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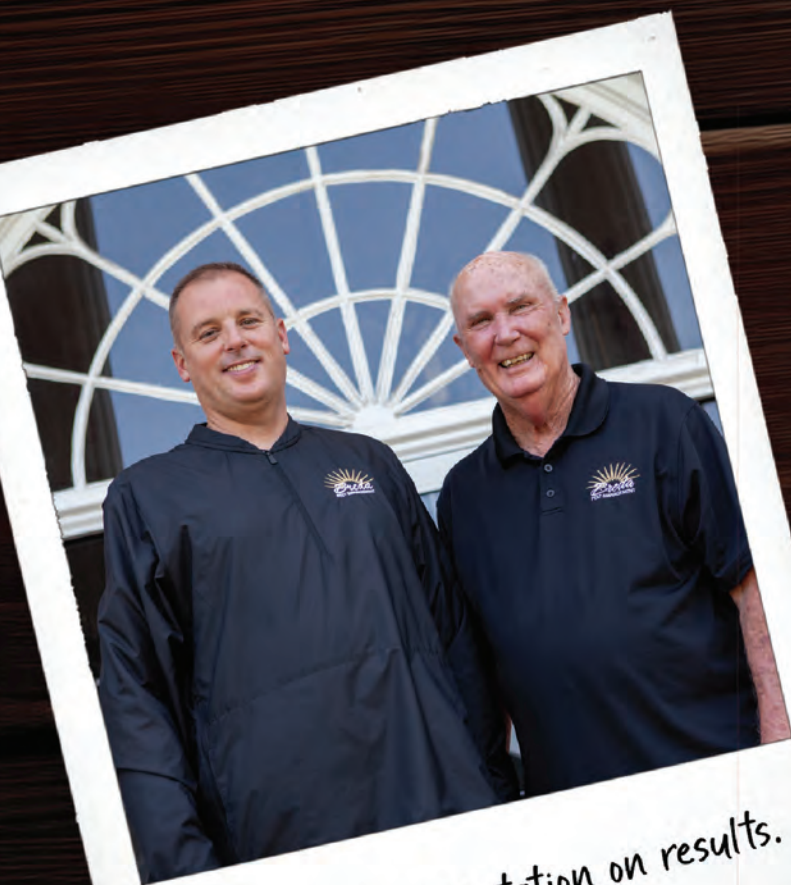
PEST CONTROL TECHNOLOGY

MARCH 2025 /// WWW.PCTONLINE.COM

SECRETS TO OUR SUCCESS

Mentorship groups allow PMPs to unpack challenges, address tough questions and find business solutions with leaders from various industries.

Turn to **page 24** to see how you and your firm can benefit.



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RESULTS

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COVER STORY **24**

SECRETS TO OUR SUCCESS

Mentorship groups allow PMPs to unpack challenges, address tough questions and find business solutions with leaders from various industries. Learn how you and your firm can benefit.

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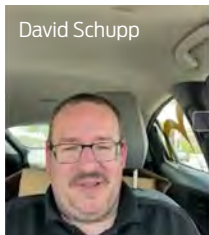
PCT keeps a pulse on the industry with timely reader poll questions. Here are results from a recent poll question for pest management professionals (PMPs).



Source: PCT Reader Poll, December 2024; iStock | ISMOLOEX

VIDEO: Truly Nolen's Schupp Shares Experience Finding, Treating Invasive Termites

In February, PCT ran the feature "Termite Threat Halted," by Dr. Barbara Thorne, who discussed how alert termite control technicians from Truly Nolen shared photos and descriptions of an unusual discovery to senior personnel at their firm. They promptly contacted the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' (FDACS) pest species helpline. Thanks to these observant, knowledgeable professionals and their swift actions, this invasive pest was hopefully exterminated before its population spread. One of those termite specialists, David Schupp, recounted this experience in a video interview with PCT that can be viewed at bit.ly/4b9BG7S.



