaluate the control options available.



The least toxic and environmentally damaging control options should be considered first – with anticoagulant rodenticides, for example, only used where the application is justified.

However, even a non toxic control measure can pose a risk to non-target species – such as snap traps where water voles are present. The knowledge to make this assessment, while factoring in all the elements and designing an effective treatment, are what sets a professional apart from an amateur.

3 JUSTIFY THE TREATMENT

Justification for the treatment you select will include balancing different risks – such as the risk to public health.



For example, habitat management and trapping might take weeks to control a rat infestation at a motorway service station (if ever). Where rats pose a significant risk to health this delay in control is not acceptable. The 24-hour nature of the service station means that a rat shoot is not possible. In these circumstances, a baiting programme may be the most appropriate means of control.

An ERA is not meant to prevent you from carrying out a control treatment, it is there to support your decision-making process and enable you to justify the treatment selection you have made.

UNDERPRICE AT YOUR PERIL



David Falzani MBE is a Professor at Nottingham University Business School's Haydn Green Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (HGIE) and president of the Sainsbury Management Fellowship. This article draws on his new book, 'Double your price: the strategy and tactics of smart pricing', published by FT Publishing.



Price is frequently regarded as something that has to be minimised. Entrepreneurs, and small business owners in particular, often see low pricing as the key to delivering acceptable value to customers and being competitive in the marketplace.

It's thanks to such a view that price basically becomes a source of guilt. Yet the truth is that almost all companies fail to maximise the role price has to play in driving success and sustainability – and many, in doing so, endanger their futures.

Underpricing is the problem I encounter most when I'm training, mentoring or coaching early-stage businesses, a huge number of which misguidedly believe their focus should be on doing things cheaply rather than doing things better.

This ethos is usually due to a lack of confidence in a value proposition, or a fear of not having enough sales and throughput to meet overheads and fixed costs. Both are rooted in defective reasoning.

Let's briefly examine each of these mindsets before exploring the unsound mental processes that give rise to them. You may wish to ask yourself if any of what follows echoes your own approach to pricing.

Lack of confidence

There are several reasons why a company might have scant confidence in its value proposition. The most common are disappointment at not winning business and customer complaints over expense.

The former is a classic illustration of how the past can cloud subsequent decisions. Failing to win business can fuel a conviction that low pricing is the only recourse when it comes to 'sweetening the deal' and ensuring sales – which is most certainly not the case.

Meanwhile, customer gripes over pricing are essentially a fact of life. We might even say it's just

natural. It's vital to remember in the face of such rancour that feedback is invariably context-specific.

Many customers have discovered asking for price discounts really does work. That's why there can be something of a game to be played. As I'm fond of saying though, the easiest way to introduce a discount is to first introduce a rise.

Ultimately, we shouldn't forget what a value proposition is. It's an encapsulation of what customers value about a company. It's a crystallisation of what differentiates a business from the competition. It covers much more than price, including crucial dimensions such as trust.

Fear of insufficient sales

This is a phenomenon that stems from a desperation to generate enough sales to cover costs. In tandem, it can be traced to an associated belief in a rational market and an assumption that a lower price will inevitably draw more customers.

As it happens, the customers who help a company grow are seldom seduced by cheapness. They're more likely to be sceptical about low-priced offerings and instead attracted by interesting features and unique selling points.

It's the customers who simply buy whatever they deem cheap at any given juncture who thwart a company's efforts to grow. Their 'bottom-feeding' approach means they can't be relied on, because they're inherently disloyal.

Any company that cuts its prices in desperation is essentially banking on people using perfect information to make perfect decisions. It supposes the world is inhabited by machine-like beings powered by pure logic.

As a wealth of behavioural and psychological research has demonstrated, there's no such world. On the whole, this is good news – because irrationality can bring significant business opportunities.

The root of the problem: cognitive bias

So exactly why do so many entrepreneurs and small business owners fall victim to these misconceptions? In most instances the answer lies in cognitive bias – systematic flaws in how information is processed, interpreted and used to make judgements.

Confirmation bias is notably rife. It occurs when individuals or organisations home in on information sources and data that echo what they already believe – reinforcing their existing opinions and thereby diminishing the likelihood of arriving at considered, evidence-based decisions.

Anchoring is also widespread. It arises when an initial piece of information is treated as disproportionately important, effectively 'anchoring' everything that follows. Many negotiations are shaped by this bias.

There's also availability bias. This describes the inclination to rely excessively on whatever information is at hand rather than seeking a statistically instructive array of data. Again, this is likely to lead to decisions that don't take full account of all the relevant facts.

