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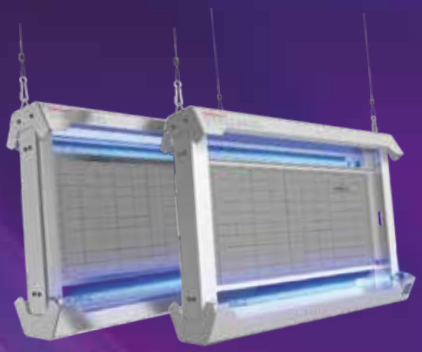

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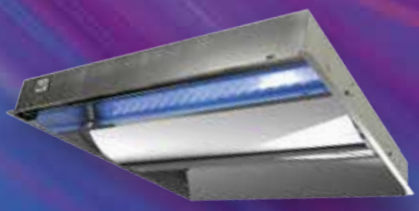

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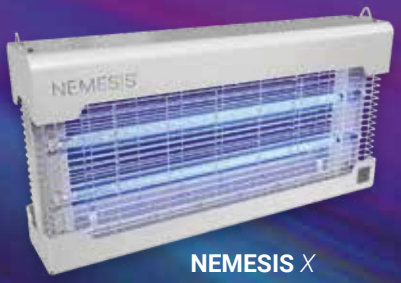

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ISSUE 138

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Bitesize...

Rodent-borne disease: An update 06

Pest Control News talks to PhD student Ana Carolina Yamakawa, working on a collaborative project with the University of Reading and Killgerm Chemicals Ltd, regarding the latest research on rodent-borne disease.

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Alex Wade joins BASF

The leading pest control solutions manufacturer, BASF, is set to welcome industry expert Alex Wade as its new Global Technical Marketing Manager for Rodenticides.

With over 18 years of experience in the sector, Alex will replace longstanding employee and fellow rodent control specialist, Sharon Hughes, when she retires from the company this summer.

Having grown up and worked in the pest control world for many years, Alex brings a wealth of passion, technical knowledge and practical expertise to the role. As BASF's new Global Technical Marketing Manager for Rodenticides, Alex is the linking pin between R&D and sales, driving customer acceptance around the world, and his role will encompass a broad range of strategic and technical responsibilities.

Commenting on his new position, Alex said: "Joining BASF is a really exciting move for me! The company is at the forefront of innovation in the pest control industry, and its commitment to sustainability and stewardship aligns perfectly with my own values and goals, and reflects more of what is needed in the industry.

"There is no doubt that Sharon has left an impressive legacy behind as BASF's Global Technical Marketing Manager, and I certainly have some big shoes to step into, but I can't wait to get stuck into the role in June."

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BASF survey reveals 87 percent of pest controllers put the profession before their own mental health

A survey exploring men's mental health in the pest control industry has revealed that over 87 percent of pest controllers have felt pressure to prioritise their job and helping customers, over their own wellbeing, resulting in worryingly poor mental health across the sector, BASF has shared.

The shocking findings from the leading pest control solutions manufacturer, which have been released ahead of Men's Mental Health Awareness Week (10 June to 17 June 2024), found that one-third of those surveyed would rate their mental health as poor.

As well as these alarming figures, the survey also found that 87 percent have suffered from work-related stress or anxiety, while two-thirds of pest controllers have experienced feelings of loneliness or isolation at work.

In fact, one-third of pest controllers surveyed shared that they felt their mental health has declined since working in the industry, listing reasons including financial strains, high workload, a lack of time, time spent alone, and problematic clients as just some of the reasons.

BASF will be sharing tips for managing mental health, resources and support systems, and advice from pest controllers on improving mental health throughout Men's Mental Health Awareness Week on its Facebook page.

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New General manager for Killgerm Ireland

Killgerm Group announces a new internal appointment for Killgerm Ireland.

Porsia Schofield has been promoted as the new General Manager for Killgerm Ireland, effective from 1st July 2024.

Porsia has been working within Killgerm Ireland (formerly Spraychem/Sprayclear) for 16 years, and she has been instrumental in supporting our Irish customers on several fronts over those years.

Porsia has an intimate knowledge of the current operations in Ireland, and her appointment will bring a new focus and impetus to the future growth of the Killgerm operations in the Republic.

Commenting on the appointment, Rupert Broome, Group Managing Director of Killgerm Group, said "Porsia has been a key part of our Irish operations for many years and she has impressed with her dedication and enthusiasm drive Killgerm Ireland to the next level. Porsia has the support of all the Killgerm family to help her to achieve her goals."

In return, Porsia said "I am delighted that my skills have been recognised within the Killgerm family and I have great ambitions for our Killgerm Ireland operations over the next few years."

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Rodent-Borne Disease: **an update**

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Pest Control News talks to PhD student Ana Carolina Yamakawa, working on a collaborative project with the University of Reading and Killgerm Chemicals Ltd, regarding the latest research on rodent-borne disease.

This current piece focuses on some of the most common and relevant parasites that could be transmitted by pest rodents.

Toxoplasmosis

Caused by the protozoan *Toxoplasma gondii*, commensal rodents such as house mice (*Mus musculus*) and brown rats (*Rattus norvegicus*) are well known to play a role in the parasite cycle. This pathogen can infect a wide range of warm-blooded animals, including other commensal pests, domestic animals, livestock, and humans. The definitive host is feline, especially the domestic cat, which excrete along with their faeces the parasite oocysts, thereby contaminating the environment.

If felines are the only ones that can excrete the parasite, how do rodents play a role in this cycle? Rodents, along with other intermediate hosts, become infected by ingesting the viable oocysts from contaminated environment, food and/or water. These infected rodents then become a significant source of infection for cats, thus helping to maintain the parasite cycle.

After they ingest the parasite, it changes form and travels through the body until finding a place to settle. *Toxoplasma gondii* can invade and form cysts in any nucleated cell in the intermediate host, most frequent in muscle cells and neurons.

For humans, the most common route of infection is by ingesting oocysts from contaminated food or water or consuming undercooked meat containing the cysts. The oocysts can remain viable in the environment for extended periods, up to 18 months.

An interesting aspect of *Toxoplasma gondii* infection in rodents, is the possibility of behavioural changes. Some studies suggested an association between the infection with changes in the rodent motor activity, memory and even lack of fear (Johnson & Koshy, 2020). Infected rats, for example, may exhibit a reduced avoidance of cat odours and urine, making them more reckless in the presence of predators compared to non-infected rats (Kannan et al., 2013; Vyas et al., 2007). However, this association remains unclear and published researches have ambiguous results (Johnson & Koshy, 2020).

In the UK a study performed in Manchester with house mice, found that 59% were infected with *T. gondii* (Murphy et al., 2008). Foetuses were collected from pregnant mice, and 74.6% also tested positive for *T. gondii* infection (Murphy et al., 2008). Furthermore, the study area was divided into 10 blocks, and of those, eight were confirmed to have a cat in the area.

While rodents do not directly infect humans with *T. gondii*, their role in the life cycle of this parasite is significant, contributing to its spread and maintenance in the environment.

Giardia duodenalis

Cryptosporidiosis

Caused by the species of the parasite *Cryptosporidium*, it can cause a nasty diarrhoea in both humans and animals. The symptoms are often non-specific and can include abdominal pain, fever, nausea, and vomiting (Tallant et al., 2016). In immunosuppressed individuals, the infection can even be fatal (Tallant et al., 2016). Transmission occurs through the ingestion of oocysts, which are excreted in the host's faeces and can contaminate water or food.

In May 2024, the UK faced a significant cryptosporidiosis outbreak linked to contaminated water sources. More than 55 people got ill in Devon, with two requiring hospital care. Approximately 16,000 households were advised to boil their water before drinking after a damaged valve led to the water contamination.

Rodents have been identified carrying the parasite. Species of *Cryptospodirium* have been identified in rats, mice and even in wildlife rodents, such as wood/field mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) and the yellow-necked wood mouse (*Apodemus flavicollis*) (Čondlová et al., 2019). The most common *Cryptosporidium* species to cause diseases in humans are the *C. parvum* and *C. hominis*. While cattle are the primary hosts for *C. parvum*, studies have shown that mice and wood mice on UK farms carry the parasite with a frequency of around 21-22% (Morgan et al., 1999). This underscores the potential roll of rodents in the maintenance of the pathogen, particularly in farm environment (Morgan et al., 1999).

Giardiasis

This parasitic disease, known for its gastrointestinal torment and watery diarrhoea, affects humans, domestic animals, and wildlife. Caused by the protozoa *Giardia duodenalis*, this parasite is distributed worldwide and has been identified in wildlife and commensal rodents.

In 2016, over 4,000 cases of giardiasis were reported in England and Wales, with the South West region claiming the highest infection rate at 18.1 cases per 100,000 people (Public Health England, 2018). Transmission can occur by the parasite ingestion with contaminated food and water, or even by contact with an infected human or animal (Dixon, 2021).

Human-to-human transmission is the most common, especially in vulnerable situations such as nursing homes and day care centres. The animal to human transmission is also possible, particularly from cattle and domestic animals (Dixon, 2021).

Regarding the commensal rodents, the parasite presence in mice and rats is reported to be up to 76%, with 3 to 9% representing species that are zoonotic (Egan et al., 2024). Experimental infection in laboratory mice has identified an average faecal shedding of *Giardia* cysts of around 44 cysts per milligram of faeces (Feng et al., 2016).

This highlights the role that rodents might play in sustaining and spreading *Giardia* in our environment.

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Design

Branding in the Pest Control Industry

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In today's competitive marketplace, establishing a strong brand identity is crucial for businesses across all sectors, including the pest control industry. While many may overlook the importance of branding in this field, it can significantly impact a company's success and reputation. Let's delve into why branding is paramount in the world of pest control.

Building Trust and Credibility: A well-crafted brand builds trust and credibility among consumers. In the pest control sector, where clients rely on professionals to address sensitive and often distressing issues, a reputable brand instils confidence. Customers are more likely to choose a company with a strong brand image, associating it with reliability and expertise.

Differentiation: With numerous pest control providers in the market, branding helps companies stand out from the competition. A distinct brand identity sets a company apart, making it easier for customers to recognise and remember. Whether through a memorable logo, consistent messaging, or unique service offerings, effective branding ensures that a business remains top-of-mind when clients require pest management services.

Quality Assurance: A well-established brand signifies quality and professionalism. Consumers equate a strong brand with superior service and products, making them more inclined to opt for a branded pest control provider over lesser-known alternatives. By consistently delivering on promises and maintaining high standards, companies can reinforce their brand reputation and attract loyal customers

Emotional Connection: Effective branding goes beyond logos and slogans; it creates an emotional connection with consumers. In the pest control industry, where services often involve safeguarding homes and businesses from harmful pests, evoking trust and empathy is essential. A strong brand that resonates with customers on an emotional level fosters long-term relationships and encourages repeat business.

Expansion Opportunities: A well-established brand opens doors to expansion opportunities. By cultivating a loyal customer base and fostering a positive reputation, pest control companies can explore new markets and service offerings with greater ease. A strong brand serves as a solid foundation for growth and diversification, enabling businesses to adapt to evolving industry trends and customer needs.