of an unusual discovery to senior personnel at their firm. They promptly contacted the Florida Department of Agriculture and

PCT AWARDS GIFT CARDS TO SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

PCT announced several winners of \$50 Visa gift cards for participating in research conducted by third-party firm Readex Research. Results from these surveys will be included in future State of the Market reports in PCT. The following were randomly selected for gift cards after completing the surveys:

- Cheryl Jacobson, owner, Guardian Pest Solutions, Missoula, Mont.
- Richard Sutton, owner, Brothers Pest Control, Lubbock, Texas
- Ben Chapman, owner, Beneli Pest Control, Houston, Texas
- Tom Fraser, general manager, Professional Pest Control, Madison, Wis.

Thank you to readers who regularly take these surveys. Such surveys allow us to provide the industry with key research findings.



Ben and Eli Chapman

EVENT COVERAGE: NPMA Rodent Spotlight Series

PCT recently returned from the first-ever NPMA Spotlight Series on Rodents, held in Atlanta, in early February. During the course of the one-day event, sponsored by Neogen, VM Products and Veseris, members of academia and in-the-field experts shared the latest research findings, innovative rodent control strategies and regulatory developments. Visit bit.ly/3CVvyDQ for PCT's coverage of this event.



Fred Strickland

On-Demand Webinars

PCT hosts informative webinars throughout the year, covering both technical and management issues. If you are not able to attend these webinars the day of the event, you can access them on demand at bit.ly/3wt2D3a. Recent PCT-hosted webinars include "Maximizing Cash Flow — Key Strategies for Business Growth" and "Pest Pathogens and Bio-Sanitation."

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SCAN & DISCOVER

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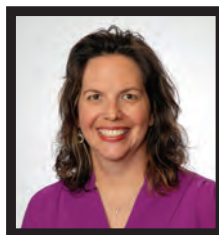
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Clear Communication is Key in Today's Busy World



Everything is so noisy these days. I think it's both the world at large and my personal world. The constant flood of news to my phone. The responsibilities I have at work. My kids' activities.

When I've felt overwhelmed by "noise" throughout my life, I've found that I need to be even more clear with my communication to make sure I'm expressing my own thoughts accurately. Whether it's with my colleagues and PCT customers, or in my personal community, I need to slow down, take a step back and make sure I'm saying what I mean and that they've heard what I mean.

As evidence, in the past few months I've sent more "I'm just making sure this is what you said" or "Can you clarify this for me" emails than I have in the past five years. And with my family, I've enacted a similar exercise. We've set weekly calls with my son who's in college and those of us at home sat down together to discuss calendar/schedule/vacation updates to make sure we're all on the same page and who's going where and when.

Speaking of schedules, my pest control technician treated my home the other day when I wasn't there. It was a cold day in Ohio and we had a couple inches of snow on the ground. I probably looked at my service ticket more than your average customer since I was interested in what he found and what products he used. But even though I was more interested than a typical residential client, I probably only spent 30 seconds reviewing the emailed statement of what he did while he was there (primarily checking rodent bait stations and replacing bait where necessary due to "light activity").

In the pest management industry, communicating what companies do — protecting public health and property — in theory seems like a simple five-word message to convey to the public. But I think it's *really* difficult to do in practice. So for customers who aren't at home or never even open your service email (and don't work at PCT), how do you communicate effectively with them? It's a challenge, and one I don't have the answer to. But that's where PCT and our social communities come in. Almost every article we include in PCT features a "communicating with the customer" element even if that's not the main point of the story. And, on our social feeds, you'll find thousands of your peers who can help answer your questions on this or any other topic.

How do I *know* that such customer communication is tough? In next month's issue, we'll feature the State of the Naturals Market report, sponsored by Central Life Sciences. In that survey, we asked our readers "Do residential customers understand what makes the pesticides you use 'green'?" Only 45% said yes. Now, "green" can be a more complex message, but still, more than half of you don't think your customers know what that means.

