

SPREADING YOUR WINGS

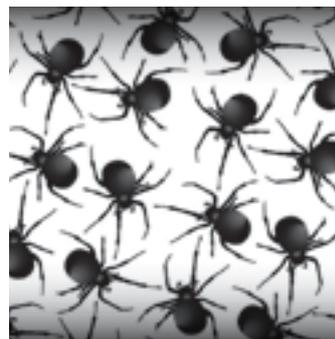
Is franchising the answer to your expansion problems?



Food industry moth control
Alternative methods to keep this problem pest at bay



Apprenticeships for the pest control industry
Nurturing the future of our sector



Google's army of spiders
How to improve your search engine standing



Beyond the first 70 years
The past, present and future of BPCA



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Networking events

The FM Event

10-11 October / Olympia, London

www.thefmevent.com

PestWorld

17-20 October / Boston, USA

www.npmapestworld.org

PestTech

7 November / Solihull, West Midlands

www.npta.org.uk

www.pesttech.org.uk

Parasitec

14-16 November / Paris, France

www.parasitec.org

SOFHT Annual Lunch

22 November / London

www.sofht.co.uk

Bioicidal Products Directive - HSE Seminar

29 November / Bootle, Merseyside

www.pesticides.gov.uk

Disinfestando 2013

6-7 March / Rimini, Italy

www.disinfestazione.org



10-11 April 2012 / ExCeL Centre, London

www.pestex.org

Modular training

BPCA has developed a modular training course culminating in the RSPH/BPCA Level 2 Certificate in Pest Management. Due to popular demand the first course taking place in November is now full.

Find out more by contacting Tammy Pratt (BPCA training officer), on 01332 225113.

Training

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

Full 2012 training calendar
www.bpct.org.uk
 ...and in PPC69!

Examinations	2012 dates	Venue	Member cost (exc. VAT)	Non-member (exc. VAT)
RSPH/BPCA Level 2 Award in Pest Management	12 October	Leeds - TBC		
Exams can be arranged to suit other requirements at the discretion of the BPCA, minimum of six candidates, there may be an additional cost.	16 November	Essex - TBC	£130	£145
	14 December	Warwick University, Coventry		
BPCA Accredited Technician in Pest Control	20 September	BPCA offices, Derby	£225	£305
BPCA Certificate in Bird Management	26 October	BPCA offices, Derby	£90	£105
BPCA Fumigation Diploma	26 October	BPCA offices, Derby	£125	£145
BPCA Fumigation Certificate of Proficiency	26 October	BPCA offices, Derby	£210	£265
BPCA Certificated Field Biologist	17 October	BPCA offices, Derby	£285	£390

Courses	PROMPT CPD	2012 dates	Venue	Member cost (exc. VAT)	Non-member (exc. VAT)
General Pest Control (residential)	24	9-14 December	Warwick University, Coventry	£875*	£1045*
Urban Bird Control and Management	20	13-14 November	BPCA offices, Derby	£300	£365
So you want to be a Field Biologist?	8	11 October	Hilton Newbury North, Newbury	£165	£195
Heat Treatment Technicians Course	22	23-24 October	BPCA offices, Derby	£300	£365

* includes full-board accommodation, BPCA/RSPH Level 2 Award in Pest Management exam fee and access to the BPCA Online Learning programme for six weeks prior to the course.

Book by calling 01332 225 113 or via www.bpca.org.uk/training.html

Every effort is made to ensure all events run to plan, but BPCA reserves the right to cancel events. A full refund will be given for a booking that is removed by the Association.

Regional forums

BPCA is pleased to announce the second tranche of our Regional Training Forums for 2012. The forums are a great opportunity to earn those all-important CPD points through training, enhancing your industry knowledge and listening to key specialist speakers. Book via www.bpca.org.uk/events

- 19 September / Durham
- 26 September / Exeter
- 10 October / Broxburn
- 17 October / High Wycombe
- 24 October / Nottingham
- 14 November / Lisburn
- 21 November / Dartford

Online learning

The flexible approach to pest control training, learn at your own pace at times to suit you.

www.bpca.skillgate.com

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

Book by calling 01332 225 113 or via www.bpca.org.uk/training.html



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www.davidson-igd.co.uk

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CPD for 2012: 2 points



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Friends with benefits

I've taken presidential privilege and hijacked the editor's column. I want to set my stall out for the membership, so you can see why I put myself forward to take over the presidency.

I, possibly like many of you, came into the industry by chance. My working background was in the timber trade. Somewhat disgruntled with the state of that industry, I happened to spot an advert for a pest control surveyor with Rentokil. At that time I knew of 'Big R' purely as a timber treatment company, and assumed the job would be as a woodworm/dry-rot specialist.

On attending the interview I was somewhat shocked when my interviewer asked "So I take it you have done some research – tell me all you know about rats." After informing him that they were scary, furry, and with long tails; he confirmed that, armed with that level of technical knowledge, I should go far – and when could I start?! Luckily I was surrounded at that time with some really knowledgeable people and my enthusiasm was lit.

For the next twelve years or so, while I knew of BPCA's existence, I knew very little about it or indeed its purpose. It was only when I left the cover of the big corporate blanket, and started out on my own, that as part of the company I bought I suddenly found a not insubstantial (although as it turned out very fair!) invoice for an annual subscription.

After the usual expletives when faced with any invoice I asked "What does BPCA ever do for me?" Though I appreciate and hope that I am preaching to the converted, it is still the comment I hear the most from existing members and, surprisingly, non-members.

So I decided to go and find out what my hard-earned cash was doing for me. I found that a regional meeting was taking place in Birmingham and decided to attend. Venturing in, I was quickly met by some of the BPCA

staff and introduced to a couple of existing members. It turned out that, broadly speaking, we all shared (and still share) the same concerns. Costs going up while prices drop,

cowboys undermining the professionalism of the industry, loss of actives making control difficult, and so on.

After the meeting I can honestly say I hadn't a clue what the talks had been about. But I had an abiding sense of relief in knowing that it wasn't just Henry Mott on his own versus the world, but that I was among and part of a group of like-minded individuals from both small and larger companies – who all wanted the same thing.

"So what?" I hear you cynics cry, "I don't want friends, I want benefits!" On

this note I express to you how much stronger we are as a group. No-one hears the individual shouting at the referee but when the whole stand shouts at him with one voice, there is just a chance he might hear and take note – and the bigger the family, the bigger the voice.

So I hope my message is clear: while all families might have the occasional tiff, let's acknowledge that fundamentally we all want the same result. An industry that...

- Is more professional and is valued highly by our customers
- Recognises the importance of training and ongoing professional development to meet customers' expectations
- Continues to develop and grow to meet the demands of an ever-changing world.

BPCA is doing lots to advance these three goals, but what is your role in this? Are you happy to let others lead the industry and moan when you don't get what you want? There's some amazing stuff in the offing – so join the family.

Henry Mott, BPCA President
president@bpc.org.uk



“Costs going up while prices drop, cowboys undermining the professionalism of the industry, loss of actives making control difficult...”

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Bell launches bait boxes

By all appearances it's an inconspicuous utility box – but a closer look reveals the distinctive Bell Laboratories logo, marking its newest tamper-resistant bait station, Protecta Evo Circuit designed for accounts where discretion is paramount.

“No-one would know it's a bait station hanging on the wall,” said Bell's product manager, Kate Mella. “Like Bell's Landscape, which to the casual observer looks like a rock, the Evo Circuit mimics an electrical box so no-one will know it's pest control at work.” Protecta Evo Circuit also incorporates all the timesaving features standard on Bell's new Evo (short for 'Evolution') line.

Bell has also evolved their Protecta Evo line to include the new Protecta Evo Ambush,

which sits low to the ground, thus being ideal for use in pallets, shelving and other out-of-the-way spots. Ambush can be anchored to Bell's Sidekick Load-n-Lock system for secured placement, especially in water-prone areas. “Protecta Evo Ambush is a workhorse station,” Mella added. “It has it all for fast, easy servicing, plus it's designed to keep children and dogs out, giving technicians added peace of mind.”

Both the Circuit and Ambush systems feature a single-locking tamper-resistant mechanism, a removable bait tray with rounded corners for easy cleaning, and a bar code inside the lid compatible with pest management software.

www.belllabs.com

PROMPT update

PROMPT

The PROMPT scheme now has over 1,400 members registered, demonstrating the continued growth of the scheme. New PROMPT flyers explaining the benefit of always using a PROMPT-registered pest technician will be distributed to 15,000 pest control customers this November with **alexo** magazine.

The PROMPT scheme is designed to keep you and your business ahead of legislation, not chasing behind. That's why BPCA has embedded CPD as a membership criteria for servicing companies.

BASIS will be changing the style of the associate card to make it clear that this is different from full membership. Look out for the new cards from January next year.

If your company has 100% of its technicians on the PROMPT Scheme, you can use a special logo supplied by BASIS to help promote yourself to customers.

The clock is ticking

By January 1 2015 your company must have all technicians on a recognised CPD scheme and hold a relevant qualification. Contact BPCA for help on 01332 225 113.

www.basispestcontrol.com

Pest control opportunities from council cutbacks?

Local authorities plan to outsource one third of all services by 2015, according to a YouGov report commissioned by Interserve. Outsourcing has grown by six per cent in the past 12 months, as councils seek efficiencies, despite a third not expecting to make their targeted savings.

Of 100 senior managers interviewed, those councils that need to make greater than average savings (more than 25% efficiency savings) or have larger budgets (more than £100 million) plan to outsource up to 60% of all services.

But other councils aim to keep resources in-house or share with other public sector providers, planning to outsource just a fifth of services by 2014/15.

The report found that:

- 44% of councils still haven't implemented a strategy to deal with their budgetary challenges to 2014/15 (79% this time last year)

- 81% said outsourcing to a commercial partner had been successful, and 82% believe that outsourcing has a role to play in achieving their targets
- Councils expect by 2015 that 20% of outsourced council services will be provided by the charity sector, and half by commercial providers
- Councils expect a 15% reduction in the size of their built estate.

Commenting on the survey, BPCA Chief Executive Simon Forrester said “Councils have exhausted the ‘quick win’ savings and cut peripheral services but are still faced with difficult reductions. It is likely that most will consider outsourcing pest control, while cutting budgets and reducing service levels. This is both an opportunity and a threat, as prices are driven down yet again. BPCA is concerned that councils will accept tenders from non-professionals in order to cut corners.”

www.local-government.interserve.com

BAMBOO FLY TRAP LAUNCHED



PestWest has launched a new front-of-house fly trap made from bamboo – possibly the most environmentally sustainable fly control unit on the market. The Sunburst can

be used wall-mounted or freestanding and is ideal for hotels, restaurants, bars and shops. It is fitted with a powerful 20 watt compact tube, and offers a coverage area of 35m².

www.killgerm.com

NEW PRODUCTS FROM BARRETTINE

Barrettine has launched Polvo, a super absorbent powder for spillages from insecticides to paint to body fluids, and ideal for the van, stores or even as a sell-on. In addition to the standard formulation, there's also Polvo Deo with an active deodoriser.