Risk Mitigation: Branding acts as a safeguard against negative publicity and crises. In the event of a pest-related issue or service mishap, a reputable brand is better equipped to weather the storm. Effective branding instils confidence in consumers, mitigating potential damage to the company's reputation and minimising the impact of adverse incidents.

In conclusion, branding plays a pivotal role in the success of pest control businesses. From fostering trust and credibility to differentiating from competitors and building emotional connections, a strong brand sets the stage for long-term growth and sustainability. By prioritising branding efforts, companies can position themselves as industry leaders and secure a competitive edge in the dynamic world of pest management.

Four decades at the forefront of rodent control

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BASF's Sharon Hughes looks back at her impressive career in the industry

After over forty years at the forefront of rodent control innovation, BASF's Sharon Hughes has announced that she will retire from her role this summer. Here, Sharon discusses her impressive career over the years, from her proudest moment to what she'll miss most about the pest control industry...

Tell us a little bit about yourself! Where are you from and how did you get into the industry?
I was born and bred in Widnes, which is conveniently where the BASF rodenticide manufacturing plant is located and where the BASF research and development laboratory was also to be found. When I left college, aged 18, I began working at Sorex as a junior lab technician involved in developing pest control products for both rodents and insects. I remained with Sorex for a couple of years before leaving to live in Greece on a gap year and re-think my career plan.
When I returned from sunny Greece, I realised that the part of my role at Sorex that I loved was working with rodents. So, I moved to London to study Applied Biology at the University of Greenwich. After graduating, I continue to focus on research. My first position was working on a Pfizer-funded project investigating new drugs to help with peptic ulcers. My next position involved moving back North to Liverpool, at University and the School of Tropical Medicine, working on anti-malarial drugs. This project was funded by the World Health Organisation.
In 1989, 8 years after taking on my first role at Sorex, I returned to take on the role of Global Research & Development Manager, working specifically on rodenticides. While this new role encompassed mainly research and development, it also included efficacy data generation, competitor assessment and working with anticoagulant resistant strains rats and mice which were semi-wild colonies, and so behaved naturally like you would experience in actual rodent infestations, so this could be observed. BASF acquired Sorex in 2010 and I continued in this role under BASF but with a greater focus on rodents and rodenticides in regions outside of Europe.

When the laboratory closed in 2015, my role changed from Global Research and Development to Global Technical Marketing Manager for rodenticides. This was a big change for me and took me out of the laboratory and into more direct contact with the customer. I was really pleased how much I enjoyed this new work chapter, becoming more involved with meeting, training and liaising with customers. I was able to use the knowledge and expertise acquired while working in R&D to advise and support internally as well as distributers, customers and end-user on rodents and the safe and correct use of rodenticides.

What has been your most interesting or enjoyable part of the role?
For me, the most interesting aspect is the process was taking a concept, and then helping to progress this through the entire R&D product development process to bring something new to market. This is an incredibly lengthy but rewarding process as it can take many years of team work, blood, sweat and tears, and of course disappointments along the way before that concept becomes a viable product to successfully bring to market.
Take Selontra® as an example - we looked at over 1,200 different active ingredients as possible alternatives to anticoagulants, and that screening process was fascinating! Of that 1,200, there were only three or four that looked really promising, but for one reason or another they fell over at an important hurdle, such as palatability. As part of a review process of these screened actives, we revisited cholecalciferol. However, we started from the beginning to create a new rodenticide bait matrix. We looked at approximately 40 different cholecaliciferol block formulations and it was so interesting to watch the rodents and how they reacted to each slightly tweaked variation.
So, the research with rodent biology and behaviour, which always underlines everything, is very interesting to me. Even when you're not involved in a study as such, to just sit and watch the dynamics of the rodent colony is fascinating! They are incredibly social, intelligent and complex creatures!

What has been your proudest moment in your career?
Definitely the development of Selontra®. We started working to find an alternative to anticoagulants in early 2010 and BASF didn't acquire registration in Europe until 2020 – so it was ten years of going back and forth to get the formulation absolutely perfect and then completing the registration process!
We knew that globally, the industry needed an effective alternative mode of action to anticoagulants, so although it took many years, a lot of time and investment, and many failures along the way, it was absolutely worth it. It's something I'm very proud to have been a part of.
To see that Selontra® is now a true global product, successfully used in many different settings is really gratifying. For example, it is used in urban and rural rodent control as well in palm oil plantations, where due to the presence of barn owls it is the preferred bait by many plantation owners. Also, in the United States where some anticoagulant baits have been banned in areas. I suspect that globally, Selontra® will continue to play an increasingly important role in pest control. I think that, post-retirement, I will keep a keen eye on how Selontra® progresses and continue to feel happy and proud.

Have there been any challenges or difficulties you have had to overcome?
Perhaps surprisingly the most challenging time for me is when a new product has actually been launched! You spend years working on a product and you 100 % believe in it. But when it is launched you have to change focus to ensure that it's well-received by the end users. It's very nerve-wracking!
The research and development process is structured and in most ways controllable. But once the product is out in the market in some ways you lose a bit of control. It is ultimately up to the customer to use it correctly

according to the label, and any incorrect use can impact efficacy.
After the initial product launch, one person who says a product isn't effective can have a louder voice than nine people who say it is great, and that is a challenge to overcome. BASF always try to work with individuals to take on their feedback and understand how they're using the product and what if any issues there are to navigate those kind of situations.

If you had to give your younger self, who was just starting out in the industry, once piece of advice, what would it be?
People might think this is a bit hard to imagine, but I'd definitely tell myself to have more confidence and more courage in my convictions and own abilities!
When I was 18 I didn't go to university because I genuinely didn't believe I was clever enough – it was only after a couple of years in the laboratory that I realised I could do more than I thought. The experience that came from those early years helped build confidence, which is needed in R&D as you have to be able to accept the failures and move on to the next step without taking it personally.

What's your favourite thing about the pest control industry?
The thing that drew me back to pest control was working with an intelligent animal, rather than working with say, parasites, for example. It is the biology and behaviour of the rodents, and how this can be utilised, that is my favourite element. They are definitely a challenge and intriguing as they can readily adapt and their behaviour can be so complex.
For example, as part of an environmental enrichment programme we frequently placed sunflower seeds into the rat's bedding so they could undergo natural behaviour and forage for the seeds. And that's how Neosorexa® Gold came about. While observing their behaviour and realising how much they enjoyed foraging for the seeds, we set about adding foraging pellets, like little treats in the bait. By adding foraging pellets to the Neosorexa® Gold we found that the rats and mice enjoyed foraging for the pellets and hence would stay longer at the bait point and eat more bait as a result.

How have you seen attitudes and approaches change towards pest control during your career?
There's far more awareness of the environmental impact of pesticides, which I think is partly driven both by regulations but mainly by personal and professional concern. I think the majority of pest controllers are including environmental protection measures because they want to protect wildlife, rather than because they have to. Of course, there was some awareness of the environmental impact of pesticides back when I first started out. But, over the years more and more information has emerged on non-target and environmental contamination and this has led to the need for improvements in pest control.
Professionalism in the industry has also increased significantly. Pest controllers are much more interested in learning and many belong to organisations like the BPCA and NPTA in the UK. There is more ownership and understanding of the responsibility that comes with placing pesticides in the environment.
There are also more challenges for rodent pest controllers with an increase in both anticoagulant resistance and behavioural resistance problems. However, as pest controllers take more responsibility in personal learning, they have a greater understanding of these problems.

If you had to give pest controllers one piece of advice before you retire, what would it be?
Before you bait or treat a site, fully understand as much as possible about the dynamics of the infestation. Where they're living, breeding, issues around non-targets, site history and so on. The more you understand about the dynamics of the situation the more you can implement the quickest, safest and most effective pest control programme. And, if that includes rodenticide bait then the most appropriate bait and the optimum locations. Every rodent infestation has its own dynamics.

What do you think the future of the pest control industry will look like? Where would you like to see the industry heading in the future?
I think there will be tougher regulations brought in - which control measures you can use and where you can use them – as regulators continue to protect the environment. Obviously, a rodent infestation is a massive human and animal health risk, but I think it will become more and more restricted as to who can use rodenticides. There may be more professional qualifications needed to make sure only those who are trained can apply rodenticides.

What do you think the future holds for BASF Pest Control Solutions?
BASF invests significantly in research and development. It is not just about bringing new products to market, it is also about enhancing and evolving existing products.
We are constantly listening to the end users to get their feedback on existing products. For example, the addition of field mice to the Selontra® label was as a direct result of end-user "lobbying".
I would definitely urge pest controllers to share their feedback with BASF representatives at conferences, events etc., as this is always relayed to the marketing and research and development teams. In this way, BASF can ensure that the market is listened to and we can develop and adapt products accordingly to continue to meet customer needs.

If you had to choose a different career path what would it be?
I have always fancied being a forensic scientist – maybe watching too much NCIS and other crime dramas - all that investigating and clever solving of murders. But alas there is just too much brain and chemistry knowledge required! However, maybe pest control is a bit similar in that there is a problem that needs investigating and diagnosing – just a thought. But I think a rodent infestation is maybe just a little less dramatic than say a murder!! That being said, I love the mix of the research and meeting people that the role I've been fortunate to hold has offered - going out and being involved in training and presenting is a huge part of what I enjoyed.

What will you miss the most?
Without a doubt, the people! I've worked with some incredible knowledgeable and interesting people over the years, both within BASF and within the industry as a whole. It is a fantastic industry to be part of. Although I'm retiring, I will continue to be involved in some aspects of the industry. As rodenticide resistance is really important, I will continue to be a member of RRAG (Rodenticide Resistance Action Group).

What have you got planned for your retirement?
I have a few projects lined up! I was given a saxophone for my birthday three years ago, but have never had the chance to learn to play it as I don't have time to practice! So first thing on the to-do list is to take some lessons, I don't think I will ever be the next great saxophonist...but I do know my family will need ear-plugs!
I have over sixty years worth of family video footage and photographs, so I would love to get those sorted and digitalised so we can enjoy looking back through family history and memories.
I've been very fortunate to travel extensively with BASF – including Brazil, Europe, Japan, Asia, China, Russia, South Africa, and the USA. However, I would love to go back to some of these places as a tourist. I have a brother in Australia so it will be lovely to have a really long visit there – he doesn't know this yet!
Finally, I'm looking forward to nice some "lie-ins"! I'm a night owl, not a morning person, so I won't miss the early morning meetings and flights!

****

Those who would like to leave their well-wishes or donate towards a retirement gift for Sharon can do so by visiting:
https://app.collectionpot.com/pot/3220366

Find out more about BASF Pest Control Solutions at:
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Natural England wildlife licensing statistics for 2023

with a focus on birds

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Many wild animals and plants are protected by legislation such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. As nature conservation adviser and regulator, one of Natural England's roles is to licence certain activities that may disturb or harm wildlife, in line with the legal framework established by Parliament.

The legislation sets out the limited purposes for which Natural England may grant a licence to take, kill or disturb wildlife or impact upon their habitat. These include preserving public health and public safety or air safety, preventing spread of disease, preventing serious damage to crops, livestock and property.