These biases can be part of the emotional baggage we all carry around with us. They might be a manifestation of naivety or inexperience. They may even be an upshot of our evolutionary history – an innate aid to making decisions with speed. Whatever their origins, they routinely go unrecognised – sometimes with dire consequences.

Price as an engine of enhancement and expansion

Most new companies fold within three years. Issues around profit margins and cash flows are usually among the contributing factors. Even for those fledgling enterprises that stagger on, low prices and the limited margins they produce can stifle growth.

OPINION

KNOW YOUR WORTH!



Martin Harvey, Managing Director of BPCA member company Harvey Environmental Services, talks about pricing, surveys and client expectations.

“Surveys take time if they’re done properly. Perhaps this investment in time is too much faff for the cowboy operator..”



As a result, many small businesses stay small. Their erroneous attitudes towards pricing – underpinned by cognitive bias – suffocate their potential and undermine their sustainability.

The reality is that underpricing is rarely an engine of value and competitiveness. It prevents reinvestment in product development. It discourages innovation. It dashes hopes of superior employee training and higher salaries. It makes achieving goals such as reducing staff turnover and creating a happier, more skilled, more efficient workplace much harder, if not impossible.

At least for a well-run company, the act of raising prices isn't about profiteering – a practice that's neither laudable nor conducive to long-term success. It's about enhancing prospects and enabling expansion.

That's why entrepreneurs and small business owners should stop regarding price as something to be minimised. The entire concept is fallacious. Clear, unbiased thinking should reveal price not as a source of guilt but as a fundamental means of making a company better for all its stakeholders.

This article was originally published on the Small Business Charter website and is reproduced here with permission.

smallbusinesscharter.org

Professional or cowboy? Take your pick.

We recently had a long-term, multi-site client contact us to say that they had been given a much cheaper quote for their pest control, and we needed to do something with our pricing or lose the work.

After a conversation, it transpired that this other company had not been to any of the sites but had given standard rates to a purchasing group which had, in turn, used these to put the proposal together.

Wow. Just wow. How professional.

The trade association that our company belongs to (BPCA) insists that surveys are carried out before quoting for a programme of work – which makes perfect sense.

The survey is the start of the process and is done to:

- Establish pest activity levels
- Identify the risk rating of the site, which impacts the number of inspections and treatments recommended
- Enable a treatment plan to be devised
- Consider risks to people and the environment
- Work out a realistic price for the work.

It's a sensible and professional approach so why would anyone do it differently?

Surveys take time if they're done properly. Perhaps this investment in time is too much faff for the cowboy operator, so they snatch the opportunity for a sale on a 'take the rough with the smooth' basis?

We recently turned away a large opportunity in central London where the enquirer wanted us to survey ten sites in a morning (by the way, they originally didn't want us to survey at all!)

I explained that it would not be possible, and that surveying ten sites may take five days to do properly and pull the reports together. They pulled a face.

I also told them this would be a considerable amount of investment and we would be looking to charge for this - an even bigger face was pulled!

We thought, "if it's going to be like this at the start of the relationship, what's it going to be like going forward" and took the enquiry no further.

We believe that there is no such thing as 'one-size-fits-all' with pest control. You don't buy pest control 'off-the-shelf', and commercially it should be very much part of the management system of the company purchasing the service. BPCA agrees with this, and that's why the Association published a Code of Best Practice regarding 'surveys first' many years ago.

CODE OF BEST PRACTICE - SURVEYS

BPCA Codes of Best Practices are available for anyone to download and read on the BPCA website. All BPCA members must follow the Codes to meet membership criteria, but non-members are welcome to use them too.

bpca.org.uk/codes

The trouble is that some in the industry do a 'one-size-fits-all' without surveying and hope for the best. Indeed, they'll often promise 'unlimited free call-outs' as part of the bargain.

Treating pest control as a commodity encourages the race to the bottom with quality and pricing. The customer will likely suffer with the quality of work, and the pest control company will suffer if the pricing is way out – leading to even worse quality.

The best way to avoid this situation is to go right back to the beginning, play by the rules and get proper surveys done – this is the starting point!

This approach is far more likely to deliver the result for everybody – short, medium and long term.

What do you think?

Send us your views on Martin's opinion piece and we may print them in the next issue.

hello@bpca.org.uk

LOAN ARRANGER

A PEST CONTROLLER'S GUIDE TO BUSINESS LOANS



In his comprehensive guide, James Robson, CEO of finance comparison site FundOnion, explains the types of business loans available to pest control companies.