Adding to the portfolio, Barrettine has launched a new 'professional only' Romax Glue Board. Barrettine has long campaigned that glue boards should be available to professional users only, and encourages responsible use of these valuable last-resort tools. As well as a modern design, the new product has added benefit of the code of conduct and guidelines printed inside, along with their professional recommendation.

Barrettine has also teamed up with one of the UK's leading sealant manufacturers to bring to the market Romax Rodent Seal. Unlike some products on the market, Romax Rodent Seal uses a top quality industrial sealant mixed with patented fibres of stainless steel. The benefits of wire wool plus proofing materials has long been known, but for the first time they've been combined to offer a professional and time-saving solution to exclusion. In addition, the product has been commercially tested and is also 'metal-detectable', a big boost to anyone working in food manufacturing.



www.barrettine.co.uk

Barrettine has just signed a contract to be the European partner for the Bed Bug Beacon. The Beacon is one of the few products to effectively reproduce the carbon dioxide attractant effect, so critical for accurate bed bug monitoring. A key tool to both detect for bugs



as well as give an accurate picture as to whether a room is now infestation free.

Bed bug code of practice moves ahead

Since the last PPC, the authors of the European Code of Practice have consulted industry, and work is in progress to deliver a new version of the document by the end of the year.

Dr Richard Naylor, who chairs the group producing the document said "We have had a wide range of comments and suggestions, which has been fantastic – many of the viewpoints have been relatively easy to incorporate, but we have a few conflicting ones which our technical working group are currently examining. I'd like to thank all those people who have given their time to help us improve the document."

Following the work in the UK, plans are in place to take the core document to other European countries, for them to use as the basis for their own codes of practice.

www.bedbugfoundation.org
richard@bedbugfoundation.org



PANORAMIC VIEWS FOR BPCA

BPCA featured in the recent Panorama documentary 'Rats, Traps, Bugs and Cutbacks' about the CIEH document 'The Perfect Storm', focusing on the withdrawal of local authority pest control and the subsequent impact on society.

BPCA was involved in the programme from the outset, and helped researchers develop their structure, putting them in touch with professional pest controllers along the way.

The programme makers went on-site with pest controllers such as Neil Parkes from Clinkil and Chris Woodard from Stevenage Borough Council to see how rodenticide resistance is causing problems, and interviewed BPCA staff both on and off-camera. BPCA technical manager Richard Moseley said "We were very pleased to be asked by the BBC to help with this programme, and the Panorama team really wanted to understand how pest



control is being impacted by the recession, and the need for professionals to step in where councils face cutbacks". Sadly, most councils were not willing to be interviewed, so the programme was cut back to 30 minutes from the full hour. Panorama also set up a fake pest control company to show how easy it is to enter the market, and were able to buy aluminium phosphide products. The programme was shown on BBC2 on 6 August, and is available on BBC iPlayer.

www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer



The British Pest Management Manual endorsed by the RSPH

Following the recent update of the 'pest controllers bible' (The British Pest Management Manual), the RSPH released the following statement "RSPH believes that The British Pest Management Manual is a valuable text for anyone undertaking the RSPH/BPCA Level 2 Award and Level 2 Certificate in Pest Management, and is an ideal resource for the professional pest controller. BPCA chief executive Simon Forrester said "The RSPH endorsement reflects the quality of the manual, and reaffirms its place as the most important resource in the industry."

Order your copy online by visiting www.bpca.org.uk/bpmmanual.html



Goodbye Terry, hello Stephanie!

August saw a farewell to BPCA finance officer Terry Ashton (pictured left), who leaves to take up a post at Repton Public School. Terry said "While I've enjoyed my time with BPCA, the role at Repton is an opportunity too good to miss."

BPCA Operations Manager, Maddy Pritchard said "Terry has been an outstanding member of the team over the past five years and we are really sad to see her leave. However, we understand this is a great move for her and we wish her every success. We welcome Stephanie Costopoulos, who brings with her a wealth of experience from her finance career in both the public and private sector."

Fumigation advice launched

The HSE has recently published guidance for those carrying out fumigation operations. It gives advice on safety measures when using moisture-activated gassing compounds for vertebrate pest control in open areas.

<http://goo.gl/dQT7v>

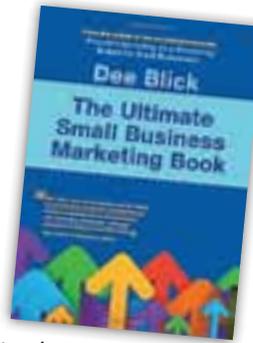
BPCA in the dock

The SOFHT Mock Trial in late September focused on a food manufacturer who had cut back on the pest control contract, and subsequently been prosecuted. Around 100 of the food industry's biggest clients witnessed BPCA Technical Manager Richard Moseley give evidence at the mock trial, based on a genuine case. At the conclusion of the day, attendees also gave their verdict on the outcome. See PPC 69 for more details.

The Ultimate Small Business Marketing Book

If you have even the slightest interest or involvement in marketing, then this book is for you. Written and edited by respected and multi-award winning marketer Dee Blick of the MarketingGym, this book explains the importance of marketing and what you could do to improve your activities, without the fluff you tend to get with other marketing books.

It has held the top spot for such publications on Amazon for many weeks, has a five star review rating, and is one of the only marketing books to be endorsed by the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM). This book will give you all the tools and knowledge needed to make the most of your marketing budget and activities. Having recently worked with pest control companies such as Dyno Pest, Dee has a good



understanding of the industry, and of the difficulties faced by small and medium sized businesses.

If you're struggling with your marketing activities and you need a helping hand, then we recommend you invest in this insightful and supportive book.

Available now, price £15.
ISBN 978-1-905493-77-7

PPC has one copy to give away in a special prize draw, courtesy of Dee Blick. For your chance to win, answer this question: which pest control company has Dee recently worked with? Send your answer, along with your name, contact number and postal address to editor@ppconline.org by 26 October 2012 to be in with a chance of winning.

New team player

A new appointment will greatly strengthen the BASF Pest Control Solutions team from this September. Moving from mainland Europe, Gavin Wood replaces Shirley Wilson to become business manager for the UK, Scandinavia and the Baltics, responsible for all professional pest control sales and support.



alexo highly commended!

alexo was highly commended after just missing out on being named Magazine of the Year at the Trade Association Forum Best Practice Awards 2012.

The judges said "This entry was awarded a Commendation for its successful introduction of a new magazine for the industry which, despite the difficult subject matter, was informative, appealing and very interesting to read."

Chief Executive Simon Forrester said, "We're absolutely gutted not to have won outright. However, it's a great achievement for **alexo** and the Association to be nominated and then get an honourable mention – thanks to everyone involved for your support."

The next issue of **alexo** focuses on food production and hits 15,000 customers' desks in November.

www.alexo.org.uk



Farewell

Chris Parmiter is to step down as divisional director at Barretine

Environmental Health to set up his own business offering training and auditing. Group managing director Steve Bailey stated "While we are disappointed that Chris will be moving on, we respect his decision to do so. Chris has a wealth of experience and knowledge of the industry and as such we will continue to work with Chris and his new business albeit as a customer."

The search for a replacement continues...

Value of early rodent control underlined by studies

Tackling rat and mouse infestations robustly and early is the key to effective and economic control, says a new BASF population dynamics study. Failure to do so can easily mean four or five times the amount of rodenticide is required to deal with large, well-entrenched populations. And even then control can often be far less effective.

Undertaken over the past two years, the research highlights the extent and speed with which unchecked rodent populations can grow, and also the vital importance of early control in cost-effectiveness terms.

"With female rats and mice able to produce up to eight young a month and reaching maturity in just five weeks, a population of 10 individuals can grow to nearly 500 in five months," states UK business manager Gavin Wood.

"A month after the infestation starts there are likely to be less than 50 rodents to control and these will be concentrated in a relatively small area. But after two or three months, as the progeny of the original individuals start breeding, numbers rise particularly rapidly. At the same time, competitive pressures ensure they disperse over a wider area.

"Larger populations of rats and mice living and foraging more broadly significantly increases the control challenge," he stresses. "It takes a fixed amount of rodenticide to deliver a lethal dose. So the more individuals there are, the more bait required.

"More individuals and a wider area also means more baiting points and longer treatment to ensure sufficient access to the bait to acquire a lethal dose.

"And while 90% control of 40 rats means only four will survive to begin repopulation, the same control with a population of 500 means 50 survivors. In turn, this means much more rapid population re-establishment,

necessitating far more frequent treatment. Which further adds to the environmental risk as well as the cost of control."

Against this background, the joint keys to the most cost-effective rat and mouse lie in a high level of vigilance, a low level of tolerance and top quality early rodenticide baiting.

Continued vigilance and minimal tolerance are particularly important given the fact that, as shy and largely nocturnal feeders, rats and mice are unlikely to be seen in many cases until population levels are already high. This makes it vital to actively seek out tell-tale signs of activity, like worn rat runs along the sides of buildings, droppings and gnawing damage to materials or buildings.

"Keep a regular and disciplined look out for signs of rats and mice," advises Gavin Wood. "They're not difficult to spot if you look for them. Especially so if you focus your attention on high rodent risk areas.

"Start baiting immediately you see any signs of activity. Bait wherever you suspect activity. And, above all, use a bait with the greatest possible appeal to maximise the speed and reliability of consumption.

"Our research clearly shows advanced

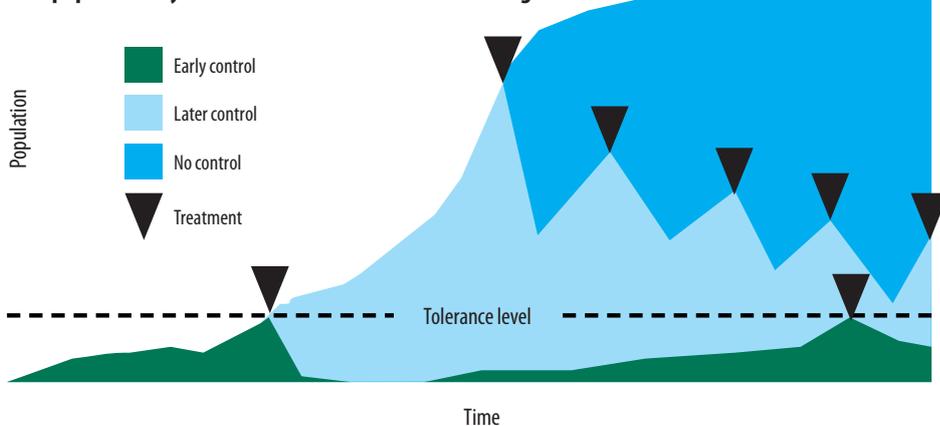
formulations like Neosorexa Gold give far more rapid and complete uptake – and therefore control – than a standard wheat bait containing precisely the same concentration of difenacoum," he reports.

"Combined with prompt early treatment, such quality baiting ensures the highest degree of control in the shortest possible time. Our studies show it will knock populations back to such a level that they can only re-establish relatively slowly from new individuals moving into the vacated territory.

"Even with a continued low level of tolerance, this means further treatment may not be required for several months, compared to the monthly baiting almost invariably needed to keep on top of persistent problems where initial control is less effective.