Licences are only issued if all relevant criteria are met following a review of the purpose of the application, alternatives and methods, and the scientific context relating to it. Wildlife management and licensing is often a balancing act in finding a solution that enables the customer to satisfactorily achieve their aim in a way that has the least impact on the protected species. This could include changing the timing, location or methods of the proposed activity or requesting additional compensation.

Bird licences

Among the licences issued last year were those for the removal of bird nests that had been built in places that were causing a risk to public health or public safety. The following are some examples:

- Starlings had built a nest in the wiring of a telephone exchange which prevented work from being carried out. In this case the nest was left until the young had fledged and only an unviable egg remained. A licence was then issued for the nest and egg to be removed to prevent the birds from returning to lay a second clutch of eggs.
- Pied wagtails had nested on a hose in a fire station. As this was preventing fire-fighting equipment from being used a licence was issued for the nest to be relocated to a safe space. However, upon moving the hose, the suspected nest was found to be just a pile of twigs. It was later discovered the birds had built an alternative nest where they could be left undisturbed.
- A barn owl nest was in a barn near a well-used road that had been damaged in a storm and had become unstable. The building required demolition before it collapsed, and a licence was issued for the nest and eggs to be moved to a safe location.

In some circumstances when there is a high risk to public health or public safety licences may be issued for the year authorising lethal control of multiple bird species or the taking of higher numbers of birds or eggs than for other types of licences. This is to ensure that in urgent situations, such as when there is a risk to aircraft, action can be taken immediately, without having to wait for a licence modification with a specific number. In most of these cases, the actual numbers of birds or eggs taken will be much lower than permitted by the licence.

Licences are only ever issued when there is deemed to be no effect on the conservation status of the birds involved. Where a renewal of a licence is requested, the numbers and species are reviewed and will be reduced the following year where appropriate.

Of particular interest to Pest Control News readers are statistics relating to bird licences issued in 2023 and class licences for the edible dormouse.

Licences issued for public health

Bird species	Number of licences
Barnacle goose	1
Barnacle goose & Mallard duck	1
Canada goose, Greylag goose, Mute swan, Mallard duck & Moorhen	1
Collared dove	3
Collared dove & Woodpigeon	2
Crow	3
Egyptian goose	1
Egyptian goose & Woodpigeon	1
Greylag goose	32
Herring gull	36
Herring gull, Woodpigeon & Crow	1
Herring gull & Great black-backed gull	1
Herring gull & Lesser black-backed gull	28
Herring gull, Lesser black-backed gull & Crow	1
House sparrow	3
Lesser black-backed gull	2
Magpie	4
Mallard duck	3
Mute swan	1
Pied wagtail	1
Red kite	2
Ring necked parakeet	1
Rook	1
Starling	3
Woodpigeon	11
Peregrine falcon	4

Purpose	Species	Number of licences
Preserving air safety under section 16(1)(i)	Various bird species - Class 12 Airport Safety (read note 1)	67
Preserving public health or public safety under section 16(1)(i)	The CL03 Class Licence is a licence to to catch certain birds trapped on food premises. It covers the following bird species: blackbird, house sparrow, robin, starling, pied wagtail, blue tit, great tit, dunnock and song thrush	67
Public health or public safety, Preventing serious damage to livestock, foodstuffs for livestock, crops, vegetables, fruit, growing timber or any other form of property	Edible or fat dormouse	62

Types of licences

Each year, as part of Natural England's commitment to transparency, they publish a summary of the wildlife licences issued and the data for 2023 are now available.

In the 2023 summary, the licences again fall into four main categories:

1. European Protected Species mitigation licences - issued to allow otherwise unlawful activities involving species such as great crested newts, dormouse and bat species, often in association with development activity and usually requires measures to reduce harm (e.g. new habitat creation) to safeguard local populations
2. Class licences - issued to suitably qualified individuals to carry our otherwise unlawful activities involving protected species under defined circumstances, often on more than one occasion or at more than one location
3. Science and conservation - issued to allow otherwise unlawful activities involving protected species for the purposes of conservation and research (for example bird ringing)
4. Species management - issued to allow the disturbance, control or habitat destruction of certain species such as badgers, birds or water voles, to manage human-wildlife conflicts

The Natural England Wildlife Licensing Service, with the support of specialists, issues more than 12,000 licences each year. 9000 of the protected species licences are for science and conservation purposes, more than for any other activity. This enables direct conservation action, scientific research and monitoring to improve our understanding of many rare and declining species so we can better protect and conserve them in future. An example of this is the Darwin Tree of Life Project which has required licences permitting the possession of whole or part specimens of certain plants and animals such as the pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly and barberry carpet moth.

Beavers

Natural England has issued three licences in 2023 for the release of beavers into large-fenced enclosures. Some of these releases have been part of natural flood management projects studying how beavers transform a landscape and help slow the flow of water. The initial release is usually of a male and female pair of beavers, in the hope that they will reproduce to form small family groups. This has resulted in a number of beavers being born in England and in 2023 some projects were reporting the birth of a second litter of kits. We have also issued 193 beaver management class licence registrations to enable suitably trained people to manage any conflicts with the increasing activities and numbers of free-living beavers in the south-east and south-west of England.

Improvements in licencing

We continue to seek improvements in wildlife licensing by finding approaches that save time while maintaining and improving the conservation status of the species. This has included 236 new or renewed licences for District Level Licensing (DLL) for Great Crested Newts (GCN) which involves applicants making a conservation payment based on the predicted impact of their development or activity. This payment covers the creation or restoration of ponds in areas which are known to represent the best places for newts to thrive.

The DLL scheme now operates in 133 Local Planning Authorities and has generated over £33 million for GCN conservation. This has funded the creation of 3,000 ponds and 2023 saw the highest occupancy rate of GCN in DLL ponds since the launch of the scheme.

The full wildlife licensing statistics are on GOV.UK. For further information on any of the data please contact Natural England via: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk.

Note 1

"The Class CL12 Licence to kill or take birds for air safety purposes covers the following bird species:

To kill or take on an aerodrome or within a 13km radius of it:

- crow
- canada goose
- egyptian goose
- great black-backed gull
- greylag goose
- herring gull
- lesser black-backed gull
- mallard
- ring-necked parakeet
- feral pigeons
- rook
- starling
- wood pigeon

To capture alive or kill on an aerodrome or within 250m radius of it:

- collard dove
- black-headed gull
- common gull
- jackdaw
- lapwing
- magpie"

Ridmus offers reliable replacement for glue boards

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Fast knockdown Ridmus Alpha rodenticide now offers professional pest controllers a viable and practical solution to the effective loss of glue boards for tackling invasive mouse populations in sensitive areas.

The enacted Glue Traps (Offences) Act now limits their licensed use to very few specific scenarios, and puts prohibitive restrictions on their use in practice in England, warns Syngenta Business Manager, Richard Moseley. Furthermore, it exposes pest controllers and businesses to exorbitant fines and extreme reputational damage for any misuse.

“Ridmus Alpha provides a realistic alternative for instant results, where conventional anti-coagulant rodenticides maybe too slow to act,” he advises.

“With its ultra-fast action to target mouse infestations, in most instances mice die within centimeters of taking the palatable bait. Control rates can be easily quantified for customers, as well as being easy to clean up carcasses of pests in sensitive situations.”

Its use includes domestic and commercial areas where instant results are required, including food preparation or public access areas. Richard points out that Ridmus Alpha can be placed in situ and checked at the controllers’ convenience, compared to glue boards that must be inspected every few hours.

“From a pest controllers delivery point of view, that makes Ridmus Alpha a far more attractive option for dealing with emergency call outs - over and above any typical contract arrangements.”

Reports of pest controllers experience with Ridmus Alpha has seen excellent results from a single mouse in a domestic situation, to large infestations in commercial properties.

Trials have shown higher levels of acceptance by mice, along with working at warmer environmental temperatures that have previously challenged fast-acting mouse control options.

Ridmus Alpha is based on the highly palatable bait matrix of the renowned Talon Soft, ensuring good results in challenging situations. Requiring very low ingestion rates to achieve fast results, just a tooth-scratch in the bait is typically sufficient for mouse control with alphachloralose.

Since it is not an anti-coagulant rodenticide, Ridmus Alpha is available for professional pest controllers to buy in single 300ml tubes, if required. The product has long shelf life, making it convenient to carry for control of all emergency mouse infestations.

A complete ban on glue boards is now in place in Wales while glue board legislation in Scotland is still undergoing parliamentary scrutiny.

Use biocides safely. Always read the label and product information before use.

Glue traps training

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PCN spoke to Killgerm Chemicals to find out more about their 'Principles in the use of glue traps under licence' training course.

How long has Killgerm been providing training in the use of glue traps?

We've been providing training on this for decades as glue traps are part of the RSPH Level 2 Award in Pest Management syllabus and its various historical incarnations. It is the same for the rodent control training we have offered over the years, in that correct use of glue traps was (and still is) part of the courses. In terms of a specific and standalone course on glue traps, it was January 2021 when Killgerm brought out the free glue board training, at our own cost. We did this to show the Government that training is taken seriously and that the use of glue boards can be entrusted to professional pest controllers. There were no other training providers that offered a standalone glue traps course.

How has licensing affected the training?

Now that licensing has been launched for England, Killgerm are the only training provider with a solution in line with government requirements. It took a lot of work to get the training available on time (ahead of the licensing website going live in fact). Government was consulted in detail regarding the training content. An independent and secure examination system has been set up, with a bank of questions drawn from the material. The training is of course a requirement for licensing.

Supporting customers and licensing

The 2024 updated version is different to the original in terms of the content and the independent and secure exam. The content has been overhauled as mentioned and we even visited a recording studio to improve the experience for learners. We've invested in this training and the training course fees cover the exam fee and some basic admin and that is all.

It is our way of providing a training solution to support pest control businesses.

Most importantly, we are determined to support professional pest controllers in staying on the right side of the law. This is one reason why Killgerm launched the free training for glue boards back in January 2021. It took until 2024 for another training organisation to bring out their own specific glue board training.

At the time of writing, the only glue board training which is recognised by government as proof of competence to support licensing in England is that provided by Killgerm. This is real practical support from Killgerm to professional pest controllers, that hasn't been available from any other supplier or training provider.

Killgerm want glue traps to remain available, in line with the legal requirements, as part of the armoury / toolbox for pest control professionals.

Killgerm® TRAINING

www.killgermtraining.com

The man behind 20 years of CRRU

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Following Alan Buckle's retirement last month, PCN delved deeper into the man behind 20 years of CRRU.

Sophie: What did you want to do when you were growing up? Did you see yourself in pest control?

Alan: I didn't see myself in pest control, actually. However, I was always intrigued by David Attenborough! I grew up in north London and from a young age, I was captivated by his programs, especially Zoo Quest—I was glued to it! My grandad gave me a bird book that I cherished. Inspired by David Attenborough's writings, I went to my local library and took out all the Zoo Quest books, reading them all voraciously.

Separately, I was a member of the XYZ club, a kids club that granted me access to my local zoo, the Zoological Gardens of London. I spent most of my school holidays there, which fuelled my ambition to become a zookeeper.

In school, I managed to get some O levels and A levels, which led me to study zoology at university. Then it was during my PhD studies, where I researched more into rodents instead of zoo-keeping.

Sophie: That's fascinating. What research was involved?

Alan: As part of my PhD, I conducted research involving fleas and rodents. I would chip tiny bits off flea's legs to mark them and release them back onto rodents, allowing them to return to their homes. I would then recapture the rodents, remove the fleas, and document their interactions to understand who was living with whom among these rodents.

Sophie: So it all fell into place quite early on?

Alan: Yes, I suppose it did, although all these steps in my studies so far were just total accidents! I've never applied for a job. I have always been told that a job has come up and I should go for it... like the job I later got with ICI and the chairman's position for CRRU.

Anyway, I've jumped ahead! After my PhD, I met a renowned researcher named Fred Rowe, who was the house mouse expert at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. He liked the sound of my work, and at that time, I was working on the Checkatube, a long plastic tube with felt pieces inside, which had rodenticide placed on them. As mice squeezed through the tube, they'd get a stripe of rodenticide on them. They'd then clean themselves, and the rodenticide would kill them. I did all the early work on that but didn't finish it. Others, including David Jenkins of what became Check Services, completed it. This project basically got me into rodent control.

Fred Rowe then called me, mentioning there was going to be an advert in the Daily Telegraph for a Technical Cooperation Officer in the UK Government's Overseas Development Administration. It was to go to Malaysia to work with the Department of Agriculture there on rice field rats. I applied for it and got it.

So before I knew it, my new wife Mary and I were on a 747 Boeing to Malaysia. And after that... it was rats, rats, rats!

But all of this started out with David Attenborough and Zoo Quest!

Sophie: Has your life panned out the way you thought it would? Any highlights beyond pest control and in pest control?

Alan: Well, I always wanted to travel—Zoo Quest fed into this dream as well—and by golly, I travelled! There were times when I was doing 100

flights a year. I basically lived on airplanes for many years!

So I did get to see amazing places. I went to the Galapagos, the Caribbean, all over South-East Asia and other incredible destinations.

On a personal note, I hoped for a happy marriage with kids and grandchildren, and I'm fortunate to have achieved that too. So yes, my life has panned out the way I hoped.

Sophie: What hobbies have you enjoyed in life? Any crazy stories?

Alan: Every Saturday afternoon for the whole of my childhood I was in the Arsenal Stadium. I've been a lifelong supporter. I went to school literally 400 yards down the road, and because of where we lived, you could tell the score by the roars of the home fans and the away fans.

Sophie: What if there was a disallowed goal?

Alan: I guess we wouldn't have known!

Another hobby of mine is to travel and hike.

My wife is from Preston, and we met in university. She soon took me up to the Lake District (I had never been north of Watford Gap before!) and we camped, and for me it was completely mind-blowingly beautiful. We stayed at Brother's Water arriving in the dark. When I got out of the tent, it was like a different world, and I was surrounded by these beautiful pyramid-like mountains. From that moment on, I wanted to climb them! I've always loved climbing things for as long as I could walk.

Through the years we went to the lakes and North Wales as much as we could just because I loved it so much.

In 1976, my wife and I climbed some large mountains on the west coast of Scotland. Last summer we did a road trip to retraced our steps but only to look up at them!

We once pulled up into a camping site and pitched the tent in the dark. We woke up the next morning and realised we had pitched the tent in a rubbish dump!

There was also, what I call the rats revenge...

PCO's are supposed to carry the Weil's Disease card with them. I don't because I'm not a PCO. I stood in front of three doctors (without this card) and told them I knew exactly why I was ill. They all looked me in the face and said- you've got the flu. At this point I could hardly stand up and my temperature was off the scale. I was eventually given antibiotics by another doctor we knew and I think it saved my life.

Sophie: Have you been on any great adventures?

Alan: To be honest, life felt like one long adventure. But I've been in charge of three boats... I've sank them all or I've run it aground.

One of these adventures was on Lake Garda. My two daughters, Laura and Karen, and I were in a big red canoe, about 20 feet long. My youngest daughter leaned over the side trying to paddle. causing the canoe to capsize, and we all fell into the lake. I surfaced and saw the canoe sinking to the depths of Lake Garda! My eldest daughter and I managed to get the canoe back to the surface, full of water. We turned it over to empty it, rowed it back to shore and nobody was the wiser.

Another time, I ran a boat aground on an island in Loch Sunart. We had hired a little fishing boat and found a quiet little beach. I ran it onto the beach, where I was with my wife, our two daughters, and each of their friends. We were having a picnic when I noticed the tide going out, causing the boat to get stuck on land. I ran and shouted for help to push the boat back into the water, but it was too late.

We had to wait for six hours for the tide to come back in and float us off. When it did, I couldn't start the engine, but luckily, a beautiful yacht came into the bay and saw me struggling. They managed to help get the engine started, and we were able to head back as it was going dark. So no more boats for me!

Sophie: Everyone has a bucket list. What's on yours? Have you made a start, or is that what retirement is for?

Alan: I've been to so many places, so there are few new destinations I'm eager to see for myself. However, there are a few places I'd really like to revisit with my wife.

I've travelled to many beautiful and wonderful places, but most of those trips were for work, and my wife wasn't with me since she was at home working as a maths teacher and taking care of the kids. I've been to all the main Indonesian islands, but I've never been to Bali. So, Bali is definitely on my bucket list, and I want to experience it with her.

Sophie: Do you have any plans for retirement?

Alan: There are so many things I've had to let go just because I've not had the time to do them. Jobs around the house that need time. I enjoy handy work and gardening.

If I was to travel, I would try my best to avoid airports. I hate airports! So, I would go somewhere by boat/ferry. Or go on a cruise. We've already had a cruise booked that will get us to Ephesus and Santorini next year.

Sophie: What have you learnt, if anything from working in the pest control industry? Any life skills to take away from it?

Alan: Always to listen to people. They always have something interesting to say.

Listen to people who have experiences you don't.

Glue trap licensing applications now open via Natural England

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FOLLOWING ON FROM THE NEW GLUE TRAP LICENCE REGIME ANNOUNCED BY NATURAL ENGLAND AND DEFRA IN APRIL, THE GLUE TRAPS (OFFENCES) ACT 2022 WILL COME INTO EFFECT ON **31 JULY 2024**.

Natural England have been appointed as the licensing authority and pest controllers are able to apply for a licence from 19 June 2024.

The full Natural England licensing requirements for rodent glue traps are available online at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/glue-trap-licences

Key principles are covered in this article.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE NEW LICENSING REGIME FOR USE OF GLUE TRAPS IN ENGLAND

Licences will only be issued for exceptional circumstances, and where all alternative methods of rodent control are ineffective or impractical.

Only professional pest controllers involved in rodent control management will be able to hold a licence for glue trapping. A professional pest controller is someone who provides a pest control service for a public authority or as part of a business. To demonstrate this, applicants will need to:

- have completed both the following courses and will need to provide evidence of these with the licence application:
  - RSPH Level 2 Award in pest management
  - Killgerm principles in the use of rodent glue traps under licence (2024 version)

    (The Killgerm principles in the use of rodent glue traps under licence course is designed for Pest Control Technicians with prior approved training and certificates in rodent control who wish to register / apply for a licence for use of rodent glue traps.)
- supply a reference from another professional pest controller that vouches for their competency

  *Other companies are welcome to develop training materials that focus specifically on the legal use of glue traps, which Natural England can consider as demonstration of an applicant's knowledge and competency.

There are 2 types of licence:

1. Class licence – you register in advance to use this licence. This licence only covers very specific situations (see below), which are time-critical. Once you are registered, you do not need to inform the Licensing Authority before you act under this licence, but you must notify the Licensing Authority within 5 working days after you have used this licence, and at each site you use it. Every year you will be asked if you want to remain registered.

The Class Licence will permit use of glue traps in the following situations only:

- inside aircraft
- in hospital surgery operating rooms (and related areas needed for maintaining equipment)
- in critical infrastructure sites[i] at imminent risk of fire or equipment failure

2. Individual licences – you apply for a single-use licence at the time of need, to deal with a particular problem, at a particular site. The Licensing Authority will assess your application and issue a decision. You cannot use glue traps until you have received written confirmation from the Licensing Authority that your application has been approved and you have a copy of your licence.

Individual licences will only be issued in exceptional circumstances where there is a high risk to public health & safety and where all alternative methods of rodent control are ineffective. Detailed evidence will be required of the alternative methods that have been tried. Exceptional circumstances

are considered to be those with a large-scale risk to public health & safety. For example: sites accommodating large numbers of vulnerable people (care homes, hospitals), food manufacturing facilities with regional distribution, laboratories where contamination risk has nationally significant impacts.

NB – restaurants, take-aways, dwelling houses are not likely to be considered as exceptional circumstances.

There is a cost associated with both types of licence:

Class Licence: New User Registration	**£180**
Class Licence: Report of Action (at each site the licence is used)	**£230**
Class Licence: Registered User Annual Re-registration	**£121**
Individual Licence. Additional charges (based on an hourly rate of £121) will be payable if further information from an applicant is needed to assess the licence application	**£535**

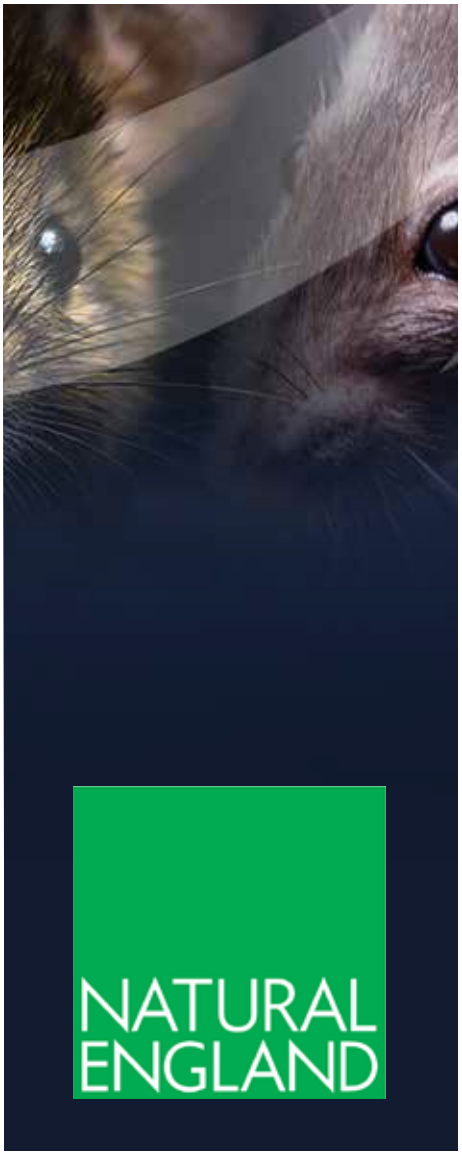
Licence requirements:

- There must be an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy in place.
- Each glue trap must be marked with the Licensee's registration number and the name and contact details of the Licensee's company (if applicable).
- A pre-treatment survey must be conducted by the Licensee to assess risk of capturing non-target species. Rodent glue traps must be placed in such a manner that they do not present a risk to non-target species.
- Where reasonably practicable, inspection times must be organised to minimise the time rodents are likely to be on the glue traps (e.g. if rodents are known to be active during certain periods, inspection times should be arranged with this in mind).
- Every glue trap must be physically inspected by the Licensee at least every 6 hours when in use.
- When glue traps are in use, the Licensee must remain on site unless a trap alert pressure or motion system, or other remote monitoring equipment, is used on every glue trap, to notify the Licensee when the trap has caught the target or other species. The Licensee must check any triggered glue trap within 2 hours of receiving such an alert.
- Where it is known that glue traps will not be inspected at the intervals stipulated above, they must be taken up (even if only temporarily).
- A contingency plan must be in place in the event of an emergency, whereby the Licensee is not able to physically check the traps in line with requirements above. The contingency plan must ensure that a Competent Person[ii] removes the glue traps and deals with any captured species appropriately. If the contingency plan is used, the Licensing Authority must be notified on the next working day.
- The size of glue trap must be appropriate for the target rodent species.
- Detailed copies of records and location plans must be available on site at all times for all glue traps laid during any treatment and must be updated as necessary and after all inspections to ensure traceability.
- Rodents trapped on glue traps must be dispatched in a quick and humane and safe manner.
- When using rodent glue traps, a freeing agent (a suitable food grade oil or similar emollient) must be available to hand.
- In the event that a non-target animal is trapped, a freeing agent must be applied to the animal for removal. Caught animals or birds that are injured, must be taken for veterinary treatment as soon as reasonably practicable or dispatched in a quick and humane manner as appropriate for the species where it is not prohibited by law.
- Non-target animals should only be released in the locality of their site of capture, not elsewhere, and only if they appear to be physically unharmed and their release is not prohibited by law.
- Where a glue trap is not in use, it must be removed. At the end of treatment all glue traps must be accounted for and removed by the Licensee.
- After use, all glue traps must be disposed of safely and in accordance with legal waste requirements. The sticky surface must be covered to avoid the accidental trapping of any species or subsequent misuse.
- The Licensee must comply with the licence reporting requirements.
- Glue traps should be purchased from suppliers who have been certified by the BASIS Point-of-Sale audit process (https://www.basis-audit.co.uk).
- The pest controller who holds the licence is responsible for all activities carried out under the licence, including activities carried out by their Assistants[iii] or, in the case of emergencies, a Competent Person.

[i] Critical infrastructure, for the purpose of licensing, critical infrastructure means sites that have a function of maintaining public health, safety or security at a regional or national level/scale. For example: national security, national power generation, data management sites that support i.e. nuclear power stations, 999 emergency control rooms, at airport or transport control centres.

[ii] A Competent Person is a pest controller who the Licensee has authorised to remove traps on their behalf in the event of an emergency and is either registered to use the Class Licence or satisfies the criteria to hold a licence.

[iii] Assistants must always be under the direct supervision of the licensed pest controller. An Assistant may not work alone or unsupervised by the licensed pest controller.



Integrating the AuroTrap System into Rodent Management: Environmental and Operational Merits

The AuroTrap system represents an innovative approach to rodent management, offering significant environmental and operational benefits. By reducing reliance on rodenticides, the AuroTrap minimizes risks to non-target species and the environment. This article explores the merits of the AuroTrap in an integrated pest management (IPM) plan, comparing it with traditional snap traps and break-back traps (and Glue Traps in some circumstances? - PCN Tech. Ed.) and discusses its complementary use with rodenticides.

Introduction

Rodent management is a critical aspect of pest control, particularly in urban and agricultural settings. Traditional methods, such as snap traps and rodenticides, present challenges including non-target species harm and or environmental contamination. The AuroTrap system, a humane, automated trapping solution, offers a promising alternative. We will examine the merits of the AuroTrap system, emphasizing its ecological and operational advantages.

Environmental Benefits

Reduction in Rodenticide Use

Rodenticides, while effective, pose significant risks to non-target species and the environment. Secondary poisoning of predators, pets and scavengers, contamination of water sources, and accumulation of toxic substances in the ecosystem are major concerns. The AuroTrap system, by reducing the need for rodenticides, directly addresses these issues. Its design ensures targeted trapping, minimizing collateral damage.

Minimizing Non-Target Species Impact

There is some risk of harm to non-target species with traditional traps. The AuroTrap, equipped with species-specific triggers will eventually (with a large enough sample size) prevent access by certain non-target species (also due to the enclosed design), which significantly reduces this risk of several animal trying to feed off snap traps. Its precision targeting helps protect biodiversity, supporting a more balanced ecosystem.

Operational Benefits

Humane Kill Certification

The AuroTrap system is certified for humane kills by the Swedish EPA (Naturvårdsverket), ensuring that trapped rodents are eliminated quickly and painlessly. This certification aligns with ethical pest control standards, enhancing the reputation of pest control professionals who prioritize humane practices.

Enhanced Monitoring and Reporting

The AuroTrap system includes integrated monitoring capabilities, providing real-time data on trap activity through an online customer trap management tool and an app targeted to the service technicians in the field. These features offer pest control technicians and their client's greater insight into rodent activity and trap effectiveness, facilitating more informed decision-making and efficient management strategies. The AuroTrap system transforms rodent control management from a reactive and redundant way of working into a proactive and customer driven way of operating by providing real-time data, enabling the professional pest controller to act proactively on data that has been gathered through sensor technology, like a surveillance system

Comparison with Traditional Traps

Effectiveness and Reliability

Standard snap traps and break-back traps, while effective, often require frequent checking and resetting, increasing labour costs and time. The AuroTrap's automated system reduces these demands, maintaining consistent efficacy with less human intervention, enabling the professional pest controllers to remove redundant procedures, and instead utilizing their expertise.

Safety and Convenience

Traditional traps may pose safety risks to non-target animals and humans. The enclosed design of the AuroTrap enhances safety by preventing accidental triggers. Additionally, its automated nature reduces the need for technicians to handle traps frequently, lowering the risk of injury and contamination.

Integration with Rodenticides

While the AuroTrap reduces the need for rodenticides, it can also be used in conjunction with them in an integrated rodent management plan. For instance, during periods of high rodent activity, rodenticides can be strategically placed in less accessible areas while the AuroTrap monitors and manages more accessible zones. This dual approach ensures comprehensive coverage, maximizing control while minimizing environmental impact.

Conclusion

The AuroTrap system presents a substantial advancement in rodent management, offering significant environmental and operational benefits. By reducing rodenticide use, it minimizes ecological risks and enhances the safety of non-target species. From an operational perspective, its humane certification, reduced labour demands, and enhanced monitoring capabilities provide pest control professionals with a superior alternative to traditional methods. Integrating the AuroTrap into an IPM plan not only ensures effective rodent control but also promotes sustainable and ethical pest management practices.

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Using ChatGPT in marketing your Pest Control Business

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Using ChatGPT in pest control marketing offers multifaceted benefits. Firstly, it enables the creation of informative and engaging content, spanning blogs, social media, and websites, attracting and educating potential customers.

Secondly, integrating ChatGPT as a chatbot on websites enhances customer service by providing instant responses to inquiries, scheduling appointments, and offering advice on pest issues. Moreover, ChatGPT aids in personalised email marketing campaigns, crafting compelling messages to increase open rates and conversions. Additionally, it facilitates keyword research for SEO optimisation, ensuring relevant content ranks higher in search results. Lastly, ChatGPT can engage with customers on social media, fostering interaction and trust. Through these avenues, ChatGPT becomes an invaluable tool in expanding the reach and effectiveness of pest control marketing efforts.

Here are some ways you can utilise ChatGPT to improve the marketing of your pest control business:

Content Creation: ChatGPT can generate engaging and informative content for blogs, social media posts, and website articles. Whether it's tips for preventing common pests, DIY pest control methods, or information about different types of pests, ChatGPT can produce high-quality content that attracts and educates potential customers.

Chatbots: Integrating ChatGPT into a website as a chatbot can provide instant responses to customer inquiries. This can enhance customer service by answering questions about pest control services, scheduling appointments, and providing advice on dealing with specific pest problems.

Email Marketing: ChatGPT can assist in creating personalised email marketing campaigns. By generating compelling subject lines, body text, and call-to-action messages, ChatGPT can help increase open rates, click-through rates, and conversions.

Keyword Research: ChatGPT can assist in identifying relevant keywords and phrases for SEO purposes. By understanding the language customers use when searching for pest control services online, marketers can optimise website content and improve search engine rankings.

Social Media Engagement: ChatGPT can generate conversational responses for engaging with customers on social media platforms. Whether responding to comments, participating in discussions, or sharing helpful tips, ChatGPT can help maintain an active and responsive social media presence.

Lead Generation: ChatGPT can assist in qualifying leads by engaging with website visitors and collecting relevant information. By asking targeted questions and providing tailored responses, ChatGPT can help identify potential customers and guide them towards scheduling consultations or services.

By incorporating ChatGPT into various aspects of pest control marketing, businesses can enhance their online presence, improve customer engagement, and ultimately drive more leads and conversions.

LABEL CHANGES COULD APPEAR FOR BROMADIOLONE AND DIFENACOUM PRODUCTS FROM EARLY SUMMER 2024, MANUFACTURERS WARN!

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Manufacturers expect that some rodenticide labels will start changing from early summer 2024. There will be a combination of different products and different dates of changes from May to July.

This is an important reminder to pest control operators to check rodenticide labels for changes.

As always, “read the label.”

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 4th July this 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). The main aim being to reduce SGAR residues in wildlife.

Sales of products containing bromadiolone and difenacoum for use in open areas and at waste dumps will cease on 4 July 2024. Existing products, already purchased, on or before that date, with the appropriate labels, 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 elimination of harbourage, food and water; lethal non-anticoagulant baits; and trapping, shooting and dogs.

Burrow Baiting

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Sales of products containing bromadiolone and difenacoum for use in open areas and at waste dumps will cease on 4 July 2024. Existing products, already purchased, on or before that date, with the appropriate labels, 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. This change has raised questions about burrow baiting, as rat burrows can be in open areas. Can burrow baiting still be done? Can rat burrows be baited around buildings? The answer is, as always, 'read the label'. Not all rodenticides have burrow baiting on the label, as it is a non-standard use of rodenticides. Look for a label text reference to 'burrow baiting' or 'direct application of ready-to-use bait into the burrow' or 'directly applied to burrows'. So that's one step taken – the product label covers burrow baiting. The next question is where are the rat burrows? If the rat burrows are in an open area, that rules out use of anticoagulants so consider use of an appropriately labelled cholecalciferol product which covers burrow baiting and open areas. If the rat burrows and rodent activity fall under the product label definition of 'around buildings' and the CRRU Code of Best Practice (and an Environmental Risk Assessment has been completed), burrow baiting would be permissible. Once it has been determined that burrow baiting is permissible, it is time to look at how to perform burrow baiting in terms of label directions and best practice...

Burrow baiting – the basics

We are aware of the significant risk to public health when there are rodents around, as the need for rodent control provides much of the business for the pest control sector. However, are we overlooking tried and tested techniques? In reference to burrow baiting, is direct treatment of burrows becoming a lost art due to changes in some rodenticide labels and industry codes of practice? Perhaps more time is being spent on paperwork rather than 'field craft' to treat rodents.

Let's start by looking at the basics. Rodent infestations should be removed as quickly as possible in the interest of public safety and hygiene. Uncontrolled populations can spread rodent-borne diseases (Leptospirosis is only one of many pathogens carried and transferred by rats) by contamination and they also cause physical damage.

Standard bait boxes can initiate a neophobic behaviour in rats, resulting

in avoidance due to fear of the new item, adding to the expected treatment time. Burrow baiting can lessen neophobia to new items* (due to the item being a 'food' albeit a rodenticide). In some cases, neophobia is avoided when burrow baiting.

So, why choose burrow baiting?

Firstly, to use the rodenticides appropriate for burrow baiting you must be a trained and competent user – adhering to stewardship and the product label in the UK.

Several reasons apply. We know from research that a 'new food' is avoided for much less time than a new bait container. This is supported by DEFRA research*.

The advantages of burrow baiting are clear and cover some of the legal requirements in place. The rodenticide is placed around known target species, located close to the nest (placing the bait on the rats' doorstep), bait is much more likely to be encountered and therefore consumed. Finally, treatment time is likely reduced due to a decrease in neophobia.

The practice of burrow baiting is supported by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), as a recommended application of rodenticide bait.

*"research has shown that hole or burrow baiting, where loose bait is applied directly into holes or burrows, can give the best results in encouraging bait uptake, resulting in quicker control."*****

Reduced Risk

Reduction in the period of time that bait is left available means less risk to humans, non-target species and the environment. This can only be a positive, but it is important to remember that the treated burrows must be checked frequently. The decision to bait burrows must also be backed up by a solid environmental risk assessment. Monitoring burrows can be done before any treatment to check the activity status. For example, to determine an active burrow versus an old burrow which is no longer in use. There are certain things to look for with an active burrow: a clean

entry hole, worn ground and tracks to and from the burrow, debris kicked out (including newly dug soil) and lack of cobwebs.

We can reduce risk but not get rid of it. So, to mitigate the risks of burrow baiting it is essential to consider the following -

Risk assessment (standard site specific and the environmental risk assessment) is essential, also to re-risk assess. Avoiding ejection of bait is one of the biggest challenges when baiting burrows. Healing the burrow in or placing light straw or substrate (e.g. soil, tussock of grass) at the entrance are good ways help prevent ejection. The bait should also be

placed as far as possible into the burrow. Follow up procedure should be determined by risk assessment, using the product label for directions. The follow up timing is also an important consideration. The best time is first thing in the morning, which also helps with bait ejection. Nocturnal rodent activity means bait can be ejected overnight. The ejected bait can be replaced or retrieved during the early morning follow up. Use the follow up visit to look for rodent carcasses and ensure that this detail appears on the report / records for the visit. Any unconsumed bait or spent bait can be collected / re-used at this time too. Formulation choice can be important too. Choosing a block bait is preferable as blocks can be wired into the ground and they are easier to retrieve. Loose bait can be used when the product label allows this.

Using technology to monitor?

Remote cameras can be used at all stages of a burrow baiting program:

- Determining burrow status (active or old)
- Species identification (non-target protection)
- Remote monitoring of bait ejection and activity
- End of treatment – no further burrow activity

Best Practice Guidance (CRRU)

We still need to maintain best practice whilst carrying out burrow baiting. Following the 'risk hierarchy' begins with proofing, hygiene and any appropriate environmental changes. Progressing to trapping and then onto first and second-generation anticoagulants can be next. However, in reaching the decision to burrow bait it is expected that the risk hierarchy has been followed already.

You must check carefully that the product can be used for burrow baiting by consulting label directions.

Other considerations – Treated sites

Rat burrows are found outdoors in soft ground, banked land and any other substrate that allows a burrow system structure such as low-growing foliage roots, tree roots, gabion baskets or rockeries. Unfortunately, rat burrows can of course be in the same area as non-target species. This is even more reason to follow up, perhaps more frequently at first. The benefits of burrow baiting must always outweigh the risks, considering human and animal health. The reasons why other methods are impractical should also be noted. The environmental risk assessment can act as the vehicle for this. If bait stations are not appropriate, state this on the report or risk assessment.

"Tamper-resistant containers baited with immovable block baits are appropriate if baits are inspected infrequently, but the evidence (presented in this review) suggests that relatively little rodent control will be achieved". **

Labelling

The treated area should also be marked, in line with product labels and the CRRU Code of Best Practice, an important consideration when burrow baiting in a public area. Bystanders should be informed, with signage being very useful for that. This should all be backed up by a written treatment report.

Summary recommendations

- Always carry out your environmental risk assessment (in line with CRRU guidance)
- Follow the CRRU Code of Best Practice
- Baiting deep, vertical burrows is preferable – less likelihood of bait ejection
- Place rodenticide as deeply into the burrow as possible
- Lightly block the burrow
- Clearly mark the treated burrow
- Inspect treated areas frequently – essential to keep rodenticide at an appropriate level and search for dead rodents
- Follow up in the early morning
- Don't forget about remote monitoring, possibly using wildlife cameras
- Burrow baiting has its benefits, but remember to keep it to a necessary minimum
- End of treatment – make all reasonable efforts to remove spent or unconsumed bait and make a final search for dead rodents
- Keep diligent records of all visits and assessments.

Foot notes/References:

*DEFRA (2018). Rats: Control of Rats with Rodenticides - A Complete Guide to Best Practice. Department for Food and Rural Affairs. Available from: http://adlib.everysite.co.uk/adlib/defra/content.aspx?id=000HK277ZX.0B4M93RRD547JA. Date accessed: 16.01.18.

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***CIEH (2015). Pest control procedures in the food industry. The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Chadwick Court, London. October 2015. 52 pp. Available from: http://www.cieh.org/policy/pest_control_food_industry.html. Date accessed: 16.01.18.

https://www.thinkwildlife.org/training-certification/continuing-professional-development-cpd-and-stewardship/

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This summer, Killgerm teamed up with BASF to introduce something exciting to the industry events calendar. The goal? To involve participants in practical tasks and allow them to fully immerse themselves in the experience. The sessions were designed to equip attendees with the skills and knowledge necessary for top-notch pest control on farms. From risk assessments to wildlife management, proofing techniques to Red Tractor standards, this event had it all!

The enthusiasm for this hands-on approach was evident, with around 100 attendees travelling to the farm over the two days, and the first day of the event selling out in less than a week.

Upon arrival, attendees were greeted with a bacon sandwich from local caterers—a warm welcome indeed!

The group was then split into two to ensure a more personal touch with the speakers. The first sessions encouraged everyone to think like auditors—a key mindset for farm work and crafting those pesky risk assessments. Love them or loathe them, risk assessments are crucial for good practice in our industry. Neil Palmer from Agri Pest Management shared cutting-edge wildlife management strategies, including technology like infrared drones. After a break, Louise Loben led a session on trapping techniques, showcasing different traps for various rodents. Rob Simpson from Killgerm followed with tips on effective proofing and monitoring techniques to keep farms safe. Martin Cobbald from Dealey Environmental provided insights into post-harvest crop protection, complete with eye-catching demonstrations of insecticides in action. To conclude, Annie Rogers from Red Tractor hosted a lively Q&A session, giving attendees the opportunity to get their burning questions answered in detail.

All in all, 'Farm Day' was a refreshing change of pace, proving that hands-on, engaging events are exactly what the industry needs.

The feedback for the event was overwhelmingly positive, supporting this new approach, with attendees expressing their satisfaction and appreciation. One participant remarked, "Glad I went – good range of subjects and great subject matter experts," highlighting the diverse and relevant topics covered by knowledgeable speakers. Another attendee noted, "Very good day, well worth the long journey," underscoring the value and impact of the event despite the travel involved. A simple yet enthusiastic, "Great day, many thanks," echoed the general sentiment of gratitude and enjoyment shared by many who attended.

After such success, there is hope that we will see further development in future events and learning opportunities within our industry.

Scan the QR to view the Farm Day video.

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07703 714 752

BC Crimping Tool

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A great new addition to the **BC Range** of bird control products from Killgerm.

The new ferrule crimping tool provides a perfect, one handed crimp operation, for various sized ferrules and wire combinations. For crimps to work effectively using the BC crimpng tool, it is important to use the correct ferrule with the correct wire size, and crimping must be achieved in the correct nest positions.

The illustration below shows the correct nest positions for the different ferrule and wire size combinations

2.5mm oval ferrules and 2.0mm diameter wire.

Cylindrical bird wire crimp ferrule and 0.7mm diameter wire.

1.5mm oval ferrulres and 1.2mm diameter wire.

1.0mm cylindrical ferrules and 0.98mm diameter wire.

USEFULL TIP FOR USING THICKER WALLED FERRULES

THIS TOOL IS INTENDED FOR USE WITH THIN-WALLED 1.5MM FERRULES; **THICK-WALLED FERRULES MAY CAUSE THE TOOL TO JAM.**

IF JAMMING OCCURS, USE THE **RATCHET RELEASE** TO OPEN THE JAWS.

We advise **NOT** to use thick wall ferrules. However, if thick wall ferrules are only available, we suggest using the **next size up nest position** to crimp them. This will hopefully avoid causing any damage to the tool, but may not provide the correct crimping pressure required.

Killgerm have a dedicated video to show you how to get the most out of the BC Crimping Tool. Scan the QR code to view the video.

Acronyms for the pest management industry

what do they stand for? – Part 3

So far in the previous two issues of PCN we have covered Awarding bodies, Governing bodies, Audits, Legislation, and associated Health & Safety. We will finish the mini-series by having a look at some of the formulations and associated acronyms that we are probably all familiar with but might be missing the details.

Product formulations

WP: Wettable powder
A powder containing the insecticide. This is usually added to water and mixed to create the product ready for use, suspended in the water. WP's tend to be more concentrated and often contain higher concentration of active product. Due to the method of preparation they can be safer to prepare, because of the reduced likelihood of spillage. Usually used through a pneumatic sprayer for a low-pressure spray application.

WG: Wettable granule
Very similar to a WP although instead of powder it's a granule. Sometimes knows as water soluble granules (WSG). Described as non-dusty. Used in the same way as a WP.

EC: Emulsifiable concentrate/emulsion concentrate
Usually an oily liquid, created by dissolving the pesticide in an organic solvent. Which is then diluted by the operator to form an emulsion within the dilutant (i.e. the water). Once diluted the solution is usually a milky white to cream colour. Surfactants are used to fully enable a stable oil and water mix.

SC: Suspension concentrate
A solid active ingredient (the pesticide in our case) is used in an insoluble state (usually at very high concentration). Along with the active ingredient, SC's have wetting agents (to keep the particles flowable) and dispersing agents (to keep them separated from each other). Positives with SC's are having similar properties chemically to WP's and WG's but no dust during preparation. We would usually dilute with water to the correct concentration for use.

MC: Microemulsion concentrate
Similar in form to EC's they are micro oil-based insecticide particles with a water and surfactant mix. Tiny insecticide droplets exist in an immiscible phase, the surfactant is there to ensure they remain dispersed within the concentrate and once diluted, again with water by the operator when mixing ready to be used.

ME / CS: Micro-encapsulated
The insecticide particles are all coated to create a capsule. Most microencapsulated insecticides have a polymeric coat (consisting of chains, creating a permeable wall around the particles). This protects the insecticide particles, allowing a controlled release of the active inside the 'coat or capsule'. This gives microencapsulated products great stability and residuality properties.

With all of the above formulations, we should say that once mixed (diluted with water) the product has a shelf life of around 24 hours.

RTU: Ready-to-use
Very simple - minimal preparation required with RTU's as they are just that, ready to use. This is a benefit from a risk assessment stance, as no mixing is needed. Just measure your quantity and off you go. Be wary though, as most RTU's are oil based and can have a distinctive odour. The same as RFU: Ready for use.

As well as the formulations, we can have various actives and associated ingredients, including chemical grouping acronyms -

Insecticide groups

IGR: Insect growth regulator
IGR's interrupt the insect life cycle. It can be at a different stage for different insects, for example how they grow or how they reproduce. Within the IGR group are juvenile hormones (JH's), often juvenile hormone mimics or analogues for example, can keep insects in their larval phase, inhibiting pupation. Therefore, they never make it to be an adult, in turn halting the population. We should not use IGR's on textile pests such as clothing moths or carpet beetles. The longer the insect stays in this long feeding stage, the greater the damage they have the potential to do. IGR's can take longer to work than other group insecticides. There are also chitin synthesis inhibiters. Often products can contain an IGR alongside the knock down or residual insecticides. Active ingredients include: S-Methoprene, pyriproxyfen, diflubenzuron.

SP: Synthetic pyrethroid
Probably our most used group. Actives include: Cypermethrin, deltamethrin, tetramethrin, d-allethrin, d-phenothrin to name a few. SPs in general work on the sodium channels in the insect nervous system, creating general disruption of the electric impulse signals being sent. They are broad spectrum and in general highly effective.

OP: Organophosphate
The mode of action for OP's is classic disruption of the nervous system by cholinesterase inhibition. OP's can be harmful to humans too. Whilst the majority of the other group chemicals are especially for insects, are rapidly metabolised out or insect enzyme activated, OP's do not always respond in the same way. Therefore even greater care is required and potentially blood monitoring depending on products labels, concentrations and conditions of use.

Remember this list is not exhaustive – there are many more, but likely less common. Use these as references when you read the labels prior to risk assessing and using chemicals.

New Products

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Raxit® Doc Leveler

The Raxit Seals pest proofing products are developed in the flexible and extremely durable rubber material Santoprene™. Along the length of the Raxit Seals are 1mm inlaid acid resistant stainless steel wires, which makes the seals impossible for rodents to gnaw through.

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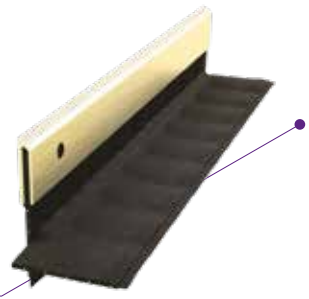

Bugscents Sentry Pro

BugScents™ Sentry Pro is a highly-effective reusable slim and discreet monitor, with a patented fast-action aggregation pheromone lure, that detects bedbugs in as little as 24 hours.

The BugScents™ lure was discovered through a decade of research by scientific experts at the world-renowned London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and Archtech Innovation.

Effective for 90 days and catches all active life stages of bedbugs.

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Hik Micro M15 Trail Camera

The Hikmicro M15 is a powerful and robust 4G cellular Trail Camera, fitted with highly sensitive PIR sensors and IR LEDs and a built-in SIM card. When activated the camera takes true living colour images/videos during the day and super clear black and white images/videos at night. The captured photos/videos can be transmitted, viewed or downloaded at any time using the Hikmicro sight APP via the 4G cellular network.

Visit www.killgerm.com

Cimex Eradicator Plus

A non-chemical, non-contact, eco-friendly solution for the elimination of bedbugs. Ideal for use as part of the integrated management of bedbugs. The Cimex Eradicator Plus is a steam generator which uses steam heated to 180°C to eliminate bedbugs. The flow of steam from the nozzle at 180°C is able to eliminate the adult insects, the nymphal stages and the eggs by causing thermal shock.

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Thermal Monocular

The Lynx-S LE10 Micro Thermal Monocular is focused on delivering high-level thermal performance at an entry-level price point. At the heart of this enhanced performance is the 256 x 192, 12um sensor, this delivers higher levels of image detail that will be especially useful when trying to locate and identify small animals like rabbits, squirrels and birds. The sub 35 NETD performance of the sensor ensures detection of small temperature changes and excellent performance in harsh conditions.

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BPCA and TrustMark

The government-endorsed quality scheme for pest management

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BPCA Servicing members have recently been registered on the government's TrustMark scheme, meaning they can now display the "government-endorsed quality" logo. BPCA Chief Exec Ian Andrew talks through the new benefit, how it came about, and what it means for members.

Where it started

The TrustMark project has been a long journey. A few years back, BPCA made a strategic decision to bring our member assessments back in-house. This move has granted us complete control over our assessment processes and the tailored support we can extend to our members.

What that has meant for members is that they're now fully aligned with the TrustMark registration standards.

TrustMark is the only UK Government-endorsed quality scheme for home improvements, and BPCA is the only Scheme Provider for the pest control industry.

We registered all our existing servicing members, and new members will be automatically enrolled in the scheme. There are no additional fees to become registered as BPCA's Board decided to fund the registration costs for members.

The process has been surprisingly straightforward, given that our member assessments are so comprehensive. The TrustMark team rigorously assessed our processes and procedures and were happy that our members met their stringent requirements.

The most significant benefit for our member companies is the ability to display the "government-endorsed quality" logo. This logo serves as a powerful tool to reassure clients that they are in good hands. It also enhances the reputation of our members and promotes the value of professional pest management.

The BPCA member logo is well respected in the commercial and pest management sector, but it might not be instantly recognisable for consumers and smaller businesses. We think closer links to government and that extra endorsement will go a long way to help members distinguish themselves from their competitors.

BPCA Servicing members now stand alongside 15,000 other tradespeople endorsed by the Government via the TrustMark Quality Scheme, including plumbers, electricians, builders, gardeners and more.

Who is TrustMark?

TrustMark is a not-for-profit social enterprise that operates under a Master Licence Agreement issued by the Government's Department for Business and Trade. The scheme has been running since 2005.

They help homeowners find skilled, trained, and competent tradespeople to carry out the work they need through their online 'Find a Trader' search facility.

They licence and work with their network of Scheme Providers, of which BPCA is now part of. These Scheme Providers must commit to meeting the quality scheme's requirements. Scheme Providers licence and work with their TrustMark Registered Businesses to ensure they commit to and maintain the required standards of technical competence, trading practices, and customer service.

Further member benefits via TrustMark

BPCA Servicing members can now:

- Display the TrustMark logo on letterheads, marketing materials, websites, and vehicles
- Appear on the TrustMark website and app via their 'Find a Business' online directory
- Access the TrustMark Business portal and customise their company profile
- Get exclusive discounts from the AA, easyToolhire, Fuel Card Services and more.

It's really like having two memberships for the price of one.

The future

Working closer with the government is vital for BPCA and its members. We're hoping our new relationship with TrustMark opens doors for us with other government departments.

All too often, we're directed toward Defra and seen as an environmental issue. However, we know pest professionals are much more aligned with public health and safety.

TrustMark means we can start conversations around consumer protection and safety. As their scheme grows, so too will our influence.

Getting TrustMark Registered

BPCA is currently the only TrustMark Scheme Provider for pest management, so the only way to become TrustMark Registered is through BPCA Servicing membership.

The application and assessment process will automatically enrol new members on the scheme.

If you have any questions about TrustMark, please contact our membership team at 01332 225 112 or membership@bpca.org.uk.

"BPCA take the services their trained and qualified technicians provide to consumers very seriously."

"With robust surveillance processes and a strict membership criteria we're excited to have them join us as a Scheme Provider offering guidance and services to homeowners."

Nicola Waller, Membership Director of TrustMark

Are You Working Safely?

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How are your safety procedures and documentation? Are you confident that they are 'suitable and sufficient'?

People expect that when their loved ones go to work in the morning, they will come home again at night, safe and sound. Unfortunately, this is not always the case for too many families in the UK. Many UK pest control technicians have suffered serious, life-changing injuries, and some have died at work. The outcomes can be devastating for the individuals and their families and colleagues. When the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) investigates workplace accidents, the principle cause is found to be that insufficient care has been taken with Risk Assessments – they are deemed by the HSE not to be 'suitable and sufficient'.

Where failures are found, the HSE issue fines, which can amount to tens of thousands of pounds, and can cripple or close down companies. And, where negligence is found, company executives can find themselves subject to a prison sentence.

So, for the ongoing success of a company and welfare of all its staff, it is incumbent upon company management to ensure thorough Risk Assessments are completed and Safe Systems of Work are implemented.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require that health and safety Risk Assessments are completed [by any employer and by the self-employed] prior to any work being carried out. The assessments need to take into account any health and safety risks to employees and to other persons. And where the company employs five or more people, then the assessments must be documented. Even for smaller companies it can be beneficial to write them down as clients often want to see them to be reassured that you will work safely on their premises.

These documents are not just tick-box exercises. They are working instructions to be used by technicians to help them to carry out their work as safely as possible. So, they need to be easily read and understood by technicians.

Here are some points to consider when producing and managing your documents to help ensure they are fit for purpose:

- Clear Format with easily identifiable sections
- Simple, jargon-free, easily-readable content that all makes sense
- Concise instructions, without superfluous detail
- Split into separate more-manageable documents where possible – don't lump lots of things together
- Thorough – ensure all potential hazards, harms, at-risk groups and control measures are thought of
- Use pictograms and scoring matrices to help show the important components
- Specify review requirements
- Instigate a system to ensure technicians have read and understood them
- Implement a means whereby technicians have ongoing ready access to them

The NPTA are holding 1-day classroom training courses on 'Risk Assessments, COSHH Assessments and Safe Systems of Work'. These have already been held at a variety of locations around the country, both as open courses and in-house. And the feedback has been exceptionally positive. More dates and venues are planned over the coming months. The courses are open to NPTA members and non-members. Would you like to join one? If so, please contact Maxine at the NPTA office for dates, venues and booking: maxine@npta.org.uk or 01773 717716.

Author and Trainer: Grahame Turner BSc, MSc, NEBOSH NGC in Occupational Health and Safety, Certificated Field Biologist, L3 Award in Education and Training.

Proud to be PROMPT:
Rentokil Pest Control

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Our members are a key part of the continued growth and success of BASIS PROMPT, the pest technicians' register. One of our biggest members and advocates is the commercial pest control and hygiene services provider, Rentokil Pest Control.

Paul Blackhurst is one of our committee members and the Head of Technical Academy at Rentokil Pest Control, responsible for the technical training and apprenticeships for Rentokil Pest Control in the UK. We spoke to him about the role BASIS PROMPT has in the business, why CPD is so important and his thoughts on the future of the pest control industry.

Why is CPD so important for pest control businesses?

Paul believes that all pest control businesses should be part of a CPD scheme: "It's vital that all our frontline technicians, when they're qualified, are CPD registered. CPD means that businesses in our industry can demonstrate that they are developing their team and supporting them to progress their skills, knowledge and behaviour throughout their careers. CPD is really important to the industry, and BASIS PROMPT is our CPD scheme of choice".

Why join BASIS PROMPT?

We pride ourselves on our independence and ease of use so that members can maximise their time doing the job at hand and focus on training and learning. It's good to hear that this is why our members choose BASIS PROMPT.

Paul says, "BASIS PROMPT is the original CPD scheme. It's been around for 24 years with strong governance and a team committed to the industry as a whole and to CPD. At Rentokil Pest Control we really value a relationship with a membership body that listens to the industry, adapts accordingly and then assists the industry in continuing to professionally develop. BASIS maintains its independence while having strong links to the whole pest control industry and its regulating bodies".

And it helps that we make the CPD process as seamless as possible for our members, Paul adds "The simplicity of being able to claim and track CPD points certainly makes life easier".

CPD is vital to the future of pest control

Paul believes that CPD is going to play a central role in the regulation of pest control: "Our industry is going to become more regulated; already we've seen a ban on glue boards and greater regulation around the use of rodenticides. We're going to see legislation on professional qualifications and without CPD, having to re-train could be costly. The career path of a professional pest technician is going to be based on qualifying, ongoing learning and demonstrating CPD and it's something we can all be doing right now. CPD is all about adapting to the industry and continuing to learn and adapt our services."

For more information about joining BASIS PROMPT, take a look at our benefits and joining information: https://basis-prompt.co.uk/benefits

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Public Inquiries and the Infected Blood Inquiry

A slight change in writing this time but the infected blood inquiry has been massively in the news of late and was one of our cases that we were involved in for our clients since the outset. Public inquiries are the government's official review/investigation of events which are a matter of major public concern, or which consider controversial public policy issues. Within this article we will be looking at the aim of public inquiries.

Public inquiries seek to shed light on particularly controversial events or events of major public concern which have or may affect many of those in the nation. In public inquiries the government looks at the facts and begins to assess by asking key questions set out by Jason Beer QC. These questions ask; what happened? Why did it happen and who is to blame? What can be done to prevent this happening again? These questions seek to create a better understanding around a particular event and bring to light the key aspects of how and why such an event would occur and how to stop such an event from happening again.

One inquiry in the public eye currently is the Infected Blood inquiry. This inquiry examines why men, women and children were given infected blood and/or infected blood products, this has resulted in many receiving the blood or blood products being infected with Hepatitis or HIV. The majority of these infections occurred in or around the 1970s/1980s when there was a large stigma against such infections, some diagnosed were shunned by peers and felt like an outcast. Additionally, at the time of many diagnoses there was no effective treatment so many had been diagnosed with a slow death sentence and ultimately died of their infections.

However, before looking at the effects, we must look at how this happened. There were two main groups of people who were infected. The first were haemophiliacs (those with a rare genetic condition which means their blood does not clot properly), those with haemophilia A have a shortage of a clotting agent called Factor VIII whereas those with haemophilia B don't have enough Factor IX. A new treatment for these shortages was created using human blood plasma, however large batches of this new treatment were contaminated with deadly viruses meaning people became infected while unaware. The second group of people were those given blood transfusions after childbirth, surgery, or medical treatment. Unbeknown to the UK recipients a lot of blood was collected from US prison populations.

We also must ask how this got so out of hand, many of those who used the plasma products and transfusions were not aware or warned of the potential risks of possible infection with blood products and blood by their doctors or clinicians. In the case of transfusions some were not even given a choice for a transfusion, rather they were told by their doctor that it was going to happen. This resulted in a lack of awareness of infection, thus leading to many more people becoming infected through their partner or loved ones as those infected had no idea of the fact and therefore were not as cautious as they should have been. Once people began to see advertisements and the risks surrounding blood products and infections they began to ask to be tested. Some doctors/GPs laughed and called people silly for thinking they could be infected; others delivered a diagnosis years after they had tested positive. This all led to a further outreach for the infection as many could be infected without any knowledge despite being proactive in testing.

The current inquiry is seeking to right these wrongs and has said that victims have been failed "not once, but repeatedly". The Infected Blood inquiry has highlighted the lack of openness from the doctors and those responsible for the blood products on the risk of treatment and the many positive test results of those infected.

In conclusion public inquiries are used in order to correct large mistakes and wrongs. They put the government in a position to create good in a situation where there may have only been bad. As seen through the Infected Blood inquiry it also gives those affected a voice, they allow those who have been wronged to have their say so no other person will have to go through what they have. It is also a political tool since the inquiries take years and years to conclude often meaning that another completely new government is in power when the reports are finalised.

If you have been received infected blood or have undergone any of the above please get in touch with Ben Harrison at ben.harrison@milnerslaw.com or 07875 016764, or indeed any legal issue arising from your business of private life please fell free to call Giles Ward on 07789 401 411 or e mail giles.ward@milnerslaw.com

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Date	Venue	Cost plus VAT
MIDLANDS		
BASIC PRINCIPLES OF PEST CONTROL		
Open Awards Level 2 Award in the Principles of Rodent Control		
29th Oct 2024	Burton on Trent	£165
Killgerm Principles of Insect Control		
30th & 31st Oct 2024	Burton on Trent	£190
REFRESHER COURSES		
Pest Control Refresher/Update		
18th Sept 2024	Burton on Trent	£65
SPECIALIST COURSES		
Safe use of Air Weapons for Bird Control		
19th Sept 2024	Kibworth	£220 Inc lunch
Bird Control		
17th & 18th Sept 2024	Kibworth	£300 Inc lunch
Insect Identification		
19th Sept 2024	Burton on Trent	£220 Inc lunch
Drainage Investigations & Rat Control		
15th August 2024	Burton on Trent	£220 Inc lunch
INSECT WORKSHOPS		
Insect Workshop 1 - Bedbugs & Fleas		
5th Sept 2024	Burton on Trent	£165 Inc lunch

Date	Venue	Cost plus VAT
SURREY		
BASIC PRINCIPLES OF PEST CONTROL		
Open Awards Level 2 Award in the Principles of Rodent Control		
16th July 2024	Lingfield	£165
24th Sept 2024	Lingfield	£165
Killgerm Principles of Insect Control		
17th & 18th July 2024	Lingfield	£190
25th & 26th Sept 2024	Lingfield	£190
SPECIALIST COURSES		
Safe use of Air Weapons for Bird Control		
23rd July 2024	Reading	£220 Inc lunch
3rd Sept 2024	Reading	£220 Inc lunch
26th Nov 2024	Reading	£220 Inc lunch
Bird Control		
24th & 25th July 2024	Reading	£300 Inc lunch

Date	Venue	Cost plus VAT
BRISTOL		
BASIC PRINCIPLES OF PEST CONTROL		
Open Awards Level 2 Award in the Principles of Rodent Control		
19th Nov 2024	Bristol	* £165/£195
Killgerm Principles of Insect Control		
20th & 21st Nov 2024	Bristol	* £190/£220
REFRESHER COURSES		
Pest Control Refresher/Update		
17th Oct 2024	Bristol	* £65/£165
SPECIALIST COURSES		
Safe use of Air Weapons for Bird Control		
12th Sept 2024	Portishead, Bristol	£220 Inc lunch
Bird Control		
10th & 11th Sept 2024	Portishead, Bristol	£300 Inc lunch

Date	Venue	Cost plus VAT
BERKSHIRE & HAMPSHIRE		
BASIC PRINCIPLES OF PEST CONTROL		
Open Awards Level 2 Award in the Principles of Rodent Control		
3rd Sept 2024	Newbury	£165
14th Nov 2024	Newbury	£165
REFRESHER COURSES		
Pest Control Refresher/Update		
4th Sept 2024	Newbury	£65
SPECIALIST COURSES		
Drainage Investigations & Rat Control		
12th Sept 2024	Newbury	£220 Inc lunch
PRACTICAL COURSES		
Trapping Techniques		
5th Sept 2024	Hampshire	£165 Inc lunch

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND BRITISH PEST CONTROL ASSOCIATION - LEVEL 2 AWARD IN PEST MANAGEMENT
FEE - £950 + VAT per person (includes Killgerm manual, RSPH Exam, lunch & refreshments)

Venue: Ossett	
Unit 3	Monday 7th & Tuesday 8th October 2024
Unit 1	Monday 14th & Tuesday 15th October 2024
Unit 2	Monday 21st & Tuesday 22nd October 2024
Examination	Wednesday 23rd October 2024

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND BRITISH PEST CONTROL ASSOCIATION - LEVEL 2 AWARD IN PEST MANAGEMENT FEE - £950 + VAT per person (includes Killgerm manual, RSPH Exam, lunch & refreshments)

Reigate	
Unit 3	Monday 28th & Tuesday 29th October 2024
Unit 1	Monday 4th & Tuesday 5th November 2024
Unit 2	Monday 11th & Tuesday 12th November 2024
Examination	Wednesday 13th November 2024

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH LEVEL 3 AWARD IN PEST MANAGEMENT. FEE - £850 + VAT per person (includes RSPH Exam, lunch & refreshments)

Venue: TBC
Training and Information day
Core Unit examination

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH LEVEL 3 AWARD IN PEST MANAGEMENT. FEE - £850 + VAT per person (includes RSPH Exam, lunch & refreshments)

Venue: TBC
Training and Information day
Core Unit examination

Date	Venue	Cost plus VAT
BASIC PRINCIPLES OF PEST CONTROL		
Open Awards Level 2 Award in the Principles of Rodent Control		
3rd Sept 2024	Ossett	£165
3rd Dec 2024	Ossett	£165
Killgerm Principles of Insect Control		
4th & 5th Sept 2024	Ossett	£190
REFRESHER COURSES		
Pest Control Refresher/Update		
14th Nov 2024	Ossett	£65
SPECIALIST COURSES		
Safe use of Air Weapons for Bird Control		
15th Oct 2024	Holmes Chapel	£220 Inc lunch
Bird Guano		
16th Oct 2024	Ossett	£130 Inc lunch
Drainage Investigations & Rat Control		
17th Oct 2024	Ossett	£220 Inc lunch
PRACTICAL COURSES		
Trapping Techniques		
3rd Oct 2024	Ossett	£165 Inc lunch
21st Nov 2024	Ossett	£165 Inc lunch

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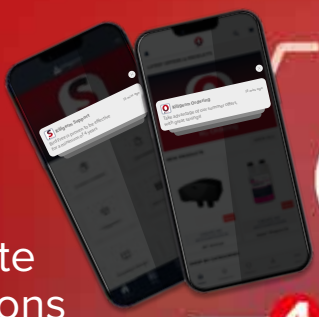

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