All too often, it isn't ambition that stops SMEs from growing – it's cash. Responsible borrowing can supercharge a pest management company's growth. Whether you're looking to spend on new vans or equipment, investment in a new service, or a marketing drive, a business loan could set you up for success.

A business loan is any loan offered to a commercial entity rather than an individual person. As with all loans, it involves the creation of a debt, which will be repaid with added interest. Several different types of business loans are available to pest control companies, which I'll go through in turn.

Term loans

The most familiar kind of business finance is the good old-fashioned term loan. In recent years, high street banks have been unable to provide smaller-sized business loans because of increased regulation and higher costs.

So who's lending, and what's available right now? Our engine instantly lets you see some of the lenders in the market right now. Lenders are offering term loans from £10,000 up to £500,000.

What are the fees?

Term loans are a type of business loan that work by giving cash to your business and setting fixed repayments, usually monthly. You pay back both the amount you borrowed plus interest over the life of the loan.

The two most common types of term loan repayments are either amortising loans or balloon/bullet loans. These differ on when the amount you borrowed and interest are paid back.

What security is needed?

You can go for either a secured or unsecured loan. With an unsecured loan, you can usually borrow up to a maximum of £250,000.

A secured loan means that the loan is secured against the value of an asset, just in case your business can't keep up repayments.

With a secured loan, the lending amounts can go much higher and are based on the value of the asset being secured against.

In short, secured business loans allow you to:

- Borrow more
- At a lower interest rate
- Spreading repayments over a longer period than an unsecured business loan.

This is simply because they represent a lower credit risk to a lender. If you don't repay the loan, the lender can acquire the asset secured against it.

Revolving credit facilities

Revolving credit facilities (or RCFs) are a less well-known form of working capital, but they can be useful on their own or alongside a regular term loan.

With an RCF, the lender approves a certain maximum amount (say £100,000), which you can draw on occasionally.

This is sometimes linked to an overdraft but is slightly different. That's because RCFs are ongoing agreements between you and the lender for a fixed term, like 12 months. But they aren't repayable on demand like an overdraft is.

The great thing about an RCF is that you don't pay any interest on the money you're not using as you would with a term loan, where you get the whole lump sum at the start.

What are personal guarantees?

Personal guarantees can be a headache for potential borrowers. These go beyond your business and put your personal assets on the line if you can't repay the business loan.

Lenders usually ask for these from the directors of the business applying for the loan and perhaps the major shareholders too. Make sure if you're going to provide a personal guarantee for a business loan or any other kind of finance, that you fully understand the implications.

What's more, personal guarantees are almost always required by lenders if you're applying for a business loan. Some alternative finance lenders may lend either without a personal guarantee or a limited personal guarantee, but this is not the norm.

At a glance

	GOOD FOR	CAUTION
TERM LOAN A loan structured by an initial upfront advance with a fixed payment schedule from the borrower to lender.	An immediate injection of capital. Can be for any purpose.	Carries fixed scheduled payments. Make sure these are built into your cash flow.
REVOLVING CREDIT FACILITY (RCF) An approved line of credit which allows the borrower to pay only for what's being used.	Managing a varying cash flow or fluctuating capital needs.	Non-utilisation fees can apply. Be sure to know which lenders do this.
MERCHANT CASH ADVANCE (MCA) A cash advance paid to the borrower, repayable on a share of revenue and not on a fixed schedule.	Seasonal businesses or businesses looking to avoid fixed repayment structure.	Can be expensive. Ensure you understand what factor rates are.

But there is a drawback. If you don't use the money, lenders usually charge a non-utilisation fee, so they're not making capital available to you for free! They want to get a return on it.

Example of how an RCF would work:

- A bank authorises a revolving credit facility of up to £100,000 for 12 months
- Fees include a £200 setup fee, interest payable on the money you use charged at 2.5% per month, and a non-utilisation fee of 0.05% per month; so...
- During that 12 months, you use £50,000 of the RCF for nine months and pay off the interest monthly.

What's a RCF useful for?

They are useful if you need flexible funding. This isn't just working capital to keep your business going smoothly but also for growth, such as running marketing campaigns or when revenue fluctuates.

Merchant cash advances

Merchant cash advances (or MCAs, also known as business cash advances) provide an upfront lump sum to your business. They take repayments based on a percentage of revenue from your business. Therefore, lenders usually look at your gross revenue when deciding how much money to advance to your company.

MCAs work particularly well if you take a lot of money in credit and debit card payments. That's because the lenders can simply plug into your payment processing system to deduct their take – say, 10% of all sales.

The really interesting thing about MCAs is that repayments aren't on a fixed schedule – they're linked to your revenue. Unlike a term loan, where you'll make regular fixed monthly payments whether your monthly turnover is high or low.