In this issue you'll find a few articles discussing pests and public health. In "Bed Bug Infestation Health Implications" on page 52, researchers from the University of Kentucky discuss the effects bed bugs can have on customers. From dermatitis and allergy symptoms to psychological distress and disease transmission, bed bugs are an often overlooked risk to public safety.

In "Continuing the Dengue Fight in Puerto Rico" on page 62, we feature an update on Rentokil Terminix and the Puerto Rico Vector Control Unit's joint effort against dengue fever-carrying mosquitoes swarming the U.S. territory. Dengue fever remains a serious public health concern in Puerto Rico, with 4,798 confirmed cases reported by the end of 2024.

Does your team have an up-to-date plan on how to communicate these and other public health issues with your customers (and potential customers)? Have you sat down lately to discuss how you can help drown out the noise in your customers' inboxes so that your important pest control and public health messages get through the clutter?

While it's not good practice to try to predict the future, there is something I can guarantee will continue to happen: The professional pest management industry, no matter what the political environment, no matter how high or how low the stock market is and no matter the season of the year, will effectively protect public health and property every day. And that critical message is one we need to ensure comes through despite the "noise." **PCT**

The author is publisher of PCT.



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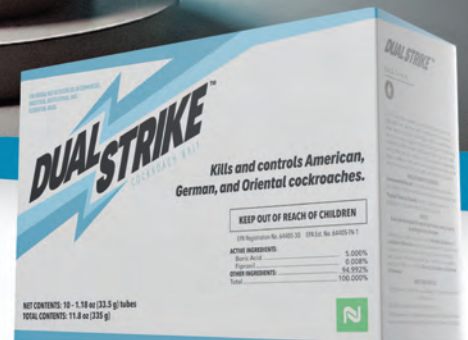
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PMPs Encouraged to 'Move at the Speed of Technology' at Purdue Conference

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Technology and artificial intelligence (AI) took center stage at the 89th Purdue Pest Management Conference in West Lafayette, Ind., Jan. 13-15. Nearly 300 pest management professionals (PMPs) learned how to best use AI tools, like ChatGPT, in everyday business operations to create more efficient and user-friendly processes.

Purdue's conference director, Dr. Barry Pittendrigh, provided feedback on where the committee sees the conference headed as it gets closer to its 100-year anniversary.



A robot dog with potential to help with mosquito management was a highlight of this year's conference.

Pittendrigh said innovations in pest control are at the interface of academia and private sectors. "Our goals are to continue these discussions on technologies and shaping the way we move forward into the 100th year of the conference," he said.

Catherine Hill, head of the department of entomology, Purdue, said her job is to make sure the department is making an impact in the real-world setting of in-field pest control. For example, finding entomological advancements through research, studying emerging invasive species and focusing on human health issues. Conference highlights included:

- A yearly review from Rose Pest Solutions' Mark VanderWerp, who discussed how the Gulf Coast tick is expanding its range, new research developments and periodical cicada emergences. VanderWerp also predicted that bird flu had the potential to turn into a significant problem (and that we are starting to see this happening).
- Sprague Pest Solutions' Darren Van Steenwyk held an AI crash course and



Bob Dold Sr., was recognized for his longtime support of the Purdue Pest Management Conference.

said the majority of the pest control industry is getting up to speed when it comes to using AI tools, like ChatGPT.

- A demonstration of a robot dog that detects tick and mosquito hot spots — a tool that has the potential to transform how the industry locates and treats mosquitoes and ticks.
- Bob Dold Sr., chief executive officer of Rose Pest Solutions, Chicago, was honored with a lifetime award for his 60+

PCO News

Please send press releases about your firm to bharbison@gie.net.