"Overall, quality baiting sufficiently early can mean you only need a quarter or a fifth the amount of bait you'd otherwise require," insists Gavin Wood. "It will also cut down the amount of time you have to put into rodent control, the amount of damage you incur and, every bit as importantly from an environmental point of view, the period over which baits have to be left down."

Pest population dynamics under different control strategies



CEPA APPOINTS NEW CHAIR

The Confederation of European Pest Management Associations (CEPA) appointed Bertrand Montmoreau as its new chair at their AGM in Brussels, moving across from his role as CEPA treasurer. He is a past president of C3SD, the French equivalent of BPCA.

Formerly of Ecolab France, Bertrand is also President of the French Heating & Ventilation Association AICVF. He commented "I'm delighted with my election to the chair of CEPA. My plan for the coming two years is to

consolidate the changes my predecessors initiated. We need to ensure that the pest management industry is recognised for responsibly protecting European citizens and their environment against public health risks.

"I know I can rely on a strong team to further enhance our dialogue with regulators in Brussels, and to successfully launch the European Pest Management Services (CEN) standard."

Roland Higgins, CEPA Director General



said of the appointment "Bertrand's election brings a former National

Association president to the chair of CEPA. As some 80% of national regulations reflect decisions taken at EU level, he understands the need for a strong representation in Brussels. We can look forward to a term that will aim at uniting our members around strong common goals."

www.cepa-europe.org



Sofa so good!

Steve McGrail from Pro-Kill Environmental in Manchester was the envy of many pest controllers when he had breakfast with BBC's news team – in front of about a million people.

Steve was on the BBC Breakfast programme to be interviewed about pest problems associated with the recent floods. Steve said "I was given no briefing prior to broadcast, and after a few minutes in makeup I was thrown into the limelight. We touched upon a variety of industry issues, and ensured we encouraged the public to use registered professionals when treating domestic or commercial properties."

He added: "If we can as an industry promote our profession given this type of opportunity, we will in time, all reap the benefits."

If any BPCA members would like to be put forward for future media opportunities, please get in touch with Laurence Barnard at the BPCA office

laurence@bpca.org.uk

H&S for small businesses

"The Health and Safety 'Toolbox: how to control risks at work' has just gone live on HSE's website. It is available free, and offers a next level of advice for those who need specific information to identify, assess and control the risks in their workplace. It offers practical advice, tools and case studies.

www.hse.gov.uk

Biocides Regulation (EU) 528/2012 officially published

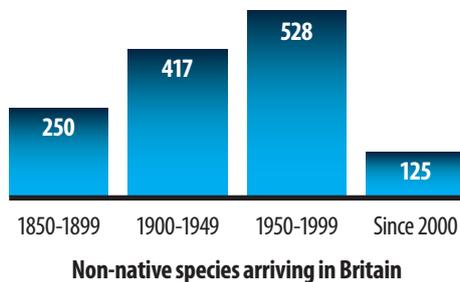
As previously reported, the Directive established a two-step process of approval: first, evaluation of the active substance at the Union level, and second, product authorisation at Member State level. Full text can be viewed at <http://goo.gl/otqsG>

August also saw the awaited release of the stakeholder engagement document 'Environmental risk mitigation measures for second generation anticoagulant rodenticides proposed by the UK' by the Health and Safety Executive. This is of key importance to the pest industry as its results will influence the way pest control

operators apply and monitor second generation anticoagulants in the UK. The document gives options to restrict outdoor use of SGARs, including where all five active ingredients are available for use 'in and around buildings.' BPCA urges readers to review this document and respond to BPCA or HSE with your views, as we are informed that the HSE is keen to take advice from professional users. The key documents and response form are at www.bpca.org.uk/downloads

Invasive species numbers up

There has been a dramatic increase over time in the number of non-native species arriving in Britain, a major new report from the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH) has found.



In the six decades from 1950 more than 600 non-native species have arrived in Britain. The invasive type of non-native species are considered to be one of the five major threats to biodiversity, and have been estimated to cost the UK economy £1.7 billion per annum.

Although the majority of non-native species are not considered invasive, those that are can cause major ecological or socio-economic impacts, and generally become permanent burdens if they establish themselves in the natural environment. Overall about 15% of the species established are considered to have a negative impact.

The review found:

- Most of the non-native species that are established within Britain originate from Europe. However, in recent decades the rate of new arrivals originating from Europe is slowing and temperate Asia and



North America are both

becoming major contributors to the non-native fauna and flora of Great Britain

- There are 1,875 established non-native species in Great Britain in total. The majority are higher plants (1,377 species) with insects as the next most numerous group (278 species)
- Most (1,684 species) of the documented established non-native species are found within the terrestrial environment.

An integral part of the project is a rapid-reporting system for new arrivals such as the Asian hornet which, although not yet present in Great Britain, could potentially having a serious impact on honey bees and other pollinators on which it preys (see PPC 65).

Dr Helen Roy from CEH said "By sharing information, the data compiled give us a comprehensive understanding of non-native species, allowing us to respond rapidly to the arrival of new species."

Any pest controller who suspects that they have seen this species is encouraged to send in a photograph through the GB-NNSIP's online recording website, which can also be used to report sightings of 19 other key species.

<http://goo.gl/hZ9rS>

www.nonnativespecies.org



WE ASKED 100 PEST CONTROLLERS FOR VIEWS ON A TOPIC THAT'S ON THEIR MINDS AT THE MOMENT...

HOW FAR ARE YOU PREPARED TO TRAVEL FOR WORK?

Some pest controllers prefer to work only within a certain distance of their base of operations, while others are happy to travel the length of the country for work. But is the rumour that pesties get nosebleeds 40 miles from home true or not?

The simple answer is 'it depends'. Like any business, pest controllers weigh up the type of job, potential profit and opportunity for repeat or add-on business before deciding to travel. Nick Anderson of RPC Pest Control summed it up as "Always ask where the job is, and price accordingly."

Those companies operating in London had very different travel distances compared to those in rural areas. Jim England from Protex said "We'll travel between 11-20 miles, but in London this is a hell of a distance. Rather than measuring it in distance I usually look at the amount of time it's going to take. There gets a point when if the time is too long it becomes unviable for the client in terms of cost."

Another respondent said "We service a large, rural area and we will visit this type of [domestic/one-off] job if we can combine it with others to help reduce the time and fuel overheads. The travelling time is made longer by the rural roads and terrain, especially in winter weather. We don't have loads of technicians too, so we need to apportion our resources sensibly: we can't have one man miles away and jobs nearer home waiting to be done."

But some pest controllers are willing to travel anywhere for a lucrative contract. One small company said "Provided the job is costed correctly, our expertise can be used anywhere, EMEA etc."

Based on responses, pest controllers will typically travel 445 miles per week for work. Assuming an overall average speed of 35mph, that's around 13 hours a week behind the wheel – no wonder one respondent said "I spend more time in my van than with my wife. It's like I'm married to it!"

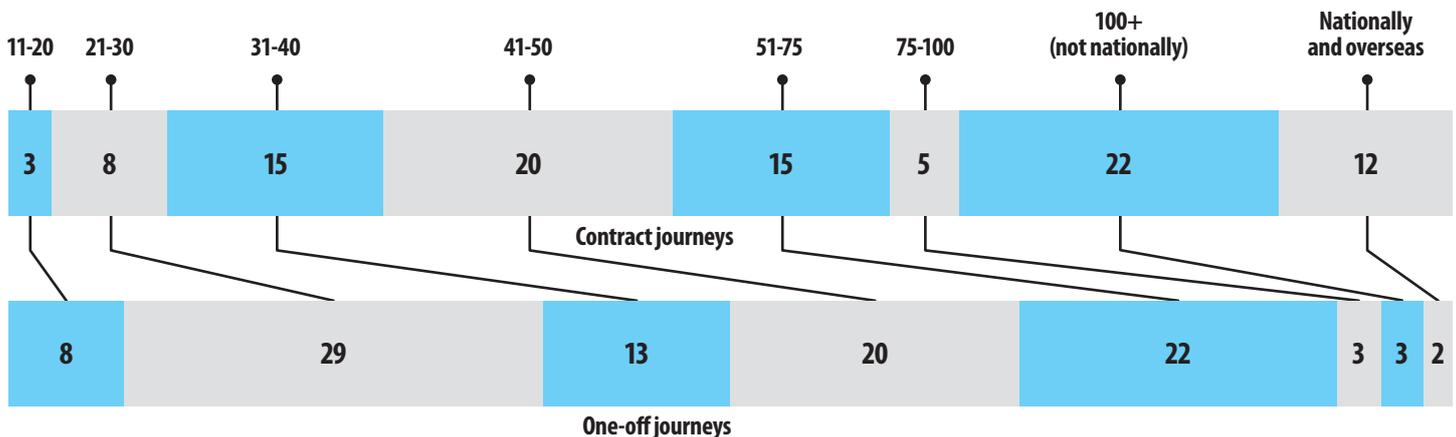
Some replies saw extensive travel as a marketing opportunity. Barry Simpson of Tendring Pest Control Services said "Mine is a fledgling business, as long as there's a pound profit, I'll travel. It gets my business

"The world is getting smaller: businesses that will not travel will falter and eventually fail."

seen in a different geographic location, my business cards in another client's hands and a potential recommendation for the high quality service I deliver. You never know who you're going to meet or how they're connected."

Mark Horsfall of MD Pest Services gave us the idea for this survey. Mark had turned away work because of the distance from his base – something he later came to regret: "As soon as I'd put the phone down on the customer, I instantly regretted not just giving him a quote. He knew whereabouts I was based and still decided to call for my services. I'm not new to pest control but I am new to business, and things like this are things I can only learn from. I've now decided that I'm going to quote for all work that comes in, no matter how far away from me it is. As long as my expenses are covered and I can make a profit on the job then I see no reason why I shouldn't go for it. At worst, the customer will only say no if my quote is

Maximum travel distance in miles, by percentage of total journeys



“...pest controllers will typically travel 445 miles per week...”

too expensive and at best, I've always a chance of more work off the customer and more work in that area, should someone see my vehicle.”

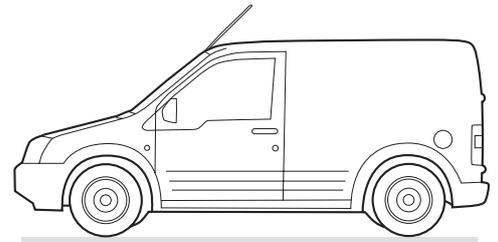
As for fuel economy, the average work vehicle delivers just under 41 miles per gallon, with most respondents in the 35-39 mpg band. Based on these figures, the average pest controller is spending roughly £3,250 on fuel each year. Interestingly, many of those who commented about van efficiency said they didn't know the actual figure, despite the increase in fuel costs in recent years. A significant number of respondents said they are looking to change their vehicles to something more economical – a clear sign margins are affected.