It's not an interest rate, it's a factor rate

MCAs are calculated by multiplying the cash advance you receive by the factor rate. This is because all of the interest is added to the amount you borrow at the start. This then gives the total amount you have to repay.

For example, say you ask for a £15,000 cash advance with a factor rate of 1.2 for 12 months. This means you would need to pay back £18,000 total (£15,000 x 1.2).

Applying for business loans

Lenders make their decisions based on your business's overall health and suitability. They're checking that you can pay them back – whichever type of financial product you choose, term loan, RCF or MCA.

Therefore, you need to think carefully about:

- The kind of finance that would be best for your business
- How much money would you have left at the end of each month to repay any loan, RCF or MCA you've taken on.

When applying for a business loan, you should be ready to send to your lender or broker the following information:

- Basic business information such as your trading name, legal entity name, company number

- What your business does, and a brief description of your activities
 - Your last full filed set of annual accounts
 - Six months' worth of business bank statements
 - Information about any overdraft you have in place
 - Information about any other kinds of debt you have outstanding – amount, repayment dates, payback period
- Right now, the market has plenty of lenders, all with slightly different attitudes to lending and the risks they're prepared to take with a borrower.

FundOnion and BPCA

FundOnion.com is a leading commercial finance brokerage that helps UK small businesses identify available financing options using their unique online platform. Created by industry professionals, FundOnion provides an easy, free-to-use platform to help educate businesses about finance with high street and specialist lenders.

bpca.org.uk/onion
fundonion.com



“This isn't just working capital to keep your business going smoothly but also for growth, such as running marketing campaigns or when revenue fluctuates.”

TICKED OFF?

MARKETING CHECKLIST FOR PEST CONTROL COMPANIES



"Communicate your unique selling points, such as expertise in dealing with specific pests, environmentally friendly practices, or exceptional customer service."

Marketing plays a crucial role in the success of any pest control business, especially for small companies in the UK. BPCA supports many members with their marketing efforts; the marcomms team has put together an action list for pest control companies to spot-check their presence and keep their phones ringing.

BIG PICTURE STUFF

To ensure a steady flow of leads, it's essential to understand your customer segments, establish a strong brand, utilise various marketing channels, and provide exceptional customer service.

CUSTOMERS

- I understand what types of customers I want
- I know where my customers search for information
- I understand what my different types of customers want from their pest controller
- I create information specifically for the different types of customers I want

Identify the diverse customer segments you can serve, including businesses, landlords, domestic users, etc. Each segment may have unique needs and preferences.

Tailor your marketing messages and services to address their specific pain points. For example, businesses may prioritise fast response times and discreet service, while landlords may seek ongoing pest prevention solutions to protect their properties.





“Consider your brand voice, decide if it’s corporate, friendly, or quirky, and ensure that it resonates with your audience.”

BRANDING

- I have a simple, memorable, timeless logo in all the file formats that I need
- I know my brand colours and fonts
- I have high-quality images I can use across my channels

The following are consistent with my brand colours and contain my logo:

- Website
- Social media channels
- Stationery
- Uniform
- Van
- Marketing materials



Little or large, having a simple, identifiable brand will save you time and effort across all your channels.

Not sure where to start? A professional designer will be able to provide a branding overview sheet, logos in a variety of formats and colour palettes. Symantec reportedly just spent \$1,280,000,000 on their rebrand – however, you’ll find local designers and those on sites like UpWork far more reasonably priced!

MESSAGING

- I have a clear and straightforward brand message/mission statement
- My mission statement is attractive to my target customers
- All of my channels incorporate our brand message
- 100% of our team understands our brand message
- 100% of our team knows how they can help deliver our brand message

A brand message or mission statement is about telling your target market what you’re about in the least possible words.

BPCA’s is “driving excellence in pest management”.

Google’s is “organise the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful”.

A favourite belongs to TED Talks, which simply states “spread ideas”.

A mission statement helps bring all your marketing messages together; it states your purpose. For example, “your partner for problem pests”, “using cutting-edge technology to protect your business from pest distress” or “experts in protecting homes from pests”.

Consider your brand voice, decide if it’s corporate, friendly, or quirky, and ensure that it resonates with your audience. Communicate your unique selling points, such as expertise in dealing with specific pests, environmentally friendly practices, or exceptional customer service.