Cindy Jones, co-owner of **Prestige Pest Control**, Pooler, Ga., recently became president of the Certified Pest Control Operators (CPCO) of Georgia for 2025. Jones is the first female president of the association in its 27-year history. Jones also has been licensed in South Carolina for more than 38 years and is a among a small number of associate certified entomologists (ACEs). Jones is the district adviser, assisting in training in her region and recently became a trainer.



Cindy Jones

joins other like-minded companies in offering educational scholarship support to students in the pest control field. One scholarship will be awarded annually in the amount of \$1,000.

Grizz Pest Management, a pest control firm serving the Chicagoland area, announced a new partnership with the Brookfield Zoo Chicago. The company will donate a portion of its revenue to the zoo with every service booked. Andrew Novinger, owner of Grizz Pest Management, has a deep-rooted connection to the zoo. Before its founding in 2017, Novinger spent five years as an animal care specialist at the zoo, where he witnessed the impact that conservation and education can have on both animals and people. His experiences at the zoo have fueled his passion for wildlife preservation and giving back to the community.

Skedaddle Humane Wildlife Control announced the opening its newest franchise location in Columbus, Ohio. At the helm of the new Skedaddle franchise are Geoff and Kara Finn, a



A Skedaddle Humane Wildlife Control service vehicle in front of The Ohio State University stadium, aka, The Horseshoe.

husband-and-wife team with diverse leadership backgrounds. Geoff Finn brings experience as an entrepreneur and business leader, having held key roles in product management and strategic planning at Stand Together and senior leadership positions at CURO Financial Technologies. Kara Finn boats a career in the aviation industry, where she led large teams and implemented strategic improvements at companies like Jet East/West Star Aviation and Bombardier-Learjet.



years of supporting the Purdue Pest Management Conference.

Visit bit.ly/4hUTN3H for more coverage from the Purdue Pest Management Conference. — *Amanda Joerndt*

Report Shows U.S. States, Counties Experiencing Severe Rodent Issues

WASHINGTON — As temperatures drop, mice and rats seek warmth and food indoors, turning homes into their seasonal havens. According to the American Housing Survey, 11.6% of households nationwide report rodent problems annually, impacting an estimated 16.2 million homes and 38.5 million people — comparable to the entire population of California.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), rats and mice can spread diseases such as hantavirus, leptospirosis and salmonella through their droppings, urine and harborages. They also worsen asthma and allergies, particularly in children. Beyond health hazards, rodents cause structural damage by gnawing through walls, wiring and insulation — sometimes even sparking electrical fires.

Using the most recent data available from the U.S. Census Bureau, Cinch, a data-driven marketing platform, reported the U.S. locations with the most severe rodent problems.

While home age and urbanization play a key role in rodent infestations, climate is another factor influencing regional differences. States located in colder regions of the U.S., particularly in the Midwest and Northeast, reported the highest percentages of homes affected by rodents. Vermont leads with 24.1% of households experiencing rodent issues, followed by South Dakota (23.2%) and North Dakota (22.9%). Other states with high rates include Iowa (22.2%) and Maine (21.2%).

These areas endure long, harsh winters that drive rodents indoors in search of warmth and shelter. Additionally, older housing stock and rural living conditions in these regions pro-

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vide ample access points and overwintering opportunities for rodents, Cinch said.

In contrast, warmer states like Florida and Arizona report significantly lower rodent infestation rates, with only 4.4% of households affected. Nevada (4.8%) and Hawaii (5.7%) also rank among the states

with the fewest rodent problems. Mild winters in these areas reduce the need for rodents to invade homes, the company added, while newer houses and higher urbanization levels limit entry points and make it harder for rodents to gain access to the indoors.

The rapid growth and development in states like Florida and Arizona have resulted in better-sealed homes, further reducing the likelihood of infestations. It's important to note, however, that cockroach infestations are more common in these warmer climates, reflecting a different challenge for pest control, Cinch said.

