

# Let's keep it voluntary



Stephen Jacob is CEO of BASIS, the independent standards setting organisation that runs the PROMPT professional pest controllers register. Amid calls from some in the industry that the UK should have stronger regulation determining the qualifications and ongoing training requirements for pest control professionals, Stephen explains, in this article, why he believes that voluntary is best.

One of the benefits of being in my position is the opportunity to meet a wide range of people from all areas of the pest management industry and from across the whole country. This gives a real flavour of attitudes to the latest legislation, trends and – my favourite – continuing professional development (CPD).

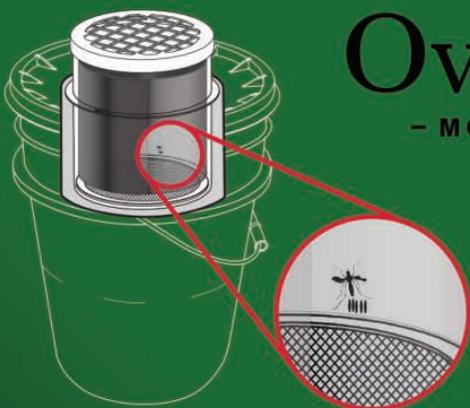
I'm happy to report that gone are the days when I would ask everyone in the room to put their hands up if they engaged with CPD and you'd get just a few hands up in reply. Ask the same question now and you'll get a forest of arms – which is hugely gratifying when you're the CEO of the largest professional register of pest control professionals; all of whom are committed to improving their expertise.

The latest example of this has been at a series of events to meet members of the National Pest Technicians Association (NPTA). Whilst I accept that in these incidences they are a self-selecting audience bearing in mind that the NPTA, which has long been a staunch supporter of BASIS PROMPT, has made being a member of a professional register a condition of joining its organisation.

Their heartening response to my question is, therefore, inevitable, but, if it is reflected elsewhere in the wider industry, then it's hugely welcome, because CPD is key to us keeping our industry in its current state and it's preferable to ensure that it's something that people buy into voluntarily. I say this,

## Get Ready for Mo(squitoes) *with*

### Ovi-Catch™ - MOSQUITO TRAP -



**#OVI-1**

Contact Sean Paker:  
sean@catchmaster.com  
catchmasterpro.com



- **Non-toxic, ideal for sensitive accounts**
- **Uses mosquitoes' breeding habits against them**
- **Eliminates up to 1,000 future mosquitoes per female caught**

even though across the Irish Sea, the Republic of Ireland has just made being a member of a CPD scheme a condition of getting a Pest Management Trained Professional User (PMU) number from the Department of Agriculture, Farming and the Marine, without which pest controllers cannot purchase anticoagulant rodenticides.

Happily for BASIS PROMPT, we are the preferred scheme and this has resulted in an increase in members for us, nevertheless, I prefer the *status quo* in the UK, where the Government has taken a more hands-off stance.

Currently in the UK, certificates gained through training are required in order to purchase certain products, but generally the industry promotes the need for CPD itself and BASIS PROMPT works with a range of organisations including pest professionals, training providers and product manufacturers to promote the advantages of ongoing training.

### Ongoing training essential

While I am sure that there are rogue operators who don't bother, most people understand that ongoing training is vital but for those who need convincing then the existence of the UK Rodenticide Stewardship Regime is a good reminder of the need for everyone to stay up-to-date with new products, practices and regulation.

A combination of measures set up to ensure that the impact of anticoagulant rodenticides on wildlife is minimised, the Regime is due to be reviewed next year by a HSE-led Government Oversight Group (GOG). This Group will examine the levels of residues of rodenticides in non-target species – namely barn owls.

The last barn owl survey showed some decline in residues and, whilst these were not large enough to be statistically significant, they were an indication that the Stewardship Regime appears to be working. This is excellent news; not least because it is an indicator of how good the industry is proving to be at regulating itself.

We most certainly experienced an increase in membership at the same time as the stewardship regime came in, correlating with the introduction of a requirement that people obtained a training-based certificate of competence in order that they could purchase stewardship-level rodenticides and the recommendation that they participated in continuous professional development.

Currently, this is a recommendation, not a condition, but it is being wholeheartedly supported by the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use (CRRU), which is also monitoring the uptake of CPD materials and will include this when reporting to the GOG.

It does not take a huge leap of imagination to envisage a situation where, if the levels of toxins are found to have increased, then engaging in ongoing training and development becomes a condition, requiring compulsory membership of a CPD scheme.

Once that happens, then there will be no way back and the extra requirement will result in additional red tape for pest controllers, accompanied by more fees to pay and the possibility of compulsory refresher tests, with, doubtless an administration fee on top.

### Insecticide restrictions likely

I have no doubt that the stringent controls we see with rodenticides will find their way into the insecticide market too. Only this year we have seen new restrictions on the use of Ficam D, which can no longer be applied outside, nor used on a host of species it used to be authorised for. This was in the wake of concerns about the effect of chemicals on non-target species.

There is a train of thought which suggests that such restrictions will encourage pest professionals to be creative and look more



BASIS PROMPT chief executive officer, Stephen Jacob

holistically at their practice, moving from controlling pests to managing pests including preventing future infestations and seeking non-lethal methods.

There will also be a burden placed upon pest technicians to demonstrate how they can deal with an infestation to consumers who are getting more informed and more concerned about the effects of products on the local ecosystem.

These requirements can only be met properly by staying abreast of developments and investing in your own training by committing voluntarily to a regular programme of CPD rather than only doing so because it is against the law not to.

**RoBait**  
CURVE

Multi functional bait station that adapts to your needs

Can be used with rat snap trap

Can be used with glue board

Bait rods in vertical and horizontal position

Note: Available with clear cover

**AldefGlobal**

Email: [aldefglobal@gmail.com](mailto:aldefglobal@gmail.com) - [info@aldefglobal.com](mailto:info@aldefglobal.com)  
 Website: [aldefglobal.com](http://aldefglobal.com)  
 Facebook: [facebook.com/aldefglobal](https://facebook.com/aldefglobal)

NPM A MEMBER  
BPCA British Pest Control Association MEMBER