LEGAL



- I understand my obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- I have completed the Information Commissioner’s Office’s (ICO) GDPR checklists ico.org.uk/for-organisations/sme-web-hub/checklists
- I have paid my data protection fee to the ICO (if not exempt)
- Everyone in my business understands their obligations when collecting, storing, and using customer data
- All my adverts and print materials comply with the UK Advertising Codes (CAP Codes) asa.org.uk/codes-and-rulings/advertising-codes/non-broadcast-code.html

We’ve written about GDPR before but, in short, obtain explicit consent for marketing communications and ensure the security of customer information. Compliance with GDPR builds trust with your customers and demonstrates your commitment to data privacy, fostering positive relationships.

BPCA members have access to GDPR templates and checklists through BPCA Quest (log-in required) bpca.org.uk/quest



CHANNELS



FREE MARKETING

- Google My Business page is claimed and set up
- I have a Facebook page
- I have a personal LinkedIn profile
- I have a LinkedIn page for my business
- I have a relationship with the local press

Google My Business

Claim and optimise your business listing on My Business to appear in local search results. Encourage satisfied customers to leave reviews, as positive ratings enhance your reputation.

LinkedIn

Establish a professional presence on LinkedIn with both a personal and business profile. Connect with potential business customers, and share informative content to showcase your expertise in the pest control industry.

Facebook

For domestic work, join local Facebook groups and keep an eye out for people looking for pest advice. Be helpful and responsive. Encourage friends, family and existing customers to tag you in posts and recommend you.

/continued...



TICKED OFF?

Public relations and press releases

Have you done something newsworthy, such as rehoming a massive swarm of bees? Utilise local newspapers by sending press releases about new services, achievements, or noteworthy projects. Position yourself as an expert and reliable source of pest control information.

YOUR WEBSITE

- I have a simple website with my contact details
- My website captures leads through a simple form
- My website looks great on a mobile phone
- My website is well-formatted with headers, lists and relevant imagery
- I have local information available on my website
- My website has separate pages set up for all my target customers
- My website contains reviews and testimonials
- My website is linked to my social media pages (and vice versa)
- I post one case study/blog post every month
- Other people link to my website
- My website has a sitemap
- I have submitted my sitemap via Google Search Console

Invest in a user-friendly and informative website that highlights your services, expertise, and contact information.

Single-page website builders are simple to set up with providers like Wix and Squarespace. Alternatively, look at a hosted WordPress website if you want something a little more substantial.

Implement search engine optimisation (SEO) strategies to improve your website's visibility in search engine results. In short, SEO is about providing information and formatting it in a way that is most helpful for a potential customer. Search engine algorithms will always be looking to reward websites that make their sites as useful as possible.

PRINT MATERIALS

- I have a leaflet explaining my services to potential customers
- Technicians have business cards I can leave with existing customers and encourage them to share them with friends
- I drop leaflets through doors when doing a treatment in a specific area
- My marketing materials make it clear how to contact me

Design informative leaflets highlighting your services, expertise, and unique selling points. Drop them at neighbouring properties while you're out on a job.

BPCA has free marketing templates available for leaflets, so be sure to check those out for inspiration.

bpc.org.uk/printshop

PAID ADVERTISING (OPTIONAL)

- Try Google Local Service Ads (BPCA members are preapproved for Google's guarantee)
- Try Google Search Ads targeted at your ideal customer
- Try reputable local directory adverts/newspaper ads

Paid advertising is tricky to recommend for pest management companies. Google Search Ads can work when properly targeted, however the new Google Local Service Ads give more consistent results (and you only pay for the leads you actually get).

Facebook Ads are too hard to target towards people who are actually looking for a pest controller, so we'd suggest this isn't money well spent. Some companies have varying degrees of success with LinkedIn adverts, but again it wouldn't be the first place we'd look to spend money. Upgrading your personal LinkedIn account so you can proactively contact business leaders through InMail might be worth the investment if you can put the time in.

Regardless of the platform, for paid advertising, always make sure you're tracking:

- How much you've spent per channel
- How many leads you've had from the channel
- The cost-per-lead of each channel ('spent' divided by 'leads').

Knowing this information lets you make informed decisions about where to invest your advertising spend.

OTHERS TO CONSIDER

- I engage with local business networks such as the Chamber of Commerce and participate in relevant events or networking opportunities
- I explore opportunities for local TV or radio appearances to discuss common pest control issues
- I partner with local businesses and trades to get and share work
- I have an email list for current and potential business customers to share pest advice and best practice
- I have joined the BPCA Contract Sharing Network (CSN) bpc.org.uk/csn

REPUTATION



CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Potential customers are responded to quickly
- I use an auto-responder to reassure potential customers
- The person answering our phones understands pest control
- The person answering the phone is courteous, enthusiastic and reassuring
- Technicians leave information on how to ask follow-up questions
- Technicians are courteous, enthusiastic and reassuring
- My documentation is clear and informative



Good customer service is a massive part of marketing but is often overlooked.