Similar trends hold at the county level with those in the Midwest and Northeast reporting the highest rates of rodent sightings. — Source: Cinch

PCT Poll Finds Awareness of Green Services on the Rise

CLEVELAND — There was a time when green pest control products were used mostly by a small segment of pest control operators, and oftentimes times they were by customer request. Hence, awareness of these products was low. But as these products have gained greater acceptance among PCOs (and customers), awareness is on the rise. In fact, results from PCT's recent reader poll found that 55% of PCOs said residential customers are more aware of green pest control products/services today than five years ago.

Twenty-eight percent of respondents said residential customers are equally aware of green products/services, while 15% said they were less aware.

"I think homeowners are more aware just because people do so much research

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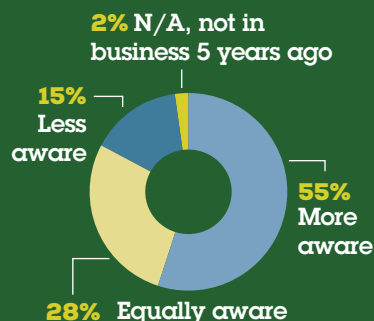
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Do you think residential customers are **more or less aware of green pest control products/services today** than five years ago?



these days,” Stephen Wheeler, Pest Pro, Cookeville, Tenn., explained to PCT.

The amount of green/natural products that Pest Pro uses today, Wheeler said, is “about the same” as it was five years ago.

Wheeler said he does not have many customers request green products, but he will use them when appropriate. For example, Wheeler uses green aerosol products indoors.

Jack Starry, retired pest management professional and host of the Tales from the Crawlspace podcast, wrote on PCT’s LinkedIn page: *I think they’re more aware, but I think they aren’t as educated about them as they think they are. Green doesn’t necessarily mean safe. Green pesticides are still engineered to eliminate pests, yet many homeowners believe they are completely safe to be around. I think PCOs need to do a better job of educating their customers.* — Brad Harbison

Rentokil Announces North America Leadership Change

LONDON — Rentokil announced in January that Brad Paulsen, CEO of Rentokil North America, will leave the company in April 2025 to pursue a new opportunity at a U.S.-listed company in the building materials sector.

Paulsen, who has been with Rentokil for several years, will remain with the company through April to ensure a smooth transition, according to Rentokil.



Alain Moffroid

Alain Moffroid, the company’s chief commercial officer, will serve as interim CEO for North America. Moffroid, who joined Rentokil in 2013 from Unilever, has extensive experience in both residential and commercial pest control, the company said.

Having previously served as managing director in the Pacific and Europe, Moffroid was appointed CCO in April 2024. He will soon begin transitioning to the North American business.

Rentokil also reported that its performance for the full year ending Dec. 31, 2024, met expectations, with North America’s adjusted operating margin and group adjusted operating profit before tax also

aligning with prior forecasts. Rentokil said its integration efforts in North America are progressing as planned, with successful pilots for new satellite branches, updated technician and sales pay structures, and re-branding activities in the fourth quarter of 2024. — Brad Harbison

In Memoriam: Layton Word and Marybeth Wonson

MALDEN, Mass., and EVANSVILLE, Ind. — The pest control industry mourns the loss of Marybeth Wonson and Layton Word. Word, who founded Arrow Termite &

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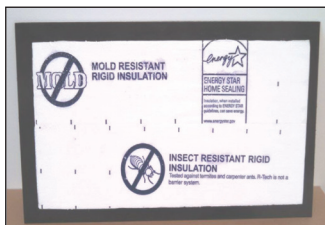
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News /// MARCH

Pest Control, Evansville, Ind., in 1970, passed away on Dec. 21, 2024, at 95. At the time of the company's founding, he was still working the evening shift at a local bakery. According to his obituary, Word grew Arrow Termite & Pest Control during the day and any additional free time. Layton retired in 1990 and passed the company down to his son, Stan Word. Today, the company is in its fourth generation, run by Layton's grandson, Derrick Word, granddaughter Amy Wathen-Hackworth and great-grandson, Cory Word.

Wonson, who passed away on Jan. 14 at 81, founded General Environmental Services, Malden, Mass., with husband Peter, in 1979.

General Environmental Services remains a family-owned business that provides commercial and residential pest control services to Boston and the surrounding areas. — *Amanda Joerndt and Brad Harbison*

M&A News

Please send press releases about your firm to bharbison@gie.net.

Arrow Exterminators acquired **Davis Exterminators**, headquartered in Panama City, Fla.

"We are very pleased to have merged with Davis Exterminators which has a great reputation for service in the Florida Panhandle," said Arrow Exterminators CEO Emily Thomas Kendrick. "This gives us 51 service centers throughout Florida and a total of 186 offices in the country."

Founded in 1966, Davis Exterminators is a full-service company providing pest and termite control service to residential and commercial customers in Destin, Lynn Haven, Panama City, Santa Rosa Beach, Seaside, Watercolor and other communities along Florida's Emerald Coast.

Clements Pest Control, a family-owned and -operated pest control company for more than 64 years and spanning three generations, announced its acquisition of **The Bug Dr.**, Port St. Lucie, Fla.

By integrating The Bug Dr. into its operations, Clements Pest Control will be able to offer more services to both residential and commercial customers in St. Lucie and Martin County, the company said.

Certus Pest announced it has expanded in Las Vegas with the acquisition of **Green Wave Pest Solutions**, which will operate under Certus Pest's established Las Vegas Pest Control (LVPC) brand.

"We are excited to join forces with a leading pest control company like Certus [Pest]," said Michael Leobold, one of Green Wave Pest Solutions' founding partners. "This partnership allows us to continue serving Las Vegas with the exceptional service they've become accustomed to while offering customers additional pest solutions."

Green Wave Pest Solutions has two branches — one in South Florida and the other in Las Vegas; Certus Pest only acquired the latter.

Knox Pest Control announced the acquisition of **Mike Weed's Termite and Pest Control**, Pensacola, Fla. Mike Weed's Termite and Pest Control has offered commercial, residential and industrial pest control services in the Panhandle of Florida for more than 30 years. The family-owned and -operated business was led by Mike Weed, an associate certified entomologist (A.C.E.) with 45 years of experience.



Left to right: Kevin Burns, Steve Davis, John Newman and Tim Pollard



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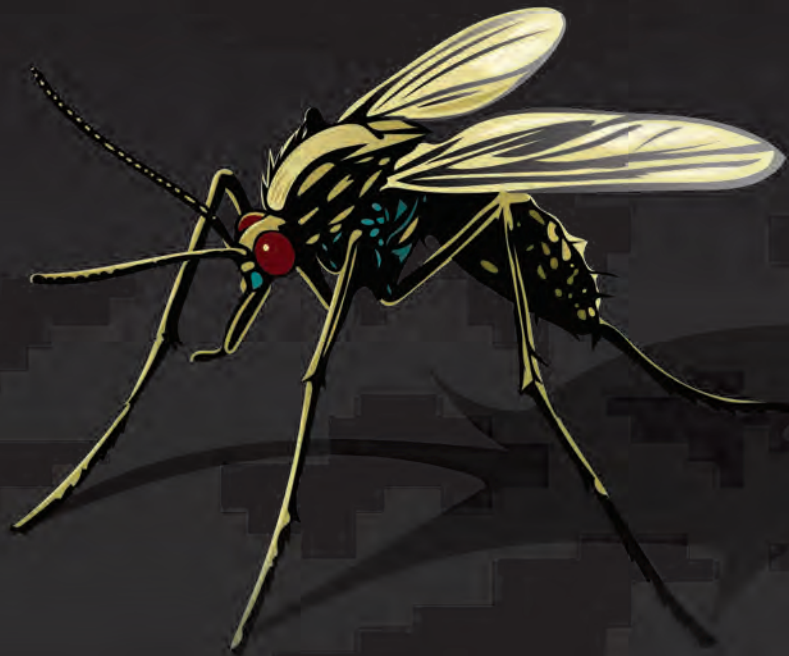
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GPCA Hosts 2025 Winter Conference

ATHENS, Ga. — In January, the Georgia Pest Control Association (GPCA) held its annual Winter Conference at the University of Georgia Conference Center in Athens, Ga.

The event included more than 50 speakers on multiple topics, 55 exhibitors and nearly 500 attendees.



GPCA's executive team (left to right): Ashley Marratt, Glenda Lehmberg, Alyson Gilleland, Adam Vannest and Greg Holley.

Comings & Goings



If your company has added new personnel, send a photo and press release to bharbison@gie.net.



Mueller



Kelley



Page



Cropper



Mahar



Dooley



Gilmer

Insects Limited announced a series of leadership changes. **Tom Mueller** has assumed the role of CEO. **Pat Kelley** has been appointed as the managing director of the Center for Stored Product Protection. **Micah Page** joined Insects Limited as chief operating officer.

Pest Pros Pest Solutions, Sacramento, Calif., announced the promotion of **Frank Cropper** to director of leadership development and culture alignment. In this newly created role, Cropper will lead company initiatives focused on developing leaders within the organization, fostering a culture of growth and ensuring alignment with the company's core values.

Cetane Associates announced that **Charlotte Mahar** has joined the firm as the manager of administration on Jan. 14. Mahar will provide administrative and marketing support to the firm.

Forshaw announced that **Shane Dooley** has been appointed as president. Dooley served as Forshaw's chief operating officer the past two years and director of warehouse and operations for six years prior.

The Colorado Pest Control Association (CPCA) has selected Lamplight Professional Services as its new association management company. The firm's owner, **Christina Gilmer**, will serve as CPCA's executive director.



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"A great team and months of planning produced an amazing time of education, community and celebration," Glenda Lehmborg, GPCA executive director, said. "We are grateful for partnerships with the Georgia Department of Agriculture and honored that NPMA President Faye Golden was able to participate."

To celebrate the 75th anniversary, Corteva provided a Banner of Honor for all to sign. Tyler Harper, Georgia Department of Agriculture Commissioner, spoke and signed the banner, along with UGA mascot Hairy Dawg.

Hairy Dawg and UGA cheerleaders, as well as key leaders within GPCA, kicked off the celebration, which honored award winners, past presidents, Hall of Fame members and leadership within the association. Those honored with awards included:

- GPCA Hall of Fame inductees: Dr. Dan Suiter, University of Georgia and Lee Tubbs, Enviroguard

- Outstanding Pest Management Professional: Brian Kohl, Peachtree Pest Control
- Woman of Excellence: Alyson Gilleland, Arrow Exterminators
- Administrative Professional Award: Connie Carpenter, SSI Pest Arrest

IPMA Presents Hall of Fame Award to Doug Foster

COLUMBUS, Ind. — The Indiana Pest Management Association (IPMA) announced that Doug Foster, owner of Burt's Pest Control, Columbus, Ind., was recently presented with the 2025 Hall of Fame Award.

Foster was given this honor for his years of dedicated service, expertise and contributions to the pest control industry in Indiana, IPMA said. Foster earned his degree in urban entomology from Purdue University in 1979, and his leadership at Burt's Pest Control has solidified his rep-



Doug Foster and Carrie Campbell

utation as a respected expert in the field, the association said.

Foster served as president of the Indiana Pest Management Association during the 2018-2019 fiscal year and he continues to contribute to the association. He currently serves as chair of the education committee. Foster's commitment to educating and advancing the pest management industry is a testament to his passion for the profession, the association said. **PCT**

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SECRETS TO OUR SUCCESS

Mentorship groups allow PMPs to unpack