

pest

The independent UK pest management magazine

Aiming to be bird free



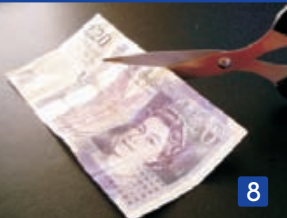
Issue 19
January & February 2012

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threat highlighted



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move birds on?



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in urban mice



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Aims

As the industry's only independent magazine, **Pest** aims to deliver a mix of unbiased news, impartial advice and topical technical features. We are committed to being as inclusive as possible covering every sector of the pest management industry.

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

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What does 2012 hold in store?

Clever they might be – but thank heavens pests can't read and are therefore oblivious to the financial woes we are currently facing. Fortunately, even when our customer's have less money in their pockets, the pests don't go away and people's willingness to tolerate them hardly changes.

What might change is how those pests are countered. We have reported before on the plight of pest control in local authorities – and we do so again. During 2011 the situation has continued to worsen, and 2012 may be no better. But, as our feature reveals, every cloud has a silver lining – as local authorities pull back, opportunities open-up for the private sector, either directly employed by a householder or, as is increasingly the case, as the local authority's chosen contractor.

These shifts are sure to show-up in our second national 'state of the industry' survey. Once again we are delighted to be working with BASF Pest Control Solutions on this – see page 13. The survey questions will be sent to those at the sharp-end later in February. Please make your views known.

Finally, our annual **Pest** Best Product award has undergone a bit of a make-over – see page 29. The qualifying period for new products has been extended so as to allow pest controllers time to use these new products for themselves and so be in a position to nominate and vote for the one that has made the most difference to their business.

Frances McKim

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Nigel joins Killgerm



Nigel Batten, one of the industry's stalwart characters, left P+L Systems to join Killgerm Chemicals on 16 January. Nigel has worked in the industry since 1973. His new role is as business &

product development manager, working alongside Paul Hoyes.

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Buy with confidence



Towards the end of last year, Steve Barron, director of Hertfordshire-based Pest-Go (Urban Fox Control London) was presented with his Trading Standards Approved Buy with Confidence certificate. Steve has made something of a speciality of fox management work in London.

CPD Number for Pest 2011



Members of the BASIS PROMPT register who are collecting CPD points for the year just ended will need the number below. This reference allows you to claim the two points awarded for reading all six issues of **Pest** magazine in 2011. The same number of points will be available for 2012.

PC/18687/1011/g

Fox filmed grabbing a 'fake baby'

A concerned South London pest controller, who is also a grandfather of two baby girls, had become increasingly worried about the number of foxes visiting his garden. So he set up his own experiment and then filmed what happened. He was all too aware of the case of the twin girls in East London who were attacked by a fox in their cots in June 2010.

'Dave' (who wishes to remain anonymous) put a buggy in his garden and in it he placed a dead piglet wearing baby clothes.

He then played the sound of a baby crying through an MP3 player. He borrowed a friend's video camera to film what happened.

Several foxes came to look at it then one of them reached forward, grabbed the baby, urinated on its 'kill' before pulling off the baby-grow and discarding it.

To watch the video for yourself go to the online **Fieldsports Channel** at www.fieldsportschannel.tv/ or the News section of the **Pest** website.

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This video picture is a little blurred but you can still make out how interested the fox is in 'the baby'

Sale of Talunex to Killgerm

Just before Christmas 2011, Certis Europe announced that agreement has been reached with the Killgerm Group for the sale of Talunex, (aluminium phosphide) and the associated Topex applicator equipment. This became effective on 9 January 2012.

In something of a turn-around, and following debate at the RAMPS AGM, Killgerm has put back to 1 June 2012 (from 1 September 2011) the date by which new entrants to the industry who wish to buy these products would need to have attained the new City & Guilds qualification. Existing customers remain unaffected. (See **Pest** Issue 18 November & December 2011).

Herefordshire pest controller honoured



Director and owner of Positive Environmental, James Ostler, pictured above (right), was awarded the president's distinguished service certificate at the Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) annual dinner in Leicester just before Christmas.

James was presented with the award by IOSH president Steve Granger (left). The citation reads 'for services to health and safety pursuant to the IOSH strategy'. James had just completed his three year term as a trustee.

Christmas party raises charity donation



Each year the Rokill Christmas party is something to look forward to. Held in January at the Haven Hotel in Sandbanks, it was attended by 90 staff and guests.

Thanks to the generous support of Killgerm, PestWest, Redwood & RatPak who provided prizes for a raffle and auction, a total of £2,000 was raised. This has been split between Macmillan Cancer Research and the Victoria Education Centre in Poole.

Pictured are Rokill director Chris Turner, (left) with managing director, Alec McQuin.

Cleankill staff celebrate top marks



A proud moment for Cleankill staff. Left to right: John Whitehead, Clive Bury, Anne Hyde (Investors in People assessor), Paul Bates (managing director) and Ian Miller

Surrey-based Cleankill Environmental Services is celebrating after becoming one of the first pest control companies in the UK to be awarded the Investors in People Bronze standard.

The news came after an Investors in People assessor visited the company's South Croydon headquarters and interviewed a number of staff about issues like training, work-life balance and communication. Cleankill met the 26 evidence criteria from the Investors in People's wider framework required for the bronze award.

The company's managing director, Paul Bates, said: "The assessment shows that our team is one of the most experienced and best trained in the country."

Escape the rat race

In an amusing publicity stunt – albeit with a serious message – Bournemouth-based Prokill organised the painting at Victoria station in London of a large piece of striking 3D floor art encouraging people to 'escape the rat race'.

The six by four metre floor vinyl was developed to stop and engage passengers as they embarked on their daily travels to and from the office. The message behind the stunt was an attempt to persuade workers fed-up with the daily grind, to consider a new career and become their own boss – that of taking up pest control with a franchise from Prokill. The timing of the event was two days after 'Black Monday' which this year fell on 16 January. Research has shown that January is the most depressing month of the year.



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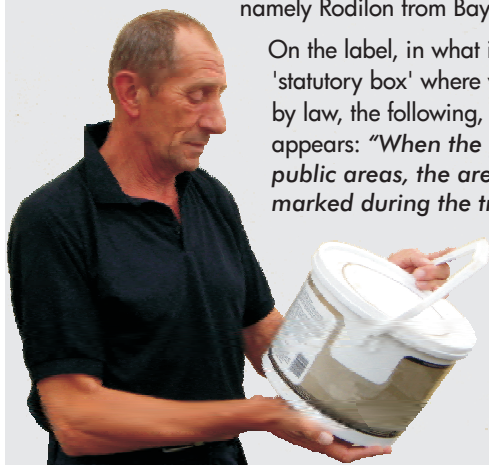
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Use biocides safely. Always read the label and product information before use.

Always read the label before use...

How many times have practical pest controllers either heard this phrase, or read it in on some piece of promotional material? Well – those who have done what was requested got something of a shock when reading the labels of the newest rodenticide to hit the market – namely Rodilon from Bayer.



On the label, in what is called the 'statutory box' where wording is defined by law, the following, totally new, phrase appears: *"When the product is used in public areas, the areas treated must be marked during the treatment period and a notice explaining the risk of primary or secondary poisoning by the anticoagulant as well as indicating the*

first measures to be taken in the case of poisoning, must be made available alongside the baits."

Unsurprisingly, quite a bit of head scratching has gone on. What exactly is a 'public area'? What is meant by 'marked' – is this something on the rodent box, a big sign in the vicinity, or what? If the latter, this is tantamount to shouting from the roof tops – "We have rats" – hardly what any restaurant would want to do!

It turns out this is a new phrase, planned to be phased-in on all second-generation anticoagulant products, as their labels come up for amendment post Annex 1 approval. Or, in layman's terms, this will be added to all difenacoum labels over the next six months and all bromadiolone ones in the next one to two years.

Industry has taken this up with the UK regulators who are believed to be preparing for some sort of consultation period towards the end of March. So, readers should be aware of this possibility and be ready to respond with their views.

One likely compromise proposal which is being talked about is that the words 'unless in tamper-resistant bait stations...' will be inserted at the end of this label statement. But who knows?

ASBOs for pigeon feeders

Following complaints from residents, and in an attempt to reduce the problem of pigeons within town centres, a number of local authorities have been getting tough on pigeon feeders.

In January, two Trowbridge pensioners, dubbed the 'Pigeon Ladies', were given Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO) after they attracted hundreds of pigeons to the town by feeding them every day. For several years the pair – 76 year-old Danuta Rogowa and 68 year-old Margaret Ann Reynolds – have flouted orders by Wiltshire Council to stop feeding the birds. Previous attempts by the council to stop the women failed.

Meanwhile, in London, the woman dubbed the 'Pigeon Lady of Pimlico' has been hit with an ASBO by Westminster City Council, banning her from feeding the birds in the area for the next three years. Nadia Lee, 64, was often spotted pushing a pram, filled with grain which she used to scatter for the pigeons.

In Cumbria, a mother and daughter were found guilty of breaching an abatement order to stop leaving food for the birds. Mildred McIntosh and daughter, Janet, were each fined £500, but said they were willing to make a stand and were prepared to go to jail. This action follows complaints by neighbours that up to 300 pigeons were being attracted by this pair.

This is not entirely a UK phenomenon. In France, Parisians can be fined Euros 450 if caught feeding the birds. They have even developed a new word to describe these urban offenders – *nourrisseurs* (feeders).



Bird control licences – what's changed for 2012?

In brief, there have been no major, but certainly some minor, changes to the Bird General and Class licences for 2012.

UK bird control licences issued under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and subsequent amendments) are reissued each year, generally on 1 January. Whilst there have been no significant alterations this year, it is always wise to double check anything you are not sure of before undertaking any bird management activities.

Below is a round-up of what has altered:

England amends

- Clarification of wording regarding statutory suspension of wildfowling to make it clearer that the licences can be used in these periods
- Licence condition 10, word 'should' changed to 'must' – remove dead animals from traps upon inspection
- List of Schedule 9 species corrected to include full list of species

Scotland amends

- Removal from General Licence #4 (Licence to Protect Air Safety), of Condition 17: 'Where there is reasonable suspicion that an offence has been committed, the operator of a trap must reveal its location if required to do so by a constable'

Bird licensing responsibilities have been transferred [from Scottish Government, Rural & Environment Directorate] to Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) as of 1 July 2011.

Wales

The 2012 licences are basically the same as in 2011. There is due to be a consultation on the licences this year.

Northern Ireland

No changes made at all when the current licences were introduced on 1 September 2011.

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What lies beneath?

Readers must be living on a different planet if they are unaware of the general spending cuts in local authorities. These have affected every aspect of the services provided by the public sector. So how has pest control fared and are there hidden and potentially far reaching consequences to the cutbacks that have been taking place? **Pest** editor Frances McKim reviews the changes and the impact they are having on pest control nationwide.

A significant proportion of **Pest** readers work in the pest control units of local authorities. Without exception they have had a pretty rough year. And all signs indicate further choppy water ahead.

How things have changed from 30 years or so ago when most in the industry would have estimated the local authority and the commercial pest control sectors as pretty equal, each commanding roughly half of the servicing market. One can only speculate what market share the public sector holds today?

Council teams under the spotlight

Ever since the cuts in Government cash allocated to councils in the Local Government Finance Settlement were announced in late 2010 all those working in council pest control teams knew they would be under the spotlight. At the end of the day, despite the often excellent service offered by these units and, under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949, a statutory duty to control certain pests, it is not a statutory duty to have an in-house pest control service. This makes pest control an easy target for the financial boys whose objective is to maintain statutory front-line services.

Not surprisingly, in the first National Pest Management Survey undertaken jointly by BASF Pest Solutions and **Pest** in early 2011, only 49% of respondents from the local

authority sector described prospects for the coming year as positive (compared with 65% for commercial pest control companies). Over the next five year period, this same group felt things would be much bleaker – a quarter felt prospects were poor. It will be very interesting to see how these feelings may have changed in this year's survey – see page 13.

Generally, throughout the year, councils have been introducing new and more efficient ways of working. Staff and services have been re-organised and administration costs cut to the bone. **Pest** has been monitoring developments reported in the local press or sent in by readers – see tables on pages 9, 10 and 11.

Probably the easiest and least stressful approach adopted by councils has been a review of which pests were to be treated along with the scale of charges made.

Go back in time and most councils offered treatments for rats, and usually mice, free of charge to householders. Charges were then made for the likes of wasps, fleas and, of more significance now, bed bugs. The rates charged were always a bone of contention with the commercial pest control companies who felt these were heavily subsidised and anti-competitive. There is now something of an irony here, as an array of commercial companies now find themselves contracted



Dave Oldbury: "It's the tip of the iceberg. Short term financial gain is storing up trouble for the future."

to perform these pest control tasks for councils; but more about this later.

Raising costs for treatments however, is something of a double-edged sword and does go against the principles of many of those who run pest control teams and who feel it is part of their public health remit to the community. In these times of austerity, what are hard-up families to do (those who fall outside the reduced prices for benefits claimants) when faced with a pest problem? Often the answer is 'nothing' or they resort to a DIY approach having searched the shelves of B&Q – and that then raises a whole raft of different issues for discussion another day!

Some still offer free service

This said, there are still several councils who do retain some free of charge treatments. Take Liverpool City Council for example. Pre

2005 it offered a free service for rats and mice. In 2005 a charge of £15 per course of treatments was introduced and the number of call-outs declined dramatically – but this was not a popular move among residents and within 10 months the service reverted to a free one. Within days the number of call-outs escalated. With this history, but now faced with a need to save significant sums, the result this time has been a drastic reduction in servicing staff, rat and mice treatments do remain free, wasps and ants are charged at £60 but after this, treatments of any further pests are no longer offered.

A money making step

To a councillor faced with budget cuts, introducing a charge for previously free services seems a good idea – just think of the extra revenue.... But, experience shows this is often a quick way to losing the service entirely. Increase the rates, call-outs fall, some councillor spots this, the value of the service is questioned – end result the department is either closed, or the service put out to tender to a local private company.

Take Waveney District Council as an example. As reported in the *Eastern Daily Press* in March 2011, the in-house service cost £84,157 in 2007/8 compared to £4,500 in 2010/11. When free, rat calls to the council's in house team in 2007/8 totalled 872. Now contracted out and charged for, the calls declined to just 90.

In a review of the service, the council seemed happy saying: "This new approach has not led to more rat infestations, has not impeded public health and provides better value for money for tax-payers."

Winchester City Council sees pest control as

a means of making money – but time will tell. Up until October 2011 treatments for rats and mice were free and the service was contracted out to Serco. Treatments were typically 2,500 to 3,000 per annum. From October the council brought the operation in-house and introduced a charge of £35 for rats & mice, £45 for wasps and £45 per hour for fleas and other insects. For 2011/12 it expects an income (after costs) of £15,000 and for 2012/13 onwards a profit of £30,000. Really?

A golden opportunity?

If local authorities are either reducing their services, or contracting them out, is this a golden opportunity for the commercial sector? Without doubt the proportion of the UK pest control market cared for by the commercial sector is growing. But perhaps the more significant question is: Is the market as a whole expanding? Unlikely is probably the answer to both these questions.

With local authority contracts on offer, some commercial companies are beating a path to the Town Hall. But what is so attractive about these contracts? Are these commercial companies making any money? Not all companies are interested, but those that are admit it's the volume of work and the regularity that proves attractive – especially if you can capture the contracts for neighbouring authorities. The prices tendered are low – but quoting the maxim of the discount supermarkets – sell enough volume, even at a low margin and it will be profitable. But the risk is, if a price is suddenly introduced to a local council tax payer for what was a free service, the volume of work can half almost overnight.

One thing which is becoming increasingly



Monitor Pest Control's advert to attract more local authority business

apparent is that tendering is virtually totally price driven. Contractors complain they have cut their quotes to the bone but still aren't awarded the contract.

Kent-based Monitor Pest Control made their desire to increase their local authority portfolio known by advertising in the last two month's editions of *Environmental Health News*. Now with contracts for 11 councils in the London, Kent and Surrey area, Monitor obviously sees this market as an opportunity. But as managing director, Gary Howard explains: "With a number of contracts to service it enables the company to raise its level of efficiency, yet still offer an excellent service to the residents for the prices charged."

A tendering frenzy underway

"At the moment there is something of a tendering frenzy, as more contracts are put out and as councils think of different and innovative ways of organising the tender. Some, such as Maidstone, Ashford and Swale, are clubbing together on their tender. Pricing is increasingly competitive and margins are being eroded," concludes Gary.

For example, currently tenders are on offer at Slough, Hart, Redditch, Colchester, the London Boroughs of Richmond and Redbridge with Hillingdon rumoured to be soon following suit. Thanet, Dover and Shepway have joined forces and are also up for award. Within tenders, contractors may have to work on a fixed fee or on a per job completed basis. Usually the customer pays the council direct, then off this listed price a margin is deducted to cover admin costs. This is then the sum the contractor gets. Another variation is the contractor is paid a higher figure, but has to deal entirely with all the administration and calls from the public requesting advice, which can prove very time consuming.

Councils where rates for pest control services have either been introduced, or significantly increased, during 2011

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ■ Amber Valley | ■ Middlesbrough Council |
| ■ Bristol City Council | ■ New Forest District Council |
| ■ Camden Council | ■ Newport Council |
| ■ City of York Council | ■ Oxford City Council |
| ■ Crawley Borough Council | ■ Reading Borough Council |
| ■ Derby City Council | ■ Ribble Valley Borough Council |
| ■ Epping Forest District Council | ■ Sheffield City Council |
| ■ Falkirk Council | ■ Stevenage Borough Council |
| ■ Liverpool City Council | ■ Test Valley Borough Council |
| ■ London Borough of Brent | ■ Waltham Forest Council |
| ■ London Borough of Tower Hamlets | ■ Winchester City Council |
| ■ Manchester City Council | |

Source: Personal contact or as reported in the local press and spotted by **Pest**. The list is likely to be longer.

Rentokil-Initial and MITIE Pest Control are also active in this market sector. Having run its three year course, the contract held by Rentokil at Leeds City Council is currently in the final stages of re-tendering. As reported in **Pest** (issue 9 May & June 2010) this contract has certainly not been 'all sweetness and light', so which company emerges as the new holder will be interesting to see. Although invited, unfortunately Rentokil did not wish to make any comment on their council work in general in this article.

On the other hand Peter Trotman, managing director of MITIE Pest Control detailed his opinion: "There is a saying 'there is no such thing as a free lunch'. The pest control service from councils has never been 'free' – it has been charged for by spreading the costs to the council tax payer. Surely charging the actual user of the service is a much fairer way than charging many people who never use the service? Therefore, the charge, whether it is delivered either by a council employee, or the council's subcontractor or a private company, is just market forces working in different ways.

"MITIE has gained work from several councils. It is high volume, low margin work but quite enjoyable and relatively simple to deliver. We like working with councils. We can take their current model of delivery, strip it down, enhance it and make it hugely more efficient. Typically we can reduce manpower by 20-40% and still deliver the same quantity of visits per year. But like all employers, we have to consider the impact on the employees. There are some really

great technicians working for councils that we can re-train into commercial roles. So we see it two ways – we get the work and we also get the opportunity to take on great staff," concludes Peter.

Huge price variation

But what sort of prices are charged? A quick web search on various local authority sites shows some quite amazing variation. In the table at the bottom of this page, the prices for four different types of treatment are recorded – the details have come directly from the named councils' websites. Whatever you might think of council policies and prices, full marks should be awarded for the transparency of the information to the customer. As an interesting exercise, try interrogating virtually any commercial pest control company's website to see what you might be charged?

Pest readers will be far more in touch with treatment costs than we are sitting here in our office. But reviewing the table, some of the charges look ridiculously low. After discounting the free services, Manchester City Council at £12 for three visits for rats is a bargain. Obviously a subsidised price, but one wonders how SDK looking after the residents in Bromley can make any money when only charging £74 for 'full treatment including all visits' for both rats and mice, or

Councils known to have contracted out in 2011

- Epping Forest District Council contracted to Rentokil
- Hart District Council (tender announced late 2011)
- London Borough of Bromley contracted to SDK Environmental
- London Borough of Sutton contracted to Monitor Pest Control
- Mid Suffolk District Council contracted to MITIE
- North Kesteven District Council contracted to Pest Express

Source: Personal contact or as reported in the local press and spotted by **Pest**. The list is likely to be longer.

Rentokil with two visits for £60 in Epping Forest. Likewise in rural Devon, Cannon Pest Control are not getting rich on £46 for up to three visits for both rats and mice.

Are we heading for a decline in standards?

Carry on at this rate and the end result must mean one thing only – a decline in standards. For those with long memories, this sounds all too familiar. It was precisely the state of hospital pest contracts back in the 1970s.

This emerging scenario is one that Bob Howard, previously in charge of the pest control unit at the London Borough of Ealing, saw coming. Having left the council in May 2011, Bob started his own pest control business taking out a franchise with Prokill. It's still early days for Bob, who said: "Pest control in local authorities isn't going to get any better. The days of large pest control teams offering the level of

Charges for four selected pest control treatments undertaken either in-house or by the retained contractor

	Waltham Forest	Liverpool City Council	Manchester City Council	London Borough of Brent	Middlesborough Council	Epping Forest DC	London Borough of Bromley	East Devon DC	North Kesteven DC
Serviced by	In-house	In-house	In-house	In-house	In-house	Rentokil Initial	SDK Environmental	Cannon Pest Control	Pest Express
Rats	Free	Free	£12 for 3 visits	£95 for 3 visits	£43.50	Charges vary with council tax band. A to D £60. For rats & mice this includes 2 visits, for wasps its per nest and for bed bugs 1 visit. Bands E to F £72 and G to H £84, subject to a free survey	£74 for full treatment - this includes all visits made	£46 for 3 visits	£41 for 2 visits
Mice	£110	Free	£60 for 3 visits	£95 for 2 visits	£43.50			£46 for 3 visits	£41 for 2 visits
Wasps	£45	£60	£54	£55	£41.50		£51	£13 per nest	£41
Bed bugs	£160 for 1 bed (per extra bed £15)	Does not treat	£72 per treatment	£195 for 2 visits	£90		£98	£20 per survey, then quoted	To be quoted

Source: Relevant local authority websites. January 2012

service they used to be numbered. But the pests don't just go away – all the work has to be done by someone. I'm in the same job, just under a different banner."

Councils which withdrew all pest control services in 2011

Callers are either referred to Yellow Pages, a trade association BPCA/NPTA, or supplied with a list of local contractors.

- Basildon Council
- Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council (except rats if on benefit)
- Brentwood Borough Council
- Carmarthenshire District Council
- City of Lincoln
- Cornwall Council
- East Staffordshire Borough Council (from April 2012)
- Kingston on Thames Council
- Torridge District Council
- Vale of White Horse District Council
- Worcester City Council

Source: Personal contact or as reported in the local press and spotted by **Pest**. The list is likely to be longer.

Dave Olbury, a much respected figure in the industry, who until his retirement last May managed the team at Manchester City Council, likens the whole scenario to an iceberg. "This short term financial gain is just storing up problems for the future. Over the years a lot of people put in much hard work, with the likes of integrated control in block treatments and city centre situations, but all this effort is now dissipating and the pests are not going away. Also, the people with the professional pest management knowledge are being lost in local authorities due to financial cutbacks or externalisation of the service."

A lone voice

Maybe something of a lone voice in the wilderness at present, but the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) has recognised the threat. Speaking at a recent CIEH conference its principal policy officer, Bob Mayo, said: "There is evidence that the incidence of pest-borne diseases is on the increase and there are risks that pests could pose a serious public health threat if not properly controlled."

"Cutting pest control services is extremely short sighted – it diminishes a local



Bob Mayo: "Pest-borne diseases are on the rise"

authority's capacity for strategic planning for public health improvement. Too many local authorities regard pest control as a treatment response, rather than as a potential public health threat," he explained.

In conclusion, he said: "The presence of pests can lead to a considerable risk to public health, including the spread of pathogens, allergies, bites, psychological or social stress, damage to property and contamination of work surfaces and foodstuffs. These are all good reasons for local authorities to build pest management into their public health and protection planning strategies. This they are much less able to do if the service has been contracted out."

Perfect Storm brewing

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health's (CIEH) growing concern about the state of public health provision in this country is highlighted in a new 16-page booklet entitled *The Perfect Storm*.

In it the CIEH explains how it has become increasingly concerned about the lack of a joined-up and comprehensive approach to pest control policy creation. The booklet refers to the worrying reduction in pest control services provided by local authorities and a decline in the qualifications, technical expertise, knowledge and understanding of pest species among those responsible for public health.

More specifically, the CIEH spells out how the trend to contracting out of pest control services is undermining the strategic approach needed and that the underlying expert knowledge required to prevent unhealthy housing and unsafe public areas is being lost. It concludes that this will inevitably lead to two major and undesirable effects.

- An increase in pest problems leading to more unhealthy living conditions and degraded environments
- More treatments being completed once the problem has become established because of lack of routine preventative measures.

Whilst recognising the need for local authorities to live within their budgets, it says that failing to recognise problems now will only lead to higher costs later. This is false economy which will simply pass the problem onto the next generation and increase health care costs in the present. CIEH recommends the development of a structure whereby local pest management expertise and strategic control programmes are retained within local authorities, even if a local authority pest control department has to bring in outside contractors from time to time to assist. A PDF of the booklet can be downloaded from www.cieh.org/policy/npap_publications.html and off the **Pest** website.



CIEH charging and contacting-out advice

In a policy briefing note published 12 months ago, in February 2011, the CIEH clearly argued that public health arguments should prevail over financial considerations when:

- The question of whether to contract-out the pest control service is raised;
- Considering the imposition of charges and their scale.

The briefing note concluded:

"We believe that the most effective pest management results from coordinated efforts with the local authority at the heart of the coordination...increasing charges for pest control services and/or contracting out the service is inconsistent with local authorities' public health responsibilities."

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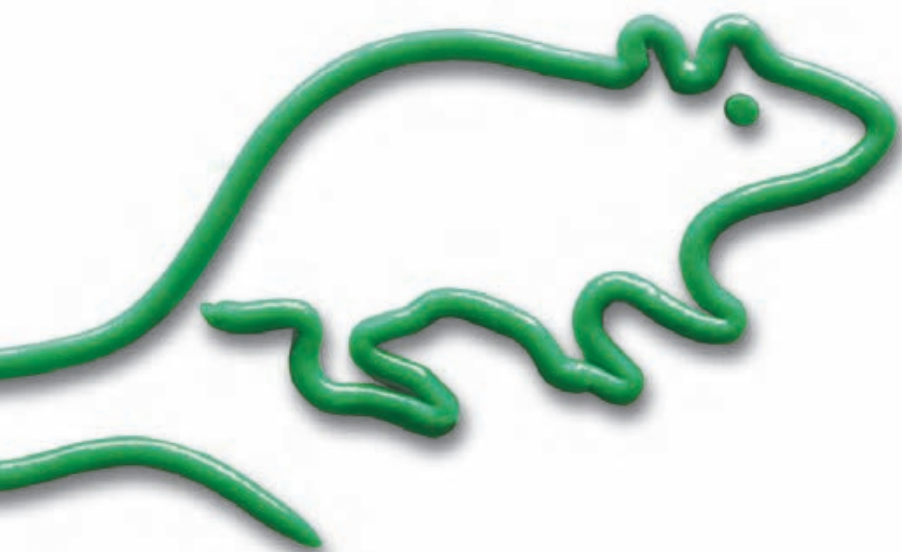
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Is your glass half full or half empty?



Last year BASF Pest Control Solutions teamed up with **Pest** to conduct the first ever 'state of the nation' survey, mapping the mood of UK pest management. Great news. We are pleased to announce that the online survey is to be repeated in 2012. So if you're at the sharp-end of UK pest control keep an eye on your email for your chance to tell us what you think!

Twelve months ago an online survey was sent to owners, managers technicians and field biologists who were registered as readers of **Pest** and had provided an email address. These people were invited to take part in a nationwide survey to benchmark their attitudes and intentions, to record how they spent their time and which pests they were coming up against. They were also asked about the prospects for their pest control work in the immediate future and over the following five years and to say whether they were self employed, from a pest control company or a local authority pest control unit.

How do you see the prospects for your pest control work over the next five years

	Very poor or poor	Neither good nor poor	Good or very good
Pest control companies	1%	19%	81%
Self-employed pest controllers	5%	8%	61%
Local authority pest control units	20%	22%	23%

Source: BASF/Pest National UK Pest Management Survey 2011

In the table, above, from last year's survey, there is a clear split between those who can be described as working in the private sector (pest control companies and self-employed pest controllers) and those in the public sector (local authorities). From the evidence we have seen the public sector fears have been well founded (see article on pages 8-11 in this issue). In the 2012 survey, it will be interesting to see whether the private sector continues to exhibit such a positive frame of mind.

Last year we had an incredible response confirming our view that people in pest control are rarely slow at coming forward.

The results will be useful to everyone allowing individuals to benchmark their activities and

Are you a lion or a pussy cat? Please tell us how you feel by taking part in the BASF/Pest National UK Pest Management Industry Survey 2012



opinions and to gain a better understanding of the industry as a whole. They will also help those who lobby on behalf of the pest control sector.

Findings will be presented at the Pest-Ventures seminar on 26 April and for those who are unable to make that event there will be a special review of the findings in the May & June issue of **Pest** magazine.

All the information you provide will be treated as confidential and no comments will be attributed to individuals.

The more people who participate, the more reliable the findings will be. Please take part and let us hear your views.

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Bird research

Pigeon flight aids drone development



Rat's with wings they might be, but pigeons are teaching us a thing or two about flight mobility! Researchers at the University of Harvard have been examining the mechanics involved in their flight to improve the maneuverability of military drones.

The study examined how pigeons fly by using high-speed synchronised cameras to record how three pigeons negotiated 90 degree turns in tight spaces. The team discovered that despite the pigeon's ability to flap one wing faster than the other, or move them in different trajectories, when making turns the birds used their bodies, rather than strengthening their wing strokes. In other words, they actually roll their bodies just like a helicopter does.

It is believed this research will enable development of the drones such that they can make much tighter turns and so navigate within buildings with greater ease.



Pigeons hitch a ride on Stockholm underground

A flock of Stockholm pigeons are using public transport for their daily jaunt foraging for food in the nearby shopping centres.

"They stand calmly at the platform and wait for the underground train to arrive. When it does they get on, travel one stop, jump off and then head for their favourite haunts," explains Rasmus Sandsten, press spokesperson for underground operator, MTR.

It is believed the pigeons learnt this trick by mistake – one pigeon first got stuck on the underground. When it saw where it ended up it thought that this was a great idea! Sooner or later more of them followed suit. Amusingly they don't appear to take the tube back again – it would seem they fly home.

This is not the first time flocks of pigeons have been seen using the Stockholm tube as train drivers reported similar activity in the 1990's.



Pigeons prove they can count as well as primates

Pigeons are on a par with primates in their numerical abilities, according to research undertaken at the University of Otago at Dunedin, New Zealand. Researchers in the Department of Psychology showed that pigeons can compare pairs of images picturing up to nine objects and order them by the lower to higher number with a success rate above chance.

Study lead author, Dr Damian Scarf, said: "Up until now, only humans and primates were thought to share the ability to use abstract numerical rules in this way. Our research not only shows that pigeons are also members of this exclusive club, but, somewhat surprisingly, their performance is on a par with that of monkeys.

"While this is obviously a long way away from how humans can count, it shows that an animal with a brain structured quite differently to ours is still able to perform complex mental tasks of which only humans were once thought capable.

"Our findings add to a growing body of evidence that pigeons are among a number of avian species exhibiting impressive mental abilities that really do give the lie to the old 'bird brain' insult," he concluded.

Birds of a feather don't always stick together!

Pigeons display spectacular variations in their feathers, feet, beaks and other physical traits, but, as a new University of Utah study shows, visible traits don't always coincide with genetics.

A bird from one breed may have huge foot feathers, while a closely related breed does not, yet two unrelated pigeon breeds may both have large foot feathers.

"Most people think of pigeons as 'rats of the sky', but in fact they are really incredibly diverse," explained Michael Shapiro, an assistant professor of biology and senior author of the study.

More than 350 breeds of pigeons differ in colour, colour pattern, body size, beak size and shape, structure of the skeleton, posture, vocalisations, feather placement and flight behaviour.

With help from pigeon breeders worldwide, the researchers studied the genetic relationships and visible traits of 361 pigeons from 70 domestic breeds and two free-living populations, one from Salt Lake

City and the other from the Isle of Skye in Scotland.

"What we found through this study is that birds that are only distantly related to each other can have very similar traits, and others that are very closely related to each other can look quite different in terms of their traits," says Mike.

The study also revealed that free-living pigeons – including the common urban pigeon – carry the DNA of escaped or lost racing pigeons. Feral rock pigeons living in Salt Lake City are substantially related to a

Bird research



Two pigeon breeds, the old Dutch capuchine, left, and komorner tumbler, right, are not closely related, yet they both have feathery ornamentation on their heads known as a head crest

breed known as racing homers. Feral and perhaps wild pigeons from Scotland "are similar to an old domestic breed called the Modena, which used to be a racing pigeon but is now exclusively a show pigeon," he adds.

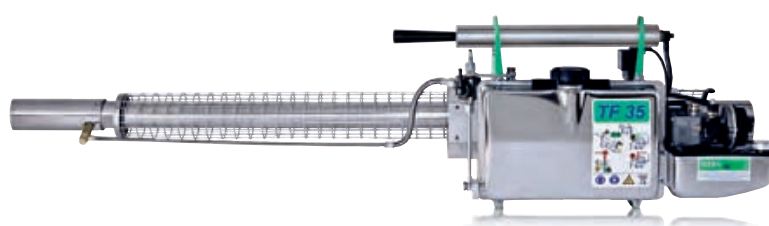
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It's a kind of magic!

The innovative new product, Bird Free Optical Gel, is causing quite a stir. How can a blob of yellowish gel in a little clear plastic dish stop birds landing, even in high pressure situations? That's what the product claims to achieve. **Pest** associate editor, Helen Riby, investigates.

According to the advertising blurb, because birds see the ultraviolet end of the spectrum, Bird Free appears to them as fire. This deterrent effect is reinforced by the smell and taste of the natural oils used in the product, which birds find extremely unpleasant, and by its stickiness.

Ian Smith, managing director, of JJ Bio, the UK agent for Bird Free explains: "Bird Free gives off an ultraviolet light which deters birds from landing on surfaces to which it is applied. I have observed this visual effect myself at a number of sites immediately after installation, and it's quite evident that most birds are deterred by the appearance of Bird Free alone.

"That said, in many cases 'dominant' birds will still attempt to return to the site for a day or two after installation.

However, once they come into contact with Bird Free, which is sticky (but harmless to the bird) they won't like the feel

of it on their feathers, and when they try to preen it off they won't like the taste. As a result, even dominant birds will completely desert the site after a few days, even if it's a habitat they have been using for years.

"Bird Free will remain effective for at least two years, even in the most exposed environment. It's quick and easy to use but, I must stress, that thorough cleaning before installation is absolutely essential."

Journalists' interest sparked

The 'fake fire effect' has certainly captured the imagination of the press with no less than the *Sunday Times* picking up on the installation in Covent Garden last summer under the headline 'Fire Gel sees off pesky pigeons.'

Not surprisingly, when pest controllers first hear of the product they are sceptical. Many bird management experts are puzzled by the 'fake fire' claim, suspecting that the more mundane senses of smell, taste and touch may have more to do with it. However, the fact is that it does seem to work.

"The idea that birds won't go near Bird Free because it appears to them as fire does seem counterintuitive, but the effect seems to work on about 70% of birds" says Ian. "This is shown statistically in a bar chart on our website.

"Of the 67 homing birds at the study site only 21 attempted to return on the first day after Bird Free was applied.

In other words, 46, or 70%, of the birds were deterred by the visual effect and made no attempt to return at all. By day three only three birds attempted to return, and after that the site was, literally, bird-free."

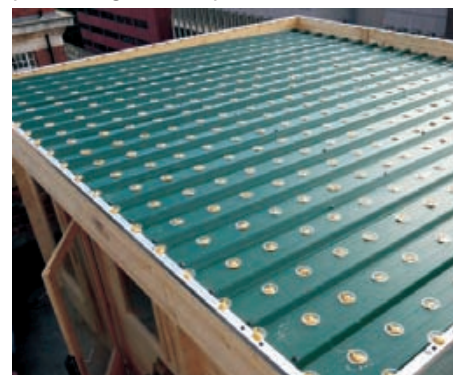


Ian Smith of JJ Bio

Experimental application

One of the first applications in the UK was in London's wealthy district of Kensington. To be precise, Bird Free was used in an experimental situation in October 2010, to prevent pigeons from landing on the roof of one of two, newly-built cabins, in the Roof Gardens Kensington. The Roof Gardens Kensington, now owned by Virgin, are an amazing relic from the 1930s when three, themed gardens were constructed on the roof of the Derry and Toms department store in Kensington High Street. Open to the public, the 1.5 acre gardens include mature oaks and fruit trees, growing in just 1.5m of soil, and a flowing stream stocked with fish. Other wildlife includes the garden's famous flamingos.

When we called him, head gardener David Lewis climbed up to see how the roofs were performing. On the protected roof, where



The experimental installation at the Roof Gardens Kensington



Sounds too good to be true! The consensus is, give it a try, but make sure you've read the installation manual first

the gel dishes had been placed, the only evidence of any birds was clearly from those flying high above.

"It's so far so good," says David. "In fact since the gel was applied, the whole garden area has seen far fewer pigeons," he adds. "We have a range of nets and spikes in and around the garden but with half a million visitors a year we are always looking for the most unobtrusive solution. Because the gel dishes are only a centimetre high they really are invisible from below."

Another success story comes from Anne Wilson, Locum Town Clerk at Bridgnorth Council. The Bird Free gel is keeping pigeons away from the town's charter market. The market is located underneath the historic timber-framed Town Hall which dates back to 1652. "It's worked a treat," she says.

"Market traders were complaining of pigeon fouling and it was regularly costing the council for extra cleaning," she explains. The stallholders are delighted at the results," she adds.

The pest professionals' view

So, the customers seem satisfied but what about professional pest controllers?

John Dickson is managing director of NBC Bird and Pest Solutions.

"We began using the product last year and are now doing a lot of treatments," he says. "My view is that it's great to have another option. We've found it to be very effective

What is Bird Free optical gel?



- A non-toxic gel made from food grade natural oils
- Developed in Korea
- Suitable for indoor and outdoor use
- Installed in thousands of commercial situations worldwide
- Supplied in 250g caulking tubes with 15 clear plastic application dishes (magnetic dishes and hooks for hanging in trees are also available)

when used in the right situations. Replacing spikes in difficult to reach areas, for example. From ground level it's also much less offensive than spikes," he adds.

John's biggest concern is that it will be oversold. "When anyone is selling this product they do need to manage customer expectations. We don't yet know how it's going to perform over time," he says. "I can't see it ever replacing netting which, done properly is 100% effective and last for a very long time."

"I don't think anyone really knows how it works. I've seen no proper scientific studies and I'm sceptical about this UV proposition. Birds see in UV, they hunt by it so how are they seeing the gel as fire? I suspect it may be a combination of sight, smell, taste and touch. However as if by magic it does work and it's creating a lot of interest in bird management, which is no bad thing.

"I've seen plenty of new products come into the market and just die. This seems to be staying the course so my advice to other bird control businesses is, why not try it!"

Threat from poor installation

The other danger is that poor installation could ruin its reputation.

John Dickson continues: "It is essential to carry out all the cleaning off beforehand and there is no scope to start cutting corners and increasing the spacing between the dishes. You need to follow the recommendations in the installation manual," he stresses.

Like John Dickson, Killgerm's Peter Fielding is concerned that the product may be used in the wrong situations. Killgerm is the principle appointed distributor for Bird Free. "We're offering advice and support to avoid it being used in situations which



Seeing is believing in London's Covent Garden Market

When Steven Richmond Ryedale District Council health and environment manager heard Ian Smith's presentation on Bird Free at a Yorkshire and Humberside Pest Management Committee meeting he was sceptical to say the least. As luck would have it he was in London for the August Bank Holiday so went to take a look for himself.

"It's hardly a scientific study," says Steven "But there were clearly plenty of pigeons about on other building but there were no pigeons on the building that had received the treatment. I've not used the product myself. The Council doesn't get involved directly in bird control but we do provide advice to local businesses and this is another option for them to consider."



Pigeons on the northwest corner of Covent Garden Market before application. From this vantage point they would swoop down onto the tables in the open air cafe below



Installation was carried out early on Wednesday 3 August 2011. That afternoon pigeons were seen flying towards the roof then veering off to land elsewhere



By Monday 8 August the pigeons were no longer attempting to land on the roof parapet or the ledges below and the diners were left to enjoy their food in peace



© John Haslam

Oystercatchers are one of the more unusual species moved-on by Bird Free

are not suitable," says Peter. "Bird Free doesn't replace all the other systems, it's another tool; part of the answer," he adds.

That said it is a very good product. One situation where it has been used successfully is as a very effective ledge treatment against starlings in a market in the Greater Manchester area. "Starlings can be difficult to deter from roosting areas and it's not unusual to find them building nests on the top of spikes," says Peter. "In this market the

starlings were on the ledges and girders above an outdoor eating area and, whilst it was only a small population, their droppings and food stealing antics were proving a nuisance to customers. The gel was installed a couple of months ago and it has worked really well. The birds have definitely flown!"

So far so impressive

Up in Scotland Ross Graham from Graham Pest Control has used the product in some very different situations and it's looking pretty impressive.

"The first place I tried it was actually at my sister's house in Dundee – I didn't want to try it out on a customer! The whole street has a long-standing problem with oystercatchers which make quite a noise first thing in the morning. I fixed the little dishes across the roof and it was magic. Her house is now the only one in the street that the oystercatchers avoid."

This experience gave Ross the confidence to use it elsewhere. "I do a lot of work for St Andrew's University and I've now installed the product on a large roof there to

deter seagulls. We've tried netting and spikes in the past and never been very successful but the Bird Free has done the trick. I'll be keeping an eye on it but so far it seems to have stood up to the Scottish weather pretty well too."

Doing a large roof is not a cheap exercise. According to Ross the cost is very comparable with using nets and spikes. "Nets and spikes may be more permanent but visually Bird Free is better. I'm getting a lot of interest from the local authority for all the listed buildings in the city."

Crawley car park pigeon free



Multi-storey car parks are a 'des res' for pigeons and the Town Hall car park in Crawley West Sussex, used by the public and staff, was no exception. It had been used as a roosting and nesting site for at least five years and there was plenty of evidence on the pipework, lights and ledges.

That was until Bird Free was applied in April 2011.

As Crawley Borough Council's building services manager Alan Lagden explains: "The gel dishes were fixed along all the pipes and ledges at the odd floor ends of the 12 storey building. This was where the birds had been flying in. The area was thoroughly cleaned beforehand and it has not needed a clean since," he says. "I'm very pleased. I haven't spotted a single pigeon in the car park and the dishes themselves are virtually invisible."

Pigeons go for a spin!

Anyone who has any connection with bird management knows that pigeons aren't as daft as they look! A number of birds had made themselves at home in a glass atrium of a new building on an Uxbridge business park. The contractors thought the problem would be solved once the building was completed as there would be no way in for the pigeons.

The main entrance was a revolving door so there was not even a chance of the door being left open to allow the pigeons access. Unfortunately when the company moved in the problem pigeons were still there. NBC Bird & Pest Solutions Andy Dobbs was called in to investigate. He found that the pigeons had worked out that if they stood by the revolving doors, the sensor was activated and they could simply walk in!

"It was a tricky situation," says Andy. "Revolving doors can't be proofed so I decided to try Bird Free. The dishes of gel were installed on the metal plates on the turning mechanism and at the sides of the doors and now the birds no longer queue to get through," he explains.



Proofing a revolving door with traditional spikes and nets is impossible but, so far, Bird Free has proved equal to the challenge

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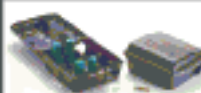


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BASF Pest Control Solutions rodenticide development manager, Sharon Hughes, says that working out the precise causes of any control problems experienced is the first vital step on the road to solving them

Tackling modern urban mouse control challenges

Changing patterns of behaviour and increasing EU rodenticide restrictions are putting serious pressures on house mouse control in many urban areas. What can pest controllers do to make sure they can stay in control?

On the one hand, it seems, mice are not eating traditional grain baits like they used to. And on the other, valuable rodenticide alternatives like concentrates, contact gels and liquid systems are progressively being withdrawn under European Union legislation.

To tackle today's particular urban mouse control challenge, BASF Pest Control Solutions rodenticide development manager, Sharon Hughes stresses that pest controllers need to understand its precise causes so they can concentrate their efforts on overcoming them.

Behavioural not physiological

"In most cases the central problem is behavioural rather than physiological resistance," she reports. "Since physiological resistance to most second generation anticoagulants seems to remain limited, mice eating enough bait almost invariably die. But all too often these days they just aren't eating enough."

"We know some urban populations don't eat grain baits because they are genetically intolerant to carbohydrates. Their inability to digest carbohydrates can be complete, as it is with our specially selected 'wild' research colony. But more often than not, any intolerance is partial; mainly because fully intolerant mice appear to be highly neophobic and far less competitive than normal strains."

"This means they are at a serious disadvantage to other mice in our modern, heavily wheat-biased human food environments."

Preference for junk food

"A far more common cause of restricted bait uptake is the noticeable change we've seen in urban mouse appetites over the years," explains Sharon. "Quite

simply, society's increasing wealth means house mice live in a far tastier and more nutritious world of proteins and fats from junk food and the like."

"Natural selection in one of the most adaptable animal species on the planet has meant inner city mouse populations, in particular, now find traditional grain baits far less attractive than the many other food sources available to them."

Under these circumstances, partial carbohydrate intolerance and changing appetites are clearly the key problems that need to be addressed in improving modern urban mouse control. The question is how?

Two steps essential for control

In Sharon's experience the solution lies in two parts. First, employ the most powerful rodenticides available so mice only have to eat the least possible amount to consume a lethal dose. And second, use them in top quality baits that are more appealing so they will eat more even in the presence of other attractive food sources.

"All second-generation anticoagulants are far and away more potent than warfarin and other first generation rodenticides," she notes. "But LD₅₀ data show that flocoumafen and difenacoum are more than twice as toxic to mice as bromadiolone and at least three times more powerful mouse killers than difethialone. So, these obviously have to be preferred."

Alternatives to traditional baits

"As far as bait types are concerned, several alternatives to traditional wheat formulation types are especially valuable. For modern urban environments I'd particularly recommend pasta, gel and canary seed baits for their high oil contents and exceptional palatability, as well as our patented Fortec foraging grain technology."

Extensive studies have shown the completely different appearance, texture, smell and taste of the Fortec pellets within the difenacoum-treated cut wheat matrix of Neosorexa Gold makes the bait far more appealing to house mice, significantly increasing its palatability and intakes in a range of environments.



A combination of high oil and sugar levels in a moist paste formulation gives difenacoum-based Neosorexa Pasta special appeal too. And single bait point packaging in edible sachets provides good environmental protection as well as baiting convenience. "A good quality pasta bait has extra mouse appeal both because it is moist and has an outer coating which has to be removed to gain access to the food," points out Sharon.

Mice like to unwrap food

"Behavioural studies suggest mice like to 'unwrap' their foods. Perhaps it's an in-built defence against contamination. Whatever it is, it also makes canary seed-based Sorexa D, which has to be de-husked to access the difenacoum-impregnated kernel, especially attractive."

Another highly attractive option for its combination of moisture and irresistible taste, Sharon has found, is very high oil Sorexa Gel which allows a difenacoum bait to be placed high on the beams and rafters so often frequented by mice without danger of spillage.

"It's important to distinguish this edible gel bait from the contact gels EU legislation is effectively preventing us from using to combat carbohydrate intolerant mice," she insists. "Disappointing in this respect too is the fact that the same legislation is also forcing the withdrawal of rodenticide concentrates which enabled professionals to create their own carbohydrate-free baits."

Preventing intolerance spread

While Sharon Hughes considers complete carbohydrate intolerance is likely to remain very much the exception in most house mice, she urges pest controllers to do everything possible to ensure partially intolerant populations as well as those which no longer prefer grain are effectively controlled. This will prevent current control challenges developing into what could, with increasing rodenticide restrictions, become serious future problems.

"As well as using the most powerful mouse killers in the best modern bait types, it's important to use quality formulations for the greatest palatability," she says. "Our testing shows apparently similar pasta and gel baits can have a wide range of mouse palatabilities from 0.2 or less in some cases to the 1.0 or more we always look for as a result of careful blending of 15-20 different ingredients in our products."



"Scrupulous attention to detail is also vital in baiting practice. In particular, it's critical to put down enough bait points in the right places, replenish baits frequently enough and continue baiting until all signs of activity have ceased. Infestations also need to be tackled as early as possible before populations build-up to very challenging levels. And I'd always recommend trapping out at the end of baiting to eliminate the few individuals which can survive even the best-managed programmes."

Specialist advice note

To help pest controllers across the UK meet the growing urban mouse challenge, BASF Pest Control Solutions has published a specialist Advice Note. This pinpoints the causes of the problem and summarises the key elements of bait choice and baiting practice required to tackle it in a handy single-page reference.

Copies of *Controlling Challenging Urban Mice* can be downloaded free of charge from the Professional Pest Control section of www.pestcontrol.basf.co.uk or obtained by ringing the BASF Pest Control Solutions technical team on 0161 488 5355.






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Agatha Christie

A mystery that screams murder

Agatha Christie's classic murder mystery play, *The Mousetrap*, is the world's longest running stage production and celebrates its 60th anniversary this year. Like mice that take the bait in the device that shares the same name, Nick Warburton gets hooked

The two crimes may not be related but in both cases the culprit responsible is eventually caught. In one, a trail of food debris left scattered around a gnawed cereal box is found to be the work of a hungry mouse. In the other, the murder of a woman at a guest house in a converted manor leads to a surprising plot twist and the murderer apprehended.

Similarly, like the house that becomes a magnet for mice looking for warmth and food, Agatha Christie's popular murder mystery play has never ceased to draw the crowds to London's West End in search of entertainment.

Premiered at the Theatre Royal in Nottingham on 6 October 1952, Agatha Christie's stage play *The Mousetrap* began its 60-year run on London's West End at the Ambassadors Theatre on 25 November 1952 with Richard Attenborough and his fellow film-star and wife, Sheila Sim taking the leading roles.

After 21 successful years, the stage production moved next door to St Martin's Theatre, reopening on the 25 March 1974, and it is still pulling the crowds. The play's enduring appeal with audiences has led to a Guinness World Record for the 'longest continuous run of any show in the world'.

This year *The Mousetrap* celebrates its 60th anniversary and the stage production will begin its first ever UK tour in September.

Yet with over 60 productions worldwide, in over 50 languages, it



Richard Attenborough and Sheila Sim in the original 1952 production

may surprise readers to learn that 'The Mousetrap' was not its original name.

In fact, Christie's play was originally called *Three Blind Mice* and was based on a short story, itself an adaptation from a 30-minute radio play with the same title, which was broadcast in 1947.

In the radio production, Agatha Christie drew on the recent real-life case of a boy who had died while in foster care.



Lottie Latham as Miss Casewell in the current production

According to Peter Saunders, the author of the 1972 book, *The Mousetrap Man*, the play had to be renamed when Emile Littler, the producer of another play called *Three Blind Mice*, which had enjoyed a run on the West End before the Second World War, objected to Agatha Christie's use of the title.

In a 1984 biography of the author, Janet Morgan revealed that it was Christie's son-in-law, Anthony Hicks, who came up with the title of 'The Mousetrap' after being inspired by William Shakespeare's famous play *Hamlet*. In it, *Hamlet* names *The Mousetrap* the 'play-within-a-play'.

England's most celebrated writer uses the device of a 'play-within-a-play' many times but in Agatha Christie's decision to use *The Mousetrap* for her play, it is possible to see a parallel with its more common use in the pest control industry.

Whereas the first is a literary device that Shakespeare names when Hamlet wishes to provoke the murderer, his uncle, and says, 'the play's the thing wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king', the other is a physical device that is used as a ploy to catch the attention of the mouse.

Of course, it is not always possible to predict the outcome of using a mousetrap to catch the culprit that has gnawed its way through the cereal box. Likewise, the play, *The Mousetrap*, has its own plot twist at the conclusion.

Because of this, theatre goers are asked not to reveal the identity of the murderer to those who haven't seen the play so that it isn't ruined for future audiences.

Set in the Great Hall of Monkswell Manor, the play revolves around eight characters. Husband and wife Giles and Mollie Ralston are

proprietors of the manor and have converted it into a guest house. During the late afternoon on the first day, four invited guests arrive – Christopher Wren, Mrs Boyle, Major Metcalf and Miss Casewell. Later that day, after being snowed in, the guests read about the murder of a woman in London in the newspaper.

Unexpectedly, an additional traveller, a Mr Paravicini, knocks on the door, claiming he has been stranded. The scene is set for the murder mystery to unfold.

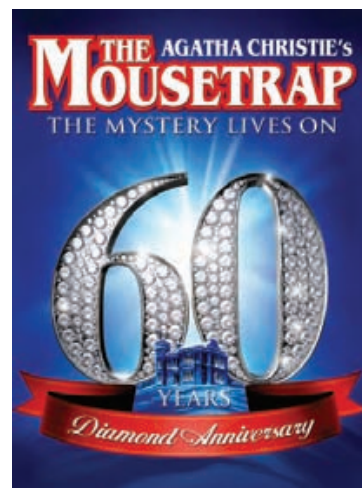
As the tension grows the last character, Detective Sergeant Trotter, arrives and reveals that the London murderer is on the way to the manor. When Mrs Boyle is murdered, the guests' worst fears are confirmed – the murderer is already among the party.

Like the trap that is set to catch the murderer in the play, the pest control device has also proved very effective over the years.

Arguably, of all the pest control methods employed in the industry, the mouse trap has become the most entrenched in people's minds.

This may be because of the public's curious relationship with the mouse.

While no one really wants to see one scoot across the kitchen floor, or find its droppings near food, many of the general public do not wish any harm to come to this furry pest.



Real traps are much older

If 60 years sounds a lot for The Mousetrap play, that's nothing when you delve into the history of the mouse trap itself.



In his excellent little book called unremarkably, *British mouse traps and their makers*, David Drummond reveals that one of the very first mentions to mouse traps in Britain refers to their use in the kitchens of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the 16th century.

Still on the shelves today is the Little Nipper mouse trap. Most readers will probably feel they grew-up with this archetypal device. Well they did!

Little Nipper virtually unchanged over 115 years

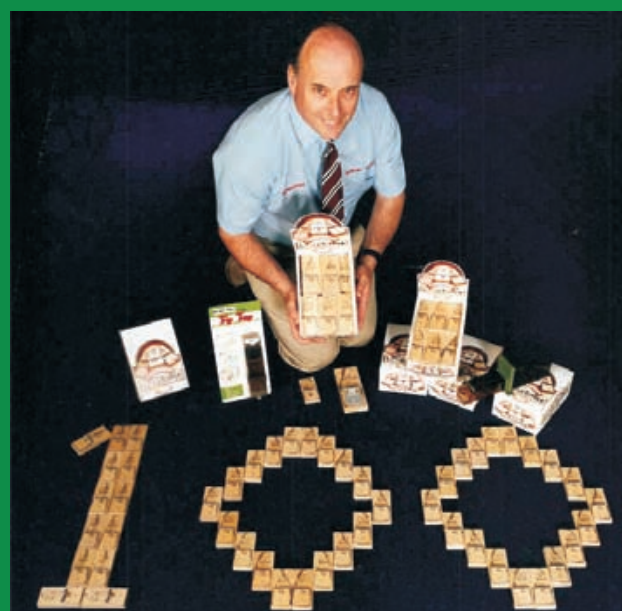
In this current world of mergers and multinationals, the Little Nipper remains virtually unchanged over the 115 years since it was invented. What's more, the company (Procter Brothers, today located in Bedwas, Gwent) still manufacturer and sell it. The company itself started out life as Procter Brothers (Wireworks) Ltd in Leeds in 1740 where they made a range of wire products.

Kness Ketch-All pushing 90 years old

On the other side of the Atlantic another firm well-known today for its range of mouse traps is Kness Mfg. Co. This company too boasts a proud pedigree and still remains a family business.

The company was founded by Austin Enos 'Brick' Kness in 1924 who invented the first multiple catch mouse trap whilst working as a caretaker at a local school. Brick was something of an inventor and thought-up several inventions before turning his mind to the mice that were invading the lunches of his students. And so was born the first Ketch-All multiple catch mouse trap.

Today Kness sells its range of rodent traps around the world. But it remains a family business, with Brick's grand-daughter now at the helm, Kathy Kness Wauson.



Above: Jeremy Procter, current managing director of Procter Bros, seen here celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Little Nipper is a descendant of the founding brothers, John and Charles Procter

Below: Brick Kness, who invented the first multiple mouse trap in 1924, with, inset, his grand-daughter Kathy Kness Wauson who runs the company today



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Keep up-to-date

Despite all the product info detailed on websites, practical pest controllers still love the annual catalogues produced by product manufacturers and distributors. We shouldn't be surprised at that. All the research we at **Pest** have done with readers, shows that you prefer and, also save, the printed copies of **Pest** magazine!

Over the next few weeks, all the 2012 catalogues will become available. Here's a round-up of those **Pest** has managed to get a sneak preview of. To secure your own copy, use the contact details alongside the covers.



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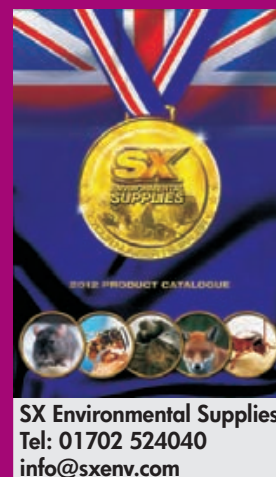
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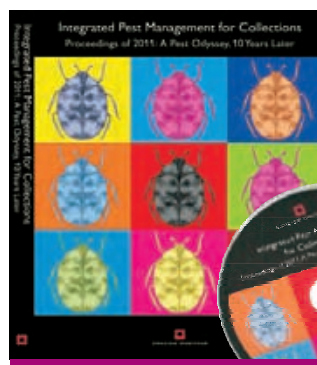


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SX Environmental Supplies
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info@sxenv.com

Pest Odyssey 2011 proceedings available



Pest verdict: Not exactly cheap but worth its place on the shelves of anyone who works in this specialised sector.

Copies of the papers and abstracts of the posters as presented at the Pest Odyssey 2011 conference in London last October have now been printed. This hard-back book, which runs to over 220 pages and includes a large number of colour pictures together with the accompanying CD, is a sumptuous record of the event.

As its title – *Integrated Pest Management for Collections* – suggests

the documents reflect the fact that an IPM programme is increasingly recognised by this sector of the industry as the most cost-effective means of preventing the loss of valuable collections to pests. See report from the event in **Pest** issue 18 November & December 2011. Another interesting facet is the number of changes which have taken place since the first of these events which was held in 2001. In the opening paper, David Pinniger of DBP Entomology (and also a **Pest** technical advisory board member) succinctly reviews these changes.

Priced at £55 from English Heritage Publishing Sales, Central Books, 99 Wallis Road, London, E9 5LN. Tel: 0845 458 9910. Email: eh@centralbooks.com ISBN 978-1-84802-114-3

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'Green' rodent trap

The new WiseBox ticks two current buzzword buttons – poison free and digital GPS reporting. Introduced by ScanWise, this product can be used above ground, alongside buildings, in attics and stores – in fact just about anywhere! The WiseBox captures both rats and mice – without the use of any active ingredient. It makes use of a rodent's fear of exposure in the open, in other words it uses the trap to hide in.

And, that's a fatal mistake! Once in the trap, a sensor is activated, an elevator lifts the rodent up to an electrode, here it is electrocuted and then its body is deposited in a bucket awaiting collection, along with others who have met a similar fate.

WiseBox comes with GPS, so reporting capture data via a mobile or the internet. Also a useful anti-theft device. A further 'green' option is the addition of solar cells, meaning the frequency of battery changing is prolonged, or even avoided.

www.scanwise.co.uk

Metal detectable pen

This metal detectable pen is made using a unique metal detectable polymer making it ideal for use in food manufacturing situations.

The retractable pen is X-ray visible, and says Killgerm, performs well in both warm and cool working temperatures.



www.killgerm.com

Ready for off – Evo Express

Often the best ideas are the simplest ideas. Protecta Evo Express is a tamper-resistant secured bait station that comes with the option of a fitted concrete block for speedy and secure placement.

The addition of the concrete block in the base of the station weighs it down, meaning the technician doesn't have to bother gluing the bait station to a patio block, or securing it to the ground. Other time-saving features include a single-locking mechanism.

Yet, if the provided concrete block idea isn't for you, there are holes in the base of the station which let the pest controller anchor it to the ground. Then there are two holes on the side to accommodate a chain, or other device, for securing it to a fence or pole.

Made of 100% recycled plastic,

www.belllabs.com

Protecta Evo Express is sturdy and built to withstand the rigors of both indoor and outdoor baiting. The heavy-duty removable tray is pre-formed to hold a variety of baiting options – either traps, or bait or a combination of the two.

The bait station's ramped entry, whilst enticing to rodents, is designed to keep children and non-target wildlife out, explains Bell.



Difenacoum added to Ratimor range



A useful addition to the range of rodenticides at Killgerm is Ratimor difenacoum. The product can be used for both rats and mice in indoor and also outdoor situations. A choice of formulation is offered for flexibility – fresh bait, or blocks or pasta bait in trays.

This addition goes alongside the existing range of Ratimor bromadiolone products – enabling professional pest controllers to alternate active ingredients.

www.killgerm.com

Two new additions to the rodent armoury

The benefits of using wire-wool in conjunction with proofing materials have been recognised for some time – yet always the two products were dealt with individually. Now, they have been combined together, to offer a professional and time-saving solution to exclusion.

Barrettine has teamed-up with one of the UK's leading sealant manufacturers to develop Romax Rodent Seal. Patented fibres of stainless steel have been added to a top quality industrial sealant to develop this product. To ensure Romax Rodent Seal is food-manufacturing friendly, it has been commercially tested and is 'metal-detectable', explains Barrettine.

A further addition to the Barrettine rodent portfolio, is a 'professional only' modern design Romax glue board. Barrettine has always campaigned that glue boards should be available to professional users only, as a valuable tool of last resort. Their responsible use should be as per the Pest Management Alliance's Code of Best Practice. To fulfil these sentiments, and to make its usage quite clear, the new glue board has the Code of Best Practice printed inside, along with 'Professional Use Only' clearly shown.



www.barrettine.co.uk

New Avishock track from Network

Launched in 2008, the Avishock system has proved popular with professional pest controllers, yet there were a few idiosyncrasies which became apparent in practical use. In true Network fashion, these have been addressed and a brand new track developed.

As with the original Avishock, an electrical pulse flows through two conductive strips. The new extruded track is more robust and incorporates conductive copper strips protected by a layer of smooth, conductive plastic. This reduces track degradation and the likelihood of shorting in wet weather. The durable, UV stable PVC base prolongs track life and new side 'wings' improve water displacement, making it ideal for even the most hostile of environments, explains Network.

Network claims the new system is quicker and easier to install.

The flexible track comes in two colour-ways (black and stone), is simple to apply and is accompanied by new straight and corner snap fit connectors.

Track resistance has also been significantly reduced, meaning fewer energisers are required to power a far greater length of track without loss of conductivity.



www.networkbird.net



Stainless steel mousemesh vents

Mousemesh is now available in stainless steel. This popular product was originally available only in white, then it was joined by a brown version and now stainless steel – so a colour for every occasion.

With prevention, rather than cure in mind, Mousemesh stops mice and wasps from entering properties via existing in-built airbrick vents. Easy to fit and durable in all weathers, the new steel version is stronger than plastic, therefore reducing the chance of gnawing.

www.killgerm.com

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award
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New qualifying period for the 2012 award



Barretine and SX were joint winners in 2011, who will get your vote in 2012?

Nominations can now be made for the **Pest** Best Product Award 2012 and there has been an important change to the qualifying period.

What's changed and why?

"Now in its third year, the idea behind the award, which is to recognise the product that readers feel has made the greatest improvement to their lives and/or working practices, has been welcomed by the industry," says **Pest** associate editor Helen Riby. "People are really starting to get behind it."

Helen continues: "However, now we have two years experience under our belts, we have recognised that some new products are being disadvantaged. If you happen to introduce your product in July or August, for example, then there is very little time for pest controllers to buy it, try it, decide they really like it and nominate it, before the closing deadline of 31 August. So, we are extending the qualifying period to 20 months.

So, any product launched 1 January 2011 to 31 August 2012 can be nominated for the 2012 award.

"The only exceptions are products which have already won first, second or third place in an earlier year. So for 2012 that means you cannot nominate the 2011 winners, which were Barretine's Oa2Ki aerosol, or SX Environmental's SX Pro Wasp Nest Destroyer or PelGar's Oktablok II."

The rest of the process remains the same. **Pest** readers are in the driving seat. They nominate the products either online or using the nomination form below.

The nominations are short-listed and then we invite you to vote for the product you feel has been the most innovative – the product which has made the greatest improvement to your life and/or your working practices.

So which product will you nominate and will your choice make the shortlist? Which of the short-listed products will you vote for and will Barretine take first prize for a third year running? Only time will tell.

Here's what will happen:

- **13 February 2012** – **Pest** Best New Product Award announced;
- **13 February to 31 August** – **Pest** readers can nominate their selected products;
- **1 September** – product shortlist drawn-up from nominations;
- **1 September to 31 October** – readers vote to find the winner;
- **2 November** – all votes counted;
- **7 November** – award announced at PestTech.

New qualifying period

Any product launched between 1 January 2011 and 31 August 2012 can be nominated, so that includes all the new products launched at PestTech last November.

So, nominations for the best new products 2012 are now open! Use the form below to put forward those products that have impressed you the most.

Rules of engagement

- 1 Only commercial pest control products can be nominated. Services, promotional schemes, special offers and the like are excluded;
- 2 Products nominated must have been launched after 1 January 2011 and before midnight on 31 August 2012;
- 3 Products must have been fully commercially available during the time period shown in 2 above. Products supplied free for trials purposes cannot be entered;
- 4 Only products sold in the UK are eligible;
- 5 Entries must be made via the official printed nomination form or by email following the format specified on the **Pest** website;
- 6 Readers can submit up to five products per nomination form but can only nominate the same product once. You can send in an unlimited number of nomination forms;
- 7 Readers may vote for their top two products, but may only submit one voting form. Second choices will be taken into account in the event of a tie;
- 8 Entries submitted after midnight on 31 October 2012 will not be counted.

Nomination form

I would like to nominate this/these products(s):

1

2

3

4

5

Name:

Organisation:

Tel:

Email:

SEND YOUR COMPLETED FORM to Pest Magazine, Foxhill, Stanford on Soar, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE12 5PZ

For all the legal stuff visit www.pestmagazine.co.uk/content/newsitem.aspx?id=750

best
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Take the Pest Test

BASIS has made two PROMPT CPD points available if you can demonstrate that you have improved your knowledge, understanding and technical know-how by passing the **Pest Test** and answering all our questions correctly. So read through our articles on local authority cut-backs, pigeon research and mouse resistance and complete the questions below.

Try to answer them all in one sitting and without referring back to the article.

Take care as some questions may have more than one correct answer so tick all the answers you believe are correct.

SEND COMPLETED QUESTIONS to: **Pest** Magazine, Foxhill, Stanford on Soar, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE12 5PZ We will contact you with your result and, if your answers are correct, we will credit your CPD points.

1 Why is the CIEH concerned about the loss of local authority pest control services?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a) The private sector is getting too powerful | <input type="checkbox"/> c) Pest problems are likely to increase |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b) Underlying technical expertise is being lost | <input type="checkbox"/> d) It's just saving money for savings sake |

2 In their work at the University of Utah, free-living pigeon populations came from:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a) New York City | <input type="checkbox"/> c) Toronto |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b) Isle of Skye | <input type="checkbox"/> d) London |

3 What types of rodenticide are being withdrawn under EU legislation?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a) Concentrates | <input type="checkbox"/> c) Liquid systems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b) Blocks | <input type="checkbox"/> d) Pasta bait |

4 Which bait is felt to be least effective in controlling urban mice?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a) Pasta bait | <input type="checkbox"/> c) Canary seed baits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b) Gels | <input type="checkbox"/> d) Traditional grain baits |

5 Pasta bait probably has extra mouse appeal because:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a) All mice originally come from Italy so they like pasta | <input type="checkbox"/> c) The outer coating has to be 'un-wrapped' |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b) The bait is moist | <input type="checkbox"/> d) They like the colour |

6 Which of the following are good baiting practices for mice?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a) Put the bait anywhere as the mice will always find it | <input type="checkbox"/> c) Don't start until you have a large population to control |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b) Replenish baits frequently | <input type="checkbox"/> d) Continue until all signs of activity have ceased |

Name: _____

Organisation: _____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

PROMPT account number: 200 _____

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	DAY	EVENT	VENUE	FIND OUT MORE
MARCH	2	First Urban Badger Conference	Ramada Encore Hotel Derby	www.urban-wildlife.co.uk
	27	BPCA Fumigation Conference 2012	BPCA Offices Derby	www.bpca.org.uk
APRIL	23-24	PestWorld East	Crown Plaza Dubai United Arab Emirates	www.npmapestworld.org
	26	Pest-Ventures 2012	Yew Lodge Hotel, Kegworth, Nottinghamshire	moira@dewpointmarketing.co.uk
MAY	16-18	10th International Fumigants & Pheromones Technical Conference	Indianapolis, USA	www.insectslimited.com
JULY	11-13	FAOPMA 2012 Conference & exhibition	Adelaide South Australia	www.aepma.com.au

Fumigation focus for UK and US events

BPCA is to hold a Fumigation 2012 conference on 27 March to address the serious health risks faced by those working around grain shipments.

Fumigators often have to deal with huge pressure from grain companies to give shipments the 'all clear' even when dangerous levels of gas are still present.

David Heaton, chairman of BPCA's Fumigation & Controlled Environments Forum (FaCE) explains: "The Conference is designed to increase knowledge levels about the risks posed by fumigation carried out on bulk grain in ships' holds as well as the risks associated with fumigated cargo containers."

The conference programme will be relevant to anyone who is associated with Port Health Authority management, the grain industry, the transport & haulage industry and, of course, professional fumigators. Speakers include Mike Kelly of Acheta Consulting, who is well-known and respected around the world for his fumigation expertise. Topics covered will include phosphine deaths on ships and explosions caused by the misuse of product.

Places cost just £30. Bookings can be made via the BPCA website.

... and in the USA

Later in the year from 16 to 18 May will be the 10th Fumigants and Pheromones Technical Conference and Workshop, which will be held in at the University Place Conference Centre in Indianapolis. It is organised by US-based Insects Limited and Fumigation Service & Supply with a theme of Pest Management Around the World.

Conference speakers will include international experts including keynote speaker Dr Gebisa Ejeta, the 2009 World Food Prize Laureate from Purdue University. Speakers will explain and demonstrate how to protect stored products such as food, grain, wood, tobacco, structures, and fibre under varied conditions and regulations. The workshop will be held in the field where practical experiences will be shared and discussed by leading experts.

The last conference was held in Valencia, Spain in March 2010 and drew delegates from 44 different countries. This year attendees from over 30 countries and six continents are expected.



Invitation to Tender for the provision of pest control services

Hart District Council is calling for tenders for the provision of a pest control service. The contract will operate for a period of two years, expected to commence from 1st May 2012.

Tender documentation, including terms of reference and selection criteria can be obtained from:

Environmental Health,
Hart District Council Civic Offices,
Harlington Way, Fleet Hampshire GU51 4EJ
Tel: 01252 774421 Email: eh@hart.gov.uk

Companies are expected to have a sound financial standing and be able to demonstrate an ability to successfully deliver contracts.

Completed documents and supporting information should be returned no later than

4pm on Thursday 31st March 2012

This is a competitive procurement being conducted in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

www.hart.gov.uk



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**SENIOR PEST CONTROL OFFICER,
HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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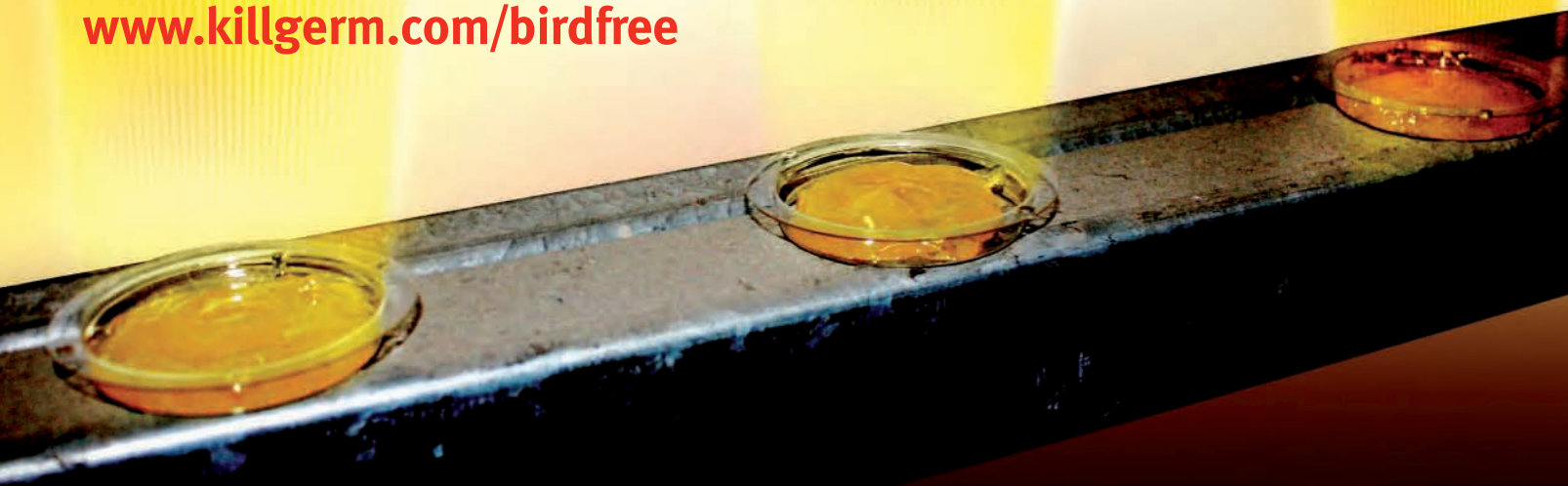
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