Satisfied customers are more likely to refer your services to friends, family, and acquaintances. Happy,

appreciated employees always are the best at customer service, so don't underestimate the power of investing in your team.



TOP TOOLS TO HELP WITH YOUR MARKETING

Most small pest control companies won't have an entire team of marketing professionals on the books. Some tools can help you punch well above your weight and streamline your operational marketing duties.

TOOL	PURPOSE	COST	LINK
CANVA	Create beautiful images, documents and flyers from templates	Free with some paid premium features	canva.com
PEXELS	Free stock images	Free	pexels.com
PIXABAY	Free stock images	Free	pixabay.com
123RF	Reasonably priced stock images	~80p an image	123rf.com
BUFFER	Social media scheduler	Free with some paid premium features	buffer.com
WIX	Simple website builder	~£10-25 per month	wix.com
SQUARESPACE	Simple website builder	~£17 per month	squarespace.com
GODADDY HOSTED WORDPRESS	Hosted website platform (more complex than the other options)	~£6-25 per month	godaddy.com/en-uk/hosting/wordpress-hosting
HEMINGWAY EDITOR	Simplify your written copy for clearer messaging	Free	hemingwayapp.com
GRAMMARLY	Advanced spelling and style checker	Free with some paid premium features	app.grammarly.com
CHATGPT	Brainstorm articles, blog posts and case studies with an AI	Free	chat.openai.com

REVIEWS AND TESTIMONIALS

- I ask for reviews from every satisfied customer
- I ask my customers to recommend me to friends and leave them with my card
- I incentivise existing customers to refer me to their friends (optional)
- I publish the best reviews as testimonials on my website
- My print materials contain testimonials

Every satisfied customer should be asked for a review, and it's best to strike while the iron is hot.

A polite email asking customers to review their service on Google My Business, Facebook, Trustpilot, Which?, etc is a great way to build 'social proof'. Social proof is what we call the confidence built when we see that many other people have already bought something.

Leverage positive customer testimonials to showcase your quality service and build trust with potential customers.

Display the best reviews as testimonials on your website and marketing materials.



"If you're a BPCA member, shout about it to enhance your professional reputation. Use the member logo on your website, van, stationery and uniform."

ASSOCIATIONS AND ACCREDITATIONS

- I display my BPCA membership logo proudly across my channels
- I explain why I choose to be a member across my channels
- My BPCA Find a pest controller listing is up-to-date
- I explain my technicians' qualifications on my website/in my documentation
- I display any awards or accreditations on my website/in my documentation

If you're a BPCA member, shout about it to enhance your professional reputation. Membership demonstrates your commitment to high industry standards and provides access to valuable resources, training opportunities, and networking events.

It also serves as a trust signal for potential customers seeking reliable pest control services.

Use the member logo on your website, van, stationery and uniform. Writing a short blog about why you choose to be a part of your trade association can be a great way of showing customers that membership is more than a badge for you.



How's my marketing?

Need help to shout about your fantastic service? Book free consultations with our award-winning marketing and communications team! Our in-house team can advise you about anything related to your marketing activity and signpost you to other valuable resources.

bpc.org.uk/book

MEET THE MEMBER

PUTTING UP THE BARRICADE

Rebekah Carral is a pest control business owner based in Scotland. We caught up with her to find out a bit more about Barricade Pest Control, how she fell into the industry and her pest control passions.

PPC First off, tell us a bit about yourself.

RC I'm Edinburgh born and bred, I've lived here all my life! I currently live in Edinburgh city centre but will be moving to Musselburgh in the next month or two. My partner Sean and I have two little girls, aged four and two. My children and Barricade keep me very busy now, it's not easy running a business and raising children. So when I'm not working I'm always spending time with my kids and taking them out on family trips or spending time at home doing activities.

PPC Tell us about your work background – did you have any jobs prior to being in the pest control industry?

RC I worked for Nike for many years and had worked my way up into managerial roles, but my main speciality was product presentation and visual merchandising. I really loved my time with Nike and had so many amazing opportunities with them over the years, from store openings to travelling and meeting some huge names in the Nike world.

I even moved down to Leeds for a short while as the assistant head coach (assistant manager) of a store they opened. The highlight of my career in Nike was going to the European headquarters in Amsterdam and being part of a huge event there. Eventually the passion started to fade for Nike, and I started seeking a new challenge.

PPC And is that when you joined the pest management industry?