Richard Bone of Des Bone Ltd had some useful advice for PCOs: “Over the last ten years we've committed ourselves to some simple vehicle rules which have benefited our

running costs. We don't carry items or materials just for the sake of it. We ask our drivers to attend once every three years a one hour driving exam with an independent approved examiner who will then provide us with a report. We find this brings back home driving systems that will remove the need for speed and [promote] sensible approaches to situations on the road. Tyre quality and pressures are a must to each vehicle as this reduces costs in the long run, and servicing at the correct time also makes such a big difference to our fuel costs.”

Anthony Williams of Predator Pest & Wildlife Control Services summed up the responses well with his comment: “If the job is at a good price, and you can make money out of it, I cannot see why you should not travel the distance to work.” Adam Juson of Merlin Environmental Solutions Ltd had a stark warning for PCOs: “The world is getting smaller. Businesses that will not travel will falter and eventually fail.”

On a more positive note, Brian Grundy from Pesteco said “I'm a newbie to this industry and thoroughly enjoying the



“...the average work vehicle delivers just under 41 miles per gallon...”

experience. I've always believed that you need to speculate in order to accumulate. You never know what's around the next corner – perhaps that large contract you hoped for!”

Contact editor@ppconline.org if you have a subject you'd like to see covered in a future issue of PPC.



The BPCA National Pest Survey garnered over 20,500 column cm of press coverage (plus TV, radio and online coverage) between May and August, which is broadly equivalent to £117,000 of advertising, reaching an audience of 11.3 million people across the UK. BPCA staff were involved in follow-up interviews with around 20 stations and papers.

Also, following the Panorama programme BPCA contacted all UK MPs to draw their attention to our cause. So far, several have written to request further information and arrange meetings or phone conversations.

Coverage for the survey

TV: BBC 2 (Panorama)

Radio: 6 BBC radio stations and 20+ local independent radio shows

National press: Daily Mirror, The Scotsman, The Daily Telegraph, The Guardian, The Independent, The Sun

Regional/local press: 70+ regional papers right across the UK

alexo

We recently surveyed both members and readers of alexo. Overall the results from the surveys were fairly positive. A good proportion of the readers enjoyed all aspects of the magazine, more specifically the features and news. Many said they wouldn't change anything about the magazine in general and that it was informative and interesting.

The research has shown there a few tweaks that need to be made to **alexo**. In general we seem to be on the right track in terms of content, but we need more editorial from members. To see your company promoted to 15,000 pest control customers, contact us

editor@alexo.org.uk



Recent research with readers showed:

- Over 33% of readers have contacted a BPCA member from **alexo**
- Over 50% of respondents' copies of **alexo** are read by more than one person in their company
- 25% of readers wouldn't change anything about **alexo**
- Over 75% of readers directly influence the procurement process for pest control in their organisations

Research with members showed:

- Members scored **alexo** 7.6 out of ten
- 68% of respondents want to contribute editorial in the future
- Most members want each issue to have a different focus

DO YOU THINK YOUR PEST CONTROL BUSINESS IS UNIQUE?

DO YOU WANT TO EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS, BUT DON'T HAVE THE TIME OR CASH FLOW?

LOVE IT OR LOATHE IT, MORE AND MORE COMPANIES ARE EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY OF FRANCHISING THEIR COMPANY.

FRANCHISING IN PEST CONTROL



Laurence Barnard investigates how, and why more and more pest controllers are following this popular model of expansion.

The whole subject of franchising in the pest control industry certainly seems to stir up some pretty strong reactions. Some view it positively as an opportunity to expand the pest control industry, whereas others take a very negative view and feel it will only increase competition. With more people leaving their jobs with fat redundancy packages, and looking to start a new career in pest control, franchising your company could be an effective way to stay ahead of the competition – or is it?

You've only got to look at the success of some of the largest companies in the world to see that the franchising model can work. Back in 1954, McDonalds was just a small drive-through restaurant in San Bernardino, California. Now it's one of the world's largest companies, with a network of well over 30,000 locations in more than 100 countries. Although the fast food sector is one of the most well-known users of the franchise model, there are thousands of franchise opportunities in a variety of sectors currently on offer in the UK, such as finance, dairy, construction, retail, marketing, travel and so on – the list is endless. With all this success, it's difficult to see why franchising isn't more popular in pest control.

If you have a successful business, franchising can be a very effective way of growing. You use your existing business as a blueprint for expansion. But instead of setting up in parts

unknown and running it yourself, you find independent franchisees that you help to set up their own businesses using your blueprint. - sounds easy, right? Before you start rubbing your hands together in glee like Delboy Trotter, you really need to know what franchising is all about, and if it's the right option for you.

How franchising works

Generally speaking, franchising means opening additional outlets through the sale of franchise rights to independent investors who will use your name and operating system. A franchisee pays a franchisor an initial fee in return for the rights to open and operate a business under the franchise trademark, and for training in how to operate the business. In most cases, after the start-up period franchisees pay an ongoing periodic royalty fee for continued support and training. Bouremouth-based Prokill offer a comprehensive training package for their franchisees. Head of Development, Geoff Whittle said, "With Prokill you'll undertake the most comprehensive training course in the country which includes field and classroom modules, sales, business structuring and a comprehensive knowledge of all types of pests: birds, insects, mammals and rodents."

From a business perspective, perhaps the most important aspect of franchising is that a franchisee furnishes all of the capital required to start the business and assumes all risk for success or failure. Geoff added "Financial commitment from individuals engenders greater personal commitment to the business than is perhaps the case with employed staff/managers, which can mean you gain greater financial returns if you can find a suitable and motivated candidate."

Advantages to franchising?

Franchising has many attractive features, particularly when compared with more traditional methods of expansion. Expanding your company takes capital and time – plus you retain all the risk of failure. Also it can be difficult to manage a new operation if it's far from your home base. For all of these reasons, more and more entrepreneurs are finding that franchising is the best way to expand a great business.

Franchising offers a number of advantages worth considering:

- You expand using someone else's money
- Franchisees are responsible for all hiring, leases, and unit-opening expenses, reducing your risk
- Franchises can open quickly, often getting your new service out ahead of the competition
- A franchisee assumes the risk of succeeding or failing
- Franchise owners are highly motivated operators.

Before making the decision to franchise, you must first determine whether franchising is a viable strategy for your particular business.

Is there a wide market for your service? Do you have a point of differentiation? Is your service saleable to potential franchisees?

When recently looking at franchising his company, Michael Taylor from northern based bird and pest control company, Contego, said "I believed we could provide an extraordinary business opportunity. Our high standards in all aspects of the industry including falconry, bird proofing, pest management and a range of environmental services, means we can offer a potential franchisee potentially lucrative business."

Tom Luczynski, Vice President International Development & Franchising at Orkin could answer all of these questions. He said "We felt we could deliver a quality franchise package including training, operational and technical support, sales, service and marketing support, and most importantly the financial returns."

"Franchising has many attractive features, particularly when compared with more traditional methods of expansion."

How do I franchise my company and make sure I recruit the right franchisee?

Once you have decided to franchise your company, your next move is to get a clear understanding of what's involved in becoming a franchisor. Your responsibilities generally include:

- Developing your services
- Setting the strategy for advertising and marketing
- Quality control and monitoring achievement
- Communications with and between the franchisee network
- Draw up legal agreements
- Protect your brand and intellectual property (IP)
- Set up training and support systems.

Recruiting franchisees is hard work. You'll need to have good selling and motivational skills. Many franchisors attend exhibitions and run marketing and advertising campaigns, which have associated costs for which you may need to budget. To attract and win franchisees, you'll need to provide evidence of the success of your business, and demonstrate your passion and enthusiasm for it.

/continued over...

Where would you like to start your own business?



Orkin International Franchise Program

As a world leader in pest management, Orkin, LLC has more than 450 company-owned locations and more than 80 franchise operations in the USA, Canada, Central and South America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. This number continues to grow as more individuals and businesses align themselves with Orkin's trusted name, more than a century of experience and consistent service worldwide.

Ask us about the benefits of converting your pest control business to an Orkin franchise.

- Orkin Franchisees have the power and resources of a \$1.2 billion (USD) company for all their support needs.
- Orkin's technical and training materials and staff are second to none. We provide initial and ongoing training programs to keep you on top and ahead of industry issues and to help you provide premium, quality services.
- Orkin franchisees are granted an exclusive territory to own and operate the Orkin business. You'll benefit from our existing customer relationships, suppliers and resources.

For more information, contact:

Tom Luczynski

Vice President International Development & Franchising

tluczyns@rollins.com

Office: 001.404.888.2360 Mobile: 001.404.725.1536

Most importantly pick your franchisees wisely and take your time throughout the recruitment process – a bad choice could damage your reputation and adversely affect your business. Geoff Whittle said “You need to be diligent with your recruitment process as your franchisees will become the champions of your business and represent your brand around the country.” It could be worth profiling your ideal candidate to use as a blueprint throughout your search. Managing director of NBC, John Dickson said “We have a clearly defined ideal franchisee profile – usually a managerial type person looking for a lifestyle change, yet wanting an environment where someone else provides the business support. Most of our franchisees do not come with a pest control background – we look for the right go-getting attitude – everything else is teachable.”

“The more franchisees you have, the better known your brand becomes. Your purchasing power may also increase as you buy more, allowing you to negotiate discounts.”

What’s my role once I’ve sold a franchise?

Rather than managing the franchisee and business, your role involves supporting your franchisees. This is likely to include:

- Helping the franchisee find premises and fit relevant equipment
- Training them to the correct standard
- Creating operating systems to help franchisees set up and run their franchise
- Providing marketing materials and resources
- Running advertising campaigns to build brand awareness
- Protecting and defending your intellectual property.

As your business grows, there can be additional benefits. The more franchisees you have, the better known your brand becomes. Your purchasing power may also increase as you buy more, allowing you to negotiate discounts.

Potential drawbacks

Franchising isn’t all a bed of roses – it has many drawbacks. You need to invest considerably in developing and marketing your franchise offering. Tom Luczynski explains “At Orkin it took us many years and a considerable investment to develop the right franchise package. We’ve learned a lot along the way and we’ve had to continually refine our business model and processes to maintain our success.”

You also need to ensure you get the right franchisees and constantly control what they do. A bad franchisee can harm your reputation and brand, damaging your whole business. The market is competitive: understand you’re not the only company in the industry franchising, and with more and more companies exploring this option, the competition to recruit the right franchisee is getting tough. But don’t let this put you off. Although there are many drawbacks to this explosive form of business growth, there are some shining examples of successful franchises and franchisees in the pest control market.

Ian Cain, NBC Bird and Pest Solutions franchisee was recently awarded the bronze award Franchise of the Year in recognition of his commitment to ethical business and environmentally responsible wildlife management and for building relationships with, and

retaining, a portfolio of high end customers across Scotland. Ian said “I came across NBC at an exhibition and though it seemed like an unusual and unique business opportunity. The experience has been fantastic, the support I have received is unrivalled, and there is always someone on hand to talk to. Ian added “If you’ve got the determination, commitment and strong work ethic, you’ll make a success of your franchise.”

Having been in the pest control industry for 111 years (that’s right, well over a century), Orkin is one of the world’s largest pest control companies with over 400 company operations and a franchise network of 80 operations in 23 countries. Although they are yet to expand into the UK market they are having resounding success elsewhere. Luis Elizondo, Orkin franchise owner in Costa Rica said “Our relationship with Orkin has allowed us to benefit from their vast technical expertise and earn our customers’ confidence.”

What about me – a potential franchisee?

Before signing up to a franchise, carefully examine what the franchisor has on offer. Ensure they have gone to great lengths to deliver a professional, fully operational, tried-and-tested formula. Geoff Whittle from Prokill advises “Ultimately, as with everything, ‘you get what you pay for’ and potential franchisees in this industry should evaluate all options, not just jump into one which appears to fit their immediate finances.”

There are many advantages to investing in a franchise. Setting a business up is harder and more costly than you may think, and buying a franchise can be an easier option. Making a business work can be difficult, but the advantage of a franchise is that apart from the initial set-up you will gain continued business support that you wouldn’t necessarily get setting up on your own. Michael Taylor said “unlike starting from scratch, with a franchise you get the support you need. At Contego we provide all the training and support needed to get you ahead of the curve from day one.”

Franchising also means you don’t need to spend years building up your brand and reputation – it’s all given to you on a plate. Tom Luczynski explains “The benefits of franchising clearly outweigh the road of trying to build it on your own. As a franchisee, you become part of the greater organisation of support, branding, collaboration, and other resources otherwise not available to you.”

Any prospective franchisee should not only thoroughly investigate the opportunity but also the reputation, back-up, operational support and depth of knowledge that they need once they embark on their new career – and of course, make sure they are a BPCA member!

FRANCHISE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE UK

ORKIN: Tom Luczynski, vice president, international development and franchising tluczyns@rollins.com

CONTEGO: Michael Taylor, managing director franchising@contegoresponse.com

PROKILL: Geoff Whittle, head of development geoff@prokill.co.uk

NBC BIRD AND PEST CONTROL: John Dickinson, managing director john.dickinson@nbcbirdandpest.co.uk



EXCLUSIVE BENEFITS PACKAGE



What happens to your calls when you are out on a job, or outside office hours?

Do they go to a mobile phone? Not ideal when you're driving, up a ladder, or asleep in bed.

Maybe you use an answer phone? Not a failsafe solution when you consider that 75% of new callers won't leave a message, preferring to ring other companies until a human answers.

Last year BPCA began promoting the use of 24/7 call handling service Answer-4u at reduced rates with one simple objective: to make sure that member calls were answered first time, every time.

London-based company Agent Orange, were one of the first members to sign up to the scheme. Ken Best at Agent Orange says "The service has been successful so far; we have been pleased with the manner in which Answer-4u has made the service fit our (demanding!) requirements and the monthly expenditure has been cost-effective, given measured call volume. I would not hesitate to recommend Answer-4u to other servicing companies

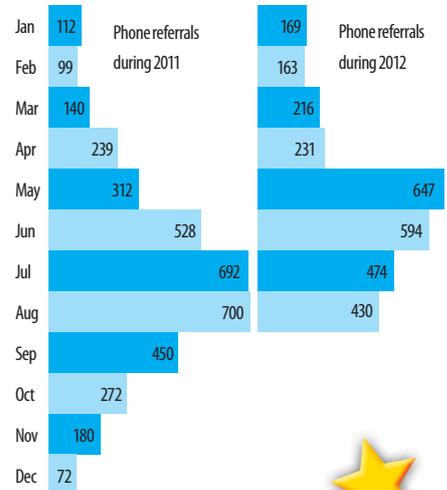
within the industry."

More recently BPCA itself decided to try out the benefits of Answer-4u by launching our 'Find a local pest controller' line 24/7, and it has proved to be very successful. Answer-4u gives the details of the nearest three BPCA members to the caller.

Interestingly, numbers are down during the Summer, demonstrating the slow wasp season – take heart that it's affecting everyone!

Following on from BPCA Regional Meetings last year, Answer-4u rang all attendees with a view to establishing the need for services. Of the 66 contacts made, 10 went straight to voicemail (15%), 20 stated they didn't require a service (30%) and only 3 has a solution in place already (5%). Some respondents said they didn't mind missing calls – they were too busy!

If you would like to find out how Answer-4u can help your business deal with calls, book appointments and more, then get in touch on 0800 8 22 33 44.



"More recently BPCA itself decided to try out the benefits of Answer-4u by launching our 'Find a local pest controller' line 24/7, and it has proved to be very successful."



PayYours® is working with BPCA to provide payment solutions to the mobile worker to help improve cashflow and increase opportunities for new business.

PayYours has upgraded the hand-held GPRS terminal, which is now being offered both on a pay-and-its-yours basis, and the option of a service level agreement of 36 monthly payments.

But the major innovation for our industry is the mobile pin entry device (MPED), which bluetooths to your mobile device, providing safe and secure payments on a low-cost, low-volume basis. To find out more see the enclosed leaflet or see the website – but don't



forget to use the code ABPC615753 to access the special rates.

Staff from Pay Yours will be with BPCA at our Regional Forums across the UK, and on our stand at PestTech.

www.payyours.co.uk



"...don't forget to use the code ABPC615753 to access the special rates."

Not a member yet?

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

rachel@bpca.org.uk

BPCA has launched almost 30 new benefits since 2011...

February 2011

Minimum 12 regional forums each year, bringing experts to your area and offering unique networking opportunities.



March 2011

Free 'You need pest control' leaflet designed for your business to win more work.



April 2011

alexo magazine launch – to promote BPCA members to clients.

PestEx Exhibition – the largest UK show bringing all the main suppliers under one roof.



May 2011

New premises in Derby with free-to-use training facilities.



April 2012

BPCA stand at PestVentures – telling industry about what BPCA is doing.



BPCA invited to join CEN Standard Committee – BPCA is now involved in driving the European standard for pest control – the likely framework for regulation in the UK and beyond.



March 2012

Fumigation Conference – bringing together experts and law-maker to explain how BPCA members need to keep these products.

February 2012

BPCA guidance on BRC standard – our document explaining what the BRC standard means, and how you can use it to win work.



“...positioning BPCA and our members as the experts...”



May 2012

BPCA stand at Facilities Show – telling 16,000 facilities managers about the importance of using professional pest controllers.

alexo issue three launched – targeted at the hospitality sector.



Launch of BPCA National Survey of Pest Species to raise our profile and encourage local authorities to use BPCA members.



BPCA launches joint guidance with British Hospitality Association – positioning BPCA and our members as the experts for any hotel or restaurant contract.



June 2012

24/7 'find a PCO' helpline delivering more work to our members.

Launch of bed bugs ECOP consultation – BPCA has driven this new guidance document on how to treat this troublesome yet lucrative pest.

July 2012

BPM Manual updated – the latest information updated in the 'bible' for pest control.



July 2011

PayYours payment systems at special rates for members.



August 2011

Product stewardship support with eBay and others.



September 2011

Employee benefits scheme and pension advice via B&CE.



Answering service at a reduced cost via Answer-4U.



January 2012

CPD revisions to BRC Standard to favour professional companies.

Online ladder safety CPD – free to members



December 2011

BusinessShield health and safety and employment law free advice line, plus 100s of online documents for PCOs to use.



Cost management via Auditel – have an expert look at your expenditure for free, and save you money.



November 2011

Guidance on grain fumigation.

alexo issue two published, including an increase in circulation to 15,000.



October 2011

Lobbying day in Brussels to get the message across to MEPs about professional pest control.



“...offering unique networking opportunities.”

September 2012

BPCA launches modular training – a 'day-a-week' model for delivering both the Level 2 Award and Certificate.



October 2012

Improved remote payment system for pest controllers via PayYours.

November 2012

Amazing new benefit for the whole sector!

BPCA will be exhibiting at PestTech. Visit our stand to discover a new benefit for:

- Technicians
- Managers
- Sales staff
- Supervisors
- Support staff
- YOU!

Want to know more before anyone else? Register online for more info at

www.bpca.org.uk/newbenefit

BPCA

British Pest Control Association

Ask yourself three questions...

Would these benefit my business and me personally?

Where else could I get all these benefits?

What would I pay for these on the open market?

...then apply to join!

Bradshaw Bennett celebrates 50th birthday

Having achieved its 50th anniversary, Bradshaw Bennett Ltd continues to push ahead with continued growth, Chartered status and a new corporate identity.

Over 30 years ago, Bradshaw Bennett established a partnership with BPCA with the aim of ensuring that those companies involved in the pest control industry were able to purchase a wide level of insurance cover at a competitive price.

During this time Bradshaw Bennett has become the market leader in the supply of insurances for pest controllers and has built up a wide knowledge of the pest control industry, understanding the issues the industry faces concerning insurance.

Lee Brodie, managing director Discreet Pest Control Ltd, commented: "We chose Bradshaw Bennett Ltd as our insurance broker because of their reputation and knowledge of the pest control industry. Everything is made easy for us – hassle free insurance, wide cover and competitive premiums."

Bradshaw Bennett is committed to looking after the insurance needs of the pest control

industry by providing comprehensive insurance solutions which offer the widest level of cover. Their specialised liability scheme automatically includes:

- Advice
- Financial loss
- Legal expenses and legal helplines
- Professional indemnity
- £5,000,000 public liability limit of indemnity as standard
- And, uniquely, has no excess for public liability.

Cliff Eccles, operations director Pestokill, said: "Bradshaw Bennett was able to demonstrate that the Special Scheme offered us the best protection available. We have the peace of mind of knowing that our insurance is placed in the right market at the right price."

Higher limits can be provided and other insurance covers such as property, business interruption and hired-in plant can be



incorporated into the insurance package.

Bradshaw Bennett also understands the affects that rising insurance costs can have on a business, and ensures that the premiums continue to be competitive while offering the widest level of cover, thereby providing the best possible value for money.

Of course, an insurance policy is only as good as the response to dealing with claims and if things do go wrong, Bradshaw Bennett ensures that matters are resolved quickly, leaving pest controllers to get on with the important task of running their business

Robert Long, managing director Absolute Pest Control Ltd, recounts: "When we suffered an unfortunate claim, Bradshaw Bennett were right there with us, ensuring that everything was quickly sorted out. We were able to get on with our business and leave it to Bradshaw Bennett."

Bradshaw Bennett Ltd 01625 505870

sch@bradshaw-group.co.uk

www.pestcontrolinsurance.co.uk



Rising insurance costs? Are you getting value for money? Bradshaw Bennett, the broker with over 30 years' experience, offers an exclusive specialist liability scheme, approved by the British Pest Control Association. The scheme offers wide cover and high claim limits are also available.

www.pestcontrolinsurance.co.uk



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“...we should not be afraid to charge a decent rate, and should value ourselves and our experience.”

Beyond the first 70 years

This year sees BPCA's 70th anniversary. To mark the occasion, back in June we got together some of the Association's former Presidents to discuss how the sector has changed, and how BPCA has risen to the challenge. Martina Flynn and Henry Mott hosted the event.

As with any group of industry figures opinions were divided, but there was a lot of agreement over the present and future for BPCA and the wider sector. We've summarised the main points here.

The past

BPCA was established to preserve the nation's food stocks in time of war, and to maintain public health through stewardship of the limited stocks of pyrethrum. Over the last 70 years BPCA has become the lead body in the sector, and has become much more inclusive, shaking off the 'old boys' club' image.

Tony Harman felt BPCA's biggest achievement was the 'hospitals are bad for your health' campaign, which removed crown immunity for hospitals which caused infections due to poor pest control. The campaign won the Institute for Public Relations 'Sword of Excellence' Award. The presidents noted that speaking with a single voice was key to the success of this and other campaigns. Never ones to dwell on past glories, and eager to speak their mind, our guests moved on to the present day...

The present

It was universally agreed that the sector needs to professionalise, and have pest control seen as being a specialist occupation, not simply a trade. Key to this is certification (i.e. regulation of individuals): by raising the barriers to entry, we keep out people who

are not serious about improving and being professional, and also squeeze out those who shouldn't be in the sector.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) was seen as a good start in fighting what many agreed was a major threat: the steady devaluation of what we do. Kevin Higgins made the point that pest control is cheaper to buy than it ever was, and there are lots more companies out there due to the ease of setting up.

Tony Harman noted that there is much more media coverage of pest control, but they were often looking for the worst rather than the best. Dave Nubel felt that BPCA is getting PR right, with good broadsheet coverage to raise the image of our industry. We should not be afraid to show people what we do, but with one eye on the programme-makers' agendas. Also, we should all carry out PR to our own customers, who need reminding pest control is a vital part of their remit. One area the presidents believed BPCA was doing well was **alexo** magazine. Frances McKim felt it was very good, something different for the sector, but that publishing **alexo** twice yearly is not frequent enough – people will forget it exists.

Some presidents felt BPCA had set high barriers to entry into the Association, and were worried the requirement for 100% CPD might have a negative impact on recruitment and retention of members. The counter-argument was that if BPCA is to stand for something, it must set a benchmark and stick to it.

The group agreed that research and education programmes are needed to show the value of pest control and the relative risk from biocides compared to the diseases that pests transmit. Once these are in place, it will be relatively simple to justify pest control and also make the task of getting MPs on side much easier.

Conversation turned to green pest control, and the general opinion is that most customers still focus on the cheapest available solution, and do not care what products are used. The old issue of pricing caused a lot of comments. Kevin Higgins thought the industry is its

“We have a tough battle to convince our customers that pest control is a specialised and valuable product, and should be undertaken by trained and competent specialists.”



own worst enemy, selling at low prices rather than high – we should not be afraid to charge a decent rate, and should value ourselves and our experience.

The future

The general consensus was that BPCA needs to work harder in three areas: namely lobbying government in the UK and Brussels; change the image of our sector; and work together with others to further our goals.

Regarding lobbying, the view was that BPCA should get more friends in government, and use food security and public health as levers for change. As an industry we need to rebrand the image of what we do, and if government won't regulate, they should give us the power to police ourselves (like CIEH does for EHOs).

Dave Nubel felt the industry should focus on health and prevention, not control, and emphasise that we keep people safe. Martina Flynn felt in general we have got better in portraying ourselves as protectors not pest killers, but there is a way to go.

One suggestion was for BPCA to move its emphasis from businesses to customers, demonstrating the importance of hygiene in the home. This would help move the UK towards a culture more like America, where pest control is valued and promoted by householders and businesses alike.

As for the single voice, one president said that unless NPTA and BPCA work together, the industry will never achieve anything. The analogy used was if Martin McGuinness can shake hands with the Queen, can BPCA and NPTA work together after establishing common ground? The group agreed that a united industry is stronger, and we can do more together than apart.

So what about the future of the sector generally? Martina Flynn felt that decisions made at European level make things difficult for us all. Many arguments are based on emotion not science. The EU looks at the hazard from biocides, not the risk of not using them, so the current focus is on potential harm rather than the problem of the pest itself. Our industry needs to counter this, or we may find ourselves fighting to keep actives in our stores.

Jonathan Peck agreed, and went on to say he felt that the future would see fewer actives in better formulations, and more products from across Europe introduced into the UK.

The presidents agreed that the expense to formulate and licence new actives will mean more brands but fewer biocides, which will likely lead to price reductions, but also difficulties for control especially if the way products are used continues to be strictly regulated. The DIY market is likely to grow, especially if other EU

countries tighten their amateur market regulation, thus driving overseas manufacturers to sell into the UK, probably via the internet.

One of the biggest threats the group saw was from facilities management companies, who either buy pest control companies without embedding their skills throughout the business, or simply use cleaning and support staff to carry out pest control, throwing it into the pot to sweeten the deal at the tendering stage, thus again devaluing what we do.

We have a tough battle to convince our customers that pest control is a specialised and valuable product, and should be undertaken by trained and competent specialists.

In summary...

In summary, in order to head off the threats and capitalise on the opportunities, it was agreed that our sector needs work together to professionalise, promote, and be proactive.

The presidents' comments will be discussed by the BPCA Board when they look at our strategy for the future.

If you have any comments on this article, please get in touch.

editor@ppconline.org

Moth control in the food industry

With moths continuing to cause havoc in the food manufacturing industry, and the presence of pesticide residues becoming an increasing concern for food manufacturers, Laurence Barnard investigates the effectiveness and financial benefits of some alternative products for moth control.

The risks posed by pests in any food handling premises are diverse: the spread of disease, damage to property, adverse public opinion, damage to reputations, the risk (and expense of) prosecution and, in extreme cases, closure of the premises. Therefore effective pest management programmes should not only prevent the introduction of pests to food sites, but also reduce the conditions that may encourage pest presence, the likelihood of pest survival, and the risk of cross-contamination to the public.

As we all know, stored food products are susceptible to pest infestations. Food moths often cause severe qualitative losses and quantitative degradations in the food industry throughout the world. Stored product insect control mainly relies on the use of conventional chemicals and fumigation, but more and more retailers, regulators, certification bodies and NGOs are putting pressure on producers to integrate measures that minimise the presence of pesticide residues.



The regulatory framework (principally, the Food Safety Act 1990 and the Food Hygiene Regulations 2005 made under it) deems food unsafe if it is considered to be injurious to health or unfit for human consumption. It lays down general hygiene requirements for all food business operators. Therefore the understandable conviction from the food industry that pesticide residues should not be present at levels that present an unacceptable risk to humans has led to legislative changes and mounting pressure to adapt current practices.

Legislation is, however, not the only driver for change in this sector. Stored product manufacturers currently rely on pesticide use for the control of moth infestations, but the process can require plant shutdown and production loss. Some servicing companies are reporting a dramatic increase in moths in recent months, most notably Surrey-based Cleankil (Environmental Services) Ltd. The use of non-chemical control is therefore being widely welcomed as a step towards residue reduction management and efficiency in UK food production.

A number of manufacturers (most notably Russell IPM and Exosect) have developed bio-rational pest management technologies in stored products, such as those using pheromones. The mating disruption technique is the most widespread control application of pheromones in which egg laying by the female is minimised or prevented by interfering with the successful mating between male and female moths.

“Food moths often cause severe qualitative losses and quantitative degradations in the food industry throughout the world.”

Russell IPM has developed a pioneering, environmentally-friendly moth control system, Dismate PE, which is based on the constant release of a of moth pheromone into the atmosphere. It is capable of disrupting the communication between male and female moths (Plodia and Ephestia) leading to failed mating and so a subsequent, gradual and sustained reduction in the moth population. Trevor Green from Russell IPM explains: “The Dismate PE mating disruption system has been designed to combat a plethora of moths present in food processing and manufacturing facilities. Dismate PE dispensers release a steady amount of pheromone over a three month period, and come ready to use in four distinctive colour-coded dispensers, making it easy to spot when the dispensers need changing. All of the parts of the system are also metal detectable, making it the most suitable system for the food processing industry.” He added “This system has been developed by us in the UK and Europe over the last 12 years, and is a proven product that works very successfully.”

Trevor said “Dismate PE can be used as a reliable alternative to constant insecticidal/ULV/fogging treatments, thereby reducing the usage of toxic products, and for the professional pest controller we’ve developed Dismate 100 which comes as a ‘ready-to-use’ off the shelf product, and will give coverage for areas up to 100 square metres.”

/continued over...

BPCA
British Pest Control Association
MEMBER

Russell IPM
INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

Dismate^{PE}
Management by confusion!

The mating disruption system with 10 years practical experience.

www.confusedmoth.com

Use responsibly only. Always read the label and product information before use. HSE Registration number 9146

Exosect developed Exosex SPTab, a similar style of product, but which works quite differently to Dismate PE and other pheromone products on the market. The Exosex SPTab tablet works by attracting male moths to the Entostat™ powder and female pheromone. As the male moths pick up Entostat™ powder from the tablet, their pheromone receptors become overloaded with pheromone and thus unable to locate females. A male will also form a mobile pheromone dispenser, producing 'false' pheromone trails, which attract additional males. Contact between the males ensures that the Entostat™ powder and the confusion effect is automatically passed on. The result is a state of Auto-Confusion™ amongst the male moth population leading to mating disruption and control. Georgina Donovan at Exosect explains "The SPTab product is unique from other brands in that it does not rely on emitting large quantities of pheromone throughout the factory, this is to ensure that monitoring traps are not shutdown. It is principally made from a natural, food grade wax, formulated with minute quantities of the female sex pheromone of the five key species of stored product moths."

As a development of their mating disruption products which have been used for agriculture applications for over 25 years, Suterra have now developed CheckMate®, specifically to be applied indoors to control stored product moths. CheckMate® artificially increases the amount of pheromone in the area the product is applied, making it difficult for male moths to find mates. Charles Phillips at Suterra explains "Food manufacturers are always keen to reduce the quantity and potential exposure of insecticides in food production facilities. The use of CheckMate® fits with the objectives of IPM programmes to reduce the pest pressure as well as the amount of insecticide used."

With all of these innovative products, monitoring traps can still be used and located by the moths, enabling firms to continue to collect reliable and accurate data for pest control, hygiene management and data auditing processes, proving to be a strong USP for all – but this isn't the only benefit of these products.

A spokesperson from a nut processing facility in America said "Since we started our trial with CheckMate®, we've seen our moth traps shut down. We still have to treat the facility for moths when we see the count start to rise, but this product has significantly reduced pest population levels, saving us thousands in treatments and production shutdown". PPC also spoke to other food producers and pest controllers that are using these products successfully, at an increased rate of return.

For the food manufacturer, demonstrating the financial benefits of using these products can be difficult to specify as it can depend on the scale of the facility, the timing of the operation, shutdown schedule and scale of the pest problem. Most importantly, there can be a detrimental cost to the business if customers find moth parts or larvae in their product. This could cause inestimable damage to the brand and share price.

An example of this would be when a large American drug maker Abbott Laboratories had to recall millions of containers of its Similac infant formula as some had been contaminated with insect parts. Abbott ended up losing \$100 million in connection with the recall. On the other end of the scale, a small facility that has trialled the Exosex SPTab explained that for every hour that their production was shut down for an insecticide treatment they lost £10k. The introduction of the Dismate PE system at a large UK bakery, has stopped regular shutdown of machinery and expensive ULV treatments completely, proving a huge financial benefit. So



"Most importantly, there can be a detrimental cost to the business if customers find moth parts or larvae in their product. This could cause inestimable damage to the brand and share price."

even on a relatively small scale, it can be demonstrated how financially important it is to keep production going, and the financial benefit of introducing these products.

For pest controllers, pheromone based products can provide an excellent form of control and a long term solution. Exosex SPTab, Dismate PE and CheckMate®, all reduce mating and thus egg laying, which controls the heart of the infestation for the long term. It enables the PCO to provide an all-round excellent service because they work in tandem with monitoring efforts. Charles Phillips added "CheckMate® is an additional tool in the pest controller's toolbox to control moths. The dispensers are fully compatible with monitors and routine fogging treatments. CheckMate® complements the on-going requirement for the professional pest controllers approach to sustainable long term biorational and integrated pest management."

For heavy infestations it is recommended you take advice from the manufacturer to help control the initial infestation. After the initial treatment it is unlikely you will need to use anything other than pheromone based products, meaning food factories can reduce their shutdown frequencies and associated costs.

While traditional forms of control such as using insecticides and fumigation are still essential to controlling infestations, pheromone confusion-based products seem to be the most innovative and cost-effective method to reduce moth activity, and are rapidly becoming the specifier's method of choice, as it helps growers, food manufacturers and processors to actively reduce their use of pesticides, while still controlling the infestation.

Useful links

www.russellipm.com

www.exosect.com

www.suterra.com

BPCA elects new Executive Board

Henry Mott, managing director of Conquer Pest Control Ltd, was elected President of the British Pest Control Association during the 70th Annual General Meeting, held on Wednesday 27 June 2012 at the BPCA offices in Derby.

Delighted at being elected as President, Henry said "It's a great pleasure and honour to be elected BPCA President. Noted for its training and technical expertise, the Association is an established trade body with a reputation for high standards and professionalism, and I am

very pleased and proud to take on the role of leading our sector's prime association."

Henry replaced long standing BPCA servant Martina Flynn, whose hard work and commitment has left the Association in a very strong position. Martina said "I've enjoyed my time as President, in spite of some challenges we've faced I believe we are in a strong position to face the future."

At the AGM Martin Harvey of Harvey Environmental Services Ltd was elected as Vice President, building on his service as a Board Member of BPCA since 2010.

New to the Executive Board this year are Jim England, Alan Morris and Brady Hudson who was recently elected chair of the Manufacturers and Distributors Committee.



New Board Members' profiles

Jim England Protex Pest Control Services Ltd



I came into the industry by accident through a chance conversation with my father. He ran a very successful stone cleaning and restoration business during the 70s and

80s, but later in life was drawn towards pest control. At the time that I became interested in a career in pest control I was working as a London cabby, and this seemed like a great opportunity to go out and get some hands-on experience with my father.

Since first attending a two week intensive course with BPCA at Ascot, and after passing several courses I became increasingly involved with BPCA and its activities with a view to continue my CPD. More recently I have been involved with several media appearances during which I have tried to promote the importance of BPCA, and I've also been invited to PestWorld in Boston this autumn to give a presentation on bed bugs in the UK. I believe this will give me a great opportunity to endorse BPCA and promote the professionalism of the UK pest industry.

I do feel that my drive and energy would make me an asset on the BPCA Executive Board. I feel that I already have a good relationship with the members of the organisation and with me what you see is what you get. I understand the commitment involved with this position and the importance of representing all BPCA members.

Brady Hudson Bell Laboratories



I have been involved with the pest control industry since joining Bell in 2006. I have been involved in chemicals since my working career began. My job as marketing manager

with Bell is extremely diverse, covering all aspects of the UK market from professional to agricultural products. Aside from being a mum of two lively kids, I use what spare time I have to take part in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, keeping fit and Olympic lifting.

Since joining Bell, I have been an active participant in the Association. I first started going to the Manufacturers and Distributors (M&D) Committee meetings, which are always lively and gave me the opportunity to network with other members of the M&D community. I also attended servicing committee meetings and BPCA regional meetings. More recently, I was successfully elected chair of the M&D Committee. I am passionate about our industry and what BPCA does to represent its members.

As part of my role on the M&D Committee I will now be a part of the Executive Board. I will contribute as vigorously as I do with other meetings and bring my values and experience to the table. There is a lot going on within our industry at the moment and times are turbulent, so this needs to be driven forward to embrace the times ahead. As a relative 'newcomer' I hope that I will be able to bring some fresh ideas.

Alan Morris Bayer Cropscience Ltd



I have been in the pest control industry for over 15 years now, working for one of the leading pest control manufacturers, Bayer CropScience and founder

companies (AgrEvo and Aventis) both in the UK and abroad.

I believe my experience gives me a good start to understand the needs of the industry from many points of view (pest controllers, distributors and manufacturers). I have represented Bayer as a member of the Manufacturers and Distributors Committee for the past 4½ years, again giving good insight to the workings of BPCA.

I am honest, hardworking, trustworthy and speak my mind. I believe these are important attributes in these changing times within the pest control industry. We have challenges ahead in many areas from registration of new products (BPD), standards of training, codes of practice and many more legislative issues which I believe I can assist the BPCA Executive Board with in the coming years.

If you'd like to take a more active part in the Association, contact the BPCA office to find out more.

Apprenticeships for the pest control industry



Establishing more apprenticeship schemes is high on the government agenda. The current state of youth unemployment in the UK means that government bodies are now knocking on our door to reach the pest control industry. Richard Moseley examines the advantages of taking on your own apprentice.

The pest control industry has often been viewed by many as a 'second career', attracting employees who are often changing jobs and moving into an industry that they may have not previously considered. Research carried out by Clive Boase of the Pest Management Consultancy which was published in PPC64, examined candidates sitting BPCA's five day foundation course at Warwick University. The results of which showed that approximately 50% of responders were over the age of 40 and were embarking on a new career.

But why is this the case? Why is our industry not attracting young people who can drive the industry forward, and continue to develop and improve the industry? One reason may be that, unlike other industries, there is currently no formal apprenticeship scheme designed to support employers and encourage younger workers into pest control. Traditionally, apprenticeships may have been associated with large employers, training up young staff to be electricians, engineers or plumbers. However, apprenticeships are developing to encompass other industries and disciplines to offer potential employees access to training in a

wide range of careers. Apprenticeships are currently available in cleaning, facilities management, housing and parking. So why is the pest control industry not able to compete with similar industries and attract funding and support for potential employees coming in to our industry?

Well don't worry any longer. The good news is that we can. Asset Skills is the employer-led skills body for industries such as facilities management, housing and parking, and they have secured funding to create an apprenticeship scheme for the pest control industry. Working closely with organisations such as BPCA, RSPH and the Pest Control Technical Training Forum, chaired by Rentokil's Head of Technical Training Academy David Cross, Asset Skills is in the process of developing a pest control apprenticeship scheme. The funding for the creation of this new scheme is available until 31 March 2013, and it is hoped that work on the new qualification will be completed by February.

David Fisher is part of the qualifications team at Asset Skills and it is his responsibility to develop new apprenticeships on behalf of Asset Skills.

He is keen to get the new qualification up and running, and is convinced it will bring long term benefits to the pest control industry. David commented "Industry research has shown the main drivers of this apprenticeship to be economic and environmental. Through increasing the quality of training and raising standards, the public perception of the industry will improve making it more appealing to young people as a career. By having a better trained workforce, businesses will be more able to retain customers through providing a better customer experience, ensuring the safe use of pesticides."

David Cross is also keen to draw attention to the long term benefits that apprenticeships can bring to pest control companies. He said "The development of apprenticeships within the pest control industry will allow companies to build a framework to develop people in all aspects of their work. The foundation will be a good practical and academic knowledge of pests and pest control, but similar priority will be given to the other aspects of generating good professional people, which is often overlooked in exams which focus on technical training, such as communication skills, literacy, numeracy, and working safely and considerately."

Crucially, David Cross also draws attention to the recent media coverage of the pest control industry, and highlights that the apprenticeship scheme may be just what is required to show that the pest control is a responsible sector. David added "With the somewhat negative publicity given to our industry in BBC's Panorama programme, which broadcast just how easy it is for anybody to set up as a pest control operator, the development of apprenticeship schemes will help demonstrate that our industry is not made up of 'anybodies' but there is a solid foundation in developing our staff to provide the best service available. The pest control industry is one which contributes very positively to society, not just in the vital services that we offer but also in the development of our people."

Many pest control companies may well have already run their own internal version of an apprenticeship, nurturing and supporting a young employee to develop a skilled and qualified staff member. But if



**Andrew
Wolstencroft of
Pestokill**

you don't
and you
were
considering
this, then

help is on hand via Asset Skills. Pestokill, based in Greater Manchester, is one such company that gave a school leaver a chance to become a new apprentice. Pestokill's Cliff Eccles was heavily involved with the training and development of young recruit Andrew Wolstencroft, who joined the company fresh from school. Cliff recalls "It's not all plain sailing when you take on a 16 year old. You have to consider the fact that some customers may not be comfortable with allowing such a young worker on their sites. In some circumstances it may be the customers policy not to allow young

employees on site, and customers with age restrictions in place, such as pubs, nightclubs and prisons may have to be avoided by whoever is working with the trainee on that particular day." Cliff also draws attention to the issue of driving and providing a vehicle for a younger member of staff. He stated "As Andrew did not have a driving licence when he joined us, staff had to work around the fact that he needed collecting and dropping off every day. When Andrew did pass his test, which he was determined to do to get out on the road, we also had to consider additional issues such as insurance for such a young team member. Before Andrew was allowed near a vehicle he had to do a supplementary driving course, and then a second 'test' with us before we entrusted him with a service vehicle." Even with these additional considerations Cliff is in no doubt that the time and effort dedicated to their youngest recruit was worth it. "Andrew has only recently turned 21, and he is already an experienced and well-qualified pest

technician who is developing his own specialities within Pestokill. He has proved to be a valuable asset to the business, and continues to progress and grow. He is already repaying the time and effort we put into his training."

When asked if he would take on another 'Andrew' fresh from school, with support and funding through a government approved apprenticeship scheme, Cliff added "Pestokill wouldn't hesitate to take on another youngster if they showed the aptitude for the job, especially if there was the additional support available via an apprenticeship scheme. Andrew has proved that the effort put into a young team member by an employer is priceless as the benefits of having a well-trained, well qualified team members far outweigh the initial constraints of employing a younger person."

This shining example of a successful apprenticeship at work highlights that these schemes can bring real value to the workplace.

A detailed explanation of the components of a government funded apprenticeship can be found on the BPCA website at

www.bpca.org.uk/downloads.html

If you're looking to hire your own apprentice then you can get further support and information from Asset Skills on its website www.assetskills.org or contact David Fisher (apprenticeships manager, Asset Skills) on 01604 233336 dfisher@assetskills.org



The Amenity Forum is an independent body bringing together professional organisations in the amenity horticulture sector and specifically the collective body representing the industry in relation to pesticide use and methods of weed control.

If you would like to go on our information list or offer more active help by becoming a member, please email our secretary Alan.Spedding@amenityforum.co.uk

We promote best practice and the highest standards and cover a wide ranging sector including urban pavements and parks, railways, sports turf, highways, industrial area, public sites, woodlands and many more.

Our activities include holding events, publishing good practice guidelines, acting as the principal voice in discussions with government and other agencies, developing education and training initiatives and disseminating information.

If you operate in the sector, specify contracts or have an interest in it, we need your support. We seek to demonstrate that, by voluntary action, we can drive up standards. It is important that everyone supports this.

www.amenityforum.co.uk

Attracting Google's army of spiders

Rose Judson explains how to ensure your website catches more than flies!

As a pest control professional, you probably have something of a professional interest in spiders. As a search engine marketing professional, so do I. But in my case, I'm concerned with search engine spiders, automated programs that crawl the World Wide Web, moving from site to site via links. When these programs find your pest control website, they index it, adding it to the databases of Bing, Yahoo!, and Google.

They tell the search engine what your site is about and assign it a quality score. The better your quality score, the more likely it is that your site will rank on the front page of search results. This makes it easier for the 165,000 people who search for 'pest control' in Britain each month to find you. If you're not seeing your site in search results, you need to attract the spiders. You need search engine optimisation (SEO).

SEO is the process of changing the organisation and content of a site to influence its search ranking. The basic principles of SEO are simple: search engine spiders like more or less the same things human customers like. They want a site that...

- Is clearly organised and easy to navigate
- Has useful, relevant, original content that's updated regularly
- Has lots of links from other pages, proving it has a good reputation.

Search engines tweak their algorithms frequently, putting emphasis on different quality factors, but these three ingredients are always valued.

Keywords - the foundation of site optimisation

When crawling your site's pages, spiders will notice terms that are used over and over again. These are keywords, and it's in your interest to do some research into keywords people search with when they want to find a business like yours. Using search keywords in the content on your pages means you're more likely to turn up in results when users enter them into the search box.

Use the free tool at <http://goo.gl/sqfGh> to generate a few short lists of keywords (make sure you select 'United Kingdom' as your country, USA is the default). These can include:

- Searches on your company name
- Searches for 'pest control' or 'exterminator' in the areas you serve (for example, 'pest control Redditch', 'pest control Alvechurch', 'pest control B45')
- Residential or business terms ('home extermination service', 'restaurant pest controllers')
- Terms that deal with specific pests: rats, mice, silverfish, etc.

Pick about seven to ten important keywords to use for each of your website's pages.



Website organisation

Don't try to put everything about your business on your homepage. Your homepage should summarise what your business does and give its full contact information, along with a list of communities you serve. Other topics should have their own pages. You can have an 'about' page that gives more information about your company, a page listing services and fees, one with your location and operating hours (including a map), the products you use, case studies, etc.

On each page, make sure you separate content into sections with clear headings that use keywords. Keep paragraphs short, and use keywords as often as seems natural.

Beware: stuffing content with keywords to the point where it doesn't sound like normal writing can backfire on you. It puts readers off, and search engine spiders may think your site is a spam site. Also, don't plagiarise other sites. The search engines can spot this and will penalise your site for it with a low quality score.

“SEO is the process of changing the organisation and content of a site to influence its search ranking. The basic principles of SEO are simple: search engine spiders like more or less the same things human customers like.”

“Millions of people in the UK have social media accounts they pay attention to regularly.”

Metadata and navigation - the techy bit

Next, you need to optimise some information only the spiders can see. Right-click on your homepage and select "view page source". This will open a window that contains the page's source code, including the metadata: the title, description, and keywords. For instance, if you visit BCPA's site and look at the source code, near the top of the page you will see:

```
<title>British Pest Control Association</title>
<meta name="Description" content="British Pest Control Association" />
<meta name="Keywords" content="british, pest, control, association,
controller, uk, member, bpca" />
```

I'd revise this to:

```
<title>The British Pest Control Association: Improving Public Health
Through Pest Control</title>
<meta name="Description" content="The British Pest Control Association
represents professional exterminators of public health and nuisance
pests, providing training, research and industry outreach." />
<meta name="Keywords" content="british pest control association, pest
control certification, pest management level 2, bpca certified, bpca"/>
```

The title should announce what your page is about. The description should summarise it in a sentence or two. The keywords should include five or so of the terms you researched.

Update metadata for each page, making it relevant to that page's topic.

Finally, make sure your site's navigation bar – the part of the site where users can click to other pages – is text-based rather than Flash animated. Spiders can't see the links on a Flash bar, and if they can't see the links, they won't visit and index the other pages on your site.

Good site content draws links

One of the most effective things you can do to improve your search engine rankings is to create original content - 'link bait', we call it. Anything that draws readers to your site and attracts links, likes and tweets is good. More links means more visits from the spiders, which usually means a higher ranking.

One option is to maintain a blog. You write short entries about your latest projects, special offers, your views on the industry, new products you are trying out, consumer guides and tips for homeowners or businesses, etc.

A blog should be updated at least once a fortnight. It doesn't need to be 'War and Peace' – short articles are all that's required.

If that's too time-intensive, you can opt to add a few static pages to your site that include useful information for potential customers. Guides and short lists are good for this: 'Top Ten Summertime Pests in Britain', 'How To Keep Mice Out Of Your House' etc. BPCA can help with these.

Whichever option you choose, you'll want to promote it via social media.



Social media and link building

Millions of people in the UK have social media accounts they pay attention to regularly. Posting your latest articles and updates to Twitter, Facebook, and sharing sites like StumbleUpon can bring a lot of eyes to your website, raising it in the search result rankings. Companies frequently employ private contractors (like yours truly) to run their blogs and social media accounts.

If that's not in your budget, it's still worth it to spend a few hours claiming Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn accounts for your business. These are free to open and give you a place to put up a link back to your website. You should also edit your company's profile on free directory sites, such as Google Places, Yahoo! Local, Yelp.com, and MerchantCircle.

Finally, make sure your site contains links back to organisations you're associated with. If you're approved by local councils, link to them. If you've won a local business award or are listed with a Chamber of Commerce, link to them, too. And if you're a member of, say, a trade association, by all means put that link front and centre on your page.



Rose Judson is an independent Search Marketing Specialist and Google Adwords Certified

professional based in Birmingham.

Her practice focuses on improving clients' website content and social media profiles. Clients range from sole-proprietor businesses to Fortune 1000 corporations.

This article is a summary of a presentation given at the BPCA Servicing Committee meeting on 11 September 2012.

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“Beware: stuffing content with keywords to the point where it doesn't sound like normal writing can backfire on you. It puts readers off, and search engine spiders may think your site is a spam site.”



association SPOTLIGHT

BPCA works with a range of associations to further the goals of BPCA and to benefit our members. This issue PPC interviews Professor John Moverley, independent chairman of the Amenity Forum.



PPC: So what is the Amenity Forum?

JM: The Amenity Forum was formed as a key action to support the Voluntary

Initiative, an

industry-led project agreed with Government to reduce the environmental impact of pesticides. It is an independent body which brings together professional organisations with an involvement in the amenity horticulture sector.

What do you define as ‘amenity’?

This is a very diverse industry responsible for the landscape management of urban areas, highways and rail network, sports grounds, parks, industrial and utility sites. To establish and maintain these areas to a high standard, the sector requires access to pesticides, trained and qualified staff and efficient equipment.

Who are your members?

Membership includes manufacturers, suppliers, trade associations, local authorities, sport and leisure and landscape professionals. Equally important are those members who represent training and qualification standards and key Government agencies have an important observer role. There is also a national secretary, Alan Spedding and an appointed independent chairman – me.

What are your objectives?

Key objectives of the Amenity Forum are:

- To lead, coordinate and encourage achievement of best practice objectives in amenity pesticide use
- To coordinate and encourage the establishment of sustainable qualifications, training and CPD activity for the amenity sector
- To organise activities within the membership and linked organisations, such that Amenity Forum objectives are developed in a coordinated way
- To present a united approach to these matters to external bodies and the community as a whole.

How do you hope to achieve these?

We produce best practice guidance notes, organise conferences and workshops (the next one is October 9 at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire), brief UK and European policy makers on amenity issues, and work closely with the Chemicals Regulation Directorate to ensure the Amenity Action Plan meets the requirements of the National Pesticides Strategy.

In the current financial situation, BPCA Members are concerned about their customers’ focus being solely on price – what has your organisation done about this?

Last year the Forum produced a report on quality and standards in public and commercial tendering following a widespread consultation amongst its members. While price is clearly very important, it is vital to maintain the correct balance between this factor and quality. The study showed recent tenders may have erred too much on price. The emphasis must be on the most cost effective approach, one which maximises control but does so whilst minimising both risks to all concerned and in terms of waste. The Forum is currently working towards an accepted code of practice on the issue.

Sounds familiar. So what can BPCA and the Amenity Forum do together?

Both our organisations face similar problems: removal of actives, legislation (in particular SUD), product labelling, training of staff and CPD. The Forum is a strong advocate for ensuring all staff involved in pesticide use are appropriately trained and qualified. It also works closely with appropriate agencies in promoting continuous professional development and professional skills updating. Whilst currently there is no compulsion for CPD in the sector, the Forum see this as an important area for all involved to address to ensure our sector is viewed as acting responsibly and properly. It may be appropriate for us to lobby jointly on these and other issues to show a united front.

So what’s next for the Forum?

The National Action Plan arising from the outcomes of the Sustainable Use Directive will be a key document and is being formulated by government agencies over the coming 12 months. This needs to demonstrate a willingness for our sector to continue commitment to best practice, establish mechanisms for continuous improvement and ensure through integrated approaches and efficient systems, we can minimise waste and any negative perceptions about pesticide use. Too often the spotlight can be on negative impacts. It is important to emphasise the very positive aspects of pesticide use in helping provide clean streets and parks, high quality sports surfaces and in many other ways.

How can people find out more about the work of the Forum?

The website is the first place to start. Otherwise, call us or attend our events – we’re a friendly bunch, and would welcome the involvement of pest control professionals.

www.amenityforum.co.uk

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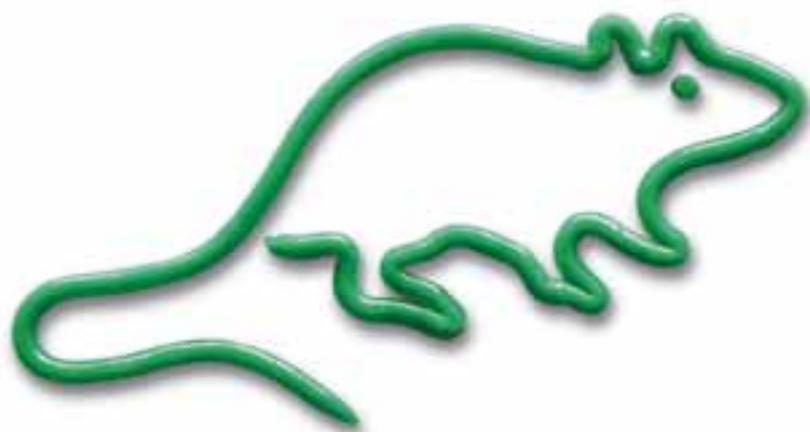
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