RC Yeah, I started working in pest control in 2017, when I was 24. I had no previous experience in the industry and I had never owned a business, but my mum and stepdad have owned a successful pest control company in Edinburgh for many years.

Quite honestly, I had never really given pest control a thought until I met my partner, Sean. He was working in car sales, but both Sean and I were no longer passionate about the jobs we had, and we were seeking a new challenge.

Fun fact: Sean and I had only officially been in a relationship for four months before setting up our company. When I think back, I really have no idea why we didn't give it much thought or hesitation, but it was obviously meant to be!

I was living with my mum and stepdad, and we could see the demand for pest control in Edinburgh while listening to them and seeing just how much business they turned away.

PPC And that's when you decided to start Barricade Pest Control?

RC Sort of! But instead of offering all services, we set up a proofing company called Barricade Pest Proofing. We could



"I love that I've gained huge amounts of knowledge throughout the years and enjoy being able to diagnose some issues for our clients before our technicians have reached the site to inspect."

also see that rodent proofing was starting to become popular and no one was really advertising this in our area.

Sean left his job, however I decided to continue to work for Nike full time through the first eight months of starting our business. Once I left Nike to give Barricade my full attention, I realised I should have done it a lot sooner. There was just always the hesitation and niggling doubts that I was leaving a good job for something I had never done before. But I'm so glad I did.

A few months into running Barricade Pest Proofing we realised that a lot of clients would have preferred that we offered all aspects of pest control. That's when we decided to get trained up and offer all services, so Barricade Pest Control was born.



“I have a fantastic team now and I’m able to delegate jobs to other members of the team.”

PPC You were in the deep end a little, having never run a business or been working in pest control! Tell us what it was like in that first year.

RC We started out very humbly – we had £1,000 to cover our insurance, some basic materials, business cards, flyers, and magnet signs for Sean’s Ford Fiesta! We spent most of those first months dropping flyers into businesses, communal stairwells and homes around the Edinburgh area, and managed to secure our first few commercial contracts by doing so (all of which we still have today).

We traded using these basic materials until being able to afford our first company van, which we became the proud owners of in April 2018. As money started to flow, we began to invest into our brand image and marketing, and we were keen to have a brand that people would remember. We now offer services across Edinburgh, the Lothians and Glasgow.

PPC What have been the biggest challenges you’ve faced when running a business?

RC Running Barricade has been exceptionally rewarding but it has come with some sacrifices and challenges along the way. Since starting our company I’ve had two children, which is a huge responsibility alongside keeping a business going.

Another challenge we’ve faced starting a business so young was trying to get onto the property ladder.

We’ve finally purchased our first home after renting in central Edinburgh for years and we are exceptionally proud of ourselves! I had no idea how difficult it would be regarding accounts and ensuring we had at least two years of accounts before applying for a mortgage. And I also didn’t

realise that when we went limited, we would have to wait another two years again!

These are things I feel should be taught in schools, because sometimes you just don’t realise how complicated business ownership can be, and how it can affect things like mortgage applications.

Our most recent challenges have been around recruitment. Not many people outside of the industry realise how rewarding a job in pest control can really be until they have had some insight into it, so attracting the right talent has always taken a little longer than we would like.

PPC What’s your current role at Barricade?

RC I do everything except carrying out the pest control work. My main duties include customer relations, booking and scheduling, team training, recruitment, marketing and everything else required to run the business. I have a fantastic team now and I’m able to delegate jobs to other members of the team. My office administrator, Holly, does a fantastic job supporting me with everything she can.

PPC What are you most passionate about when it comes to pest control?

RC I am very passionate about bees! Bee season excites me, and I absolutely love being able to share helpful and positive information to our clients about bees and their importance. I’d love to become a beekeeper too!

I also enjoy being a calming voice on the telephone and providing reassurance to our clients. Pest control is such a sensitive subject and I feel our clients deserve a personable service throughout the process. It’s important for

me that our clients feel important themselves, and that their own thoughts and feelings are valid.

I love that I’ve gained huge amounts of knowledge throughout the years and enjoy being able to diagnose some issues for our clients before our technicians have reached the site to inspect. That’s what makes me tick!

Over the years I have been approached by media outlets and networking groups to provide information or talks on my time in the industry or issues faced in the local area. I always love being able to help people or hopefully inspire them to consider setting up in business, or even better, joining the pest industry!

PPC Last year you joined the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee at BPCA. What drew you to becoming a committee member?

RC Being a female in the industry was a challenge in the early days, as well as starting out so young. In joining the committee, I hope to inspire many other people from all walks of life to give pest control a go. I know once they do, they won’t ever look back!

Right now the EDI committee is focused on the recruitment issues in the sector, which I know many business owners are struggling with. I’m exceptionally proud to be a part of the committee and I look forward to seeing the progress that we make!

Interested in representing the pest management industry?

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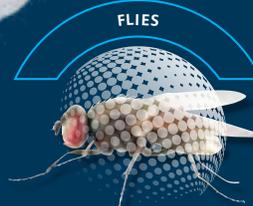
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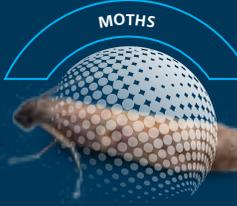
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OPINION

POLITICS, ENVIRONMENT, WELFARE AND PESTS



James Wood, Head of Training and Compliance at Beaver Pest Control, reacts to the complicated political landscape for pest management and speculates on what professionals can do to explain toolbox changes to customers.

As pest managers, our primary concern has always been resolving pest issues effectively and quickly. However, in recent years the industry has come under increased pressure regarding the questions it must consider when carrying out its role. For the last several years, CRRU rodenticide stewardship has had a massive impact on not only the way we work but also on the mindset with which we must approach it, and rightly so.

CRRU is just one example of how the industry has been shaped by the powers that be.

Rodenticide residues in the environment are something we should all be trying to prevent, and Beaver remains dedicated in its efforts to limit environmental impact.

You could be forgiven for thinking greater (yet much-needed) restrictions on the use of SGARs and FGARs will result in the promotion of more environmentally-friendly, physical control methods such as trapping, but I'm afraid you'd be wrong.

The Glue Traps (Offences) Act (introduced by MP Jane Stevenson) has received Royal Assent and is currently in its implementation phase.

Although there are provisions for professional use, it's another example of the pressures that

PCOs face when deciding how to attack an infestation.

The purpose of the Act? To reduce the suffering of rats and mice and to protect the non-target

animals (both already offences punishable under other Acts of Parliament).

This is what Jane has to say about her act: "When pest control is needed, we have a responsibility to use the most humane methods in order to prevent unnecessary suffering. A rodent stuck in a glue trap will suffer a slow and painful death, which isn't acceptable when other pest control methods are available."

As we can see, humaneness is currently a political hot-button issue. A recent study suggested that, contrary to the beliefs of Ms Stevenson, alternatives to glue trapping didn't fare much better in terms of humaneness: "The greatest welfare impacts were associated with three baiting methods, anticoagulants, cholecalciferol and non-toxic cellulose baits (severe to extreme impact for days), and with capture on a glue trap (extreme for hours) with concussive killing (mild to moderate for seconds to minutes); these methods should be considered last resorts from a welfare perspective".*

Many in the sector have pointed out the flaws in this research paper. However, we are the ones that have to navigate a political minefield.

The public is increasingly influenced and often misinformed by TV personalities and politicians, who often (and rightly) emphasise concerns for animal welfare but also gloss over the nuances and conflicts surrounding the issue, often omitting impacts on public health or ecological concerns.

One of the potential impacts of this trend was observed in 2019 when a legal challenge led to the almost overnight withdrawal of the general licences. In essence, pest controllers the country over were suddenly prevented from being able to help their clients where lethal

measures were required.

Worryingly some customers will often request, and sometimes demand, that a pest management service is conducted to their own specification, based on misinformation. Usually, a pest issue can be resolved without inhumane or even lethal means, but generally, this will require a level of site management the customer usually doesn't have the spare time to implement. The end result is usually predictable: an out-of-control infestation and a dissatisfied customer.

To prevent this, we need to take control of the narrative. Indeed, we have a responsibility to our clients to impartially inform them of the risks pests present, and help them to make the right decisions to protect their health, homes and businesses. To do that, we need to understand the services we provide. We need to invite clients to become part of the process and explain the reasoning behind our methods, demonstrating the point for each step taken. This relies on a well rounded understanding of pest behaviour and biology. We need to be able to balance the pest risk faced by our clients against issues such as humaneness and any environmental considerations. If we don't, we risk offering ineffective solutions and alienating customers.

Remember, you are the expert! You have years of experience, you've had the training and studied the topic. Information is power, use yours wisely.

*Source: An assessment of animal welfare impacts in wild Norway rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) management, SE Baker, 1 January 2023.

Share your thoughts in PPC

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"Worryingly some customers will often request, and sometimes demand, that a pest management service is conducted to their own specification, based on misinformation."

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			03-08/12/2023	
			11-16/02/2024	
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			10-17/02/2024	
Hands On Practical Training	165.00		02/12/2023	Stafford
			10/02/2024	
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Chris, Venables Pest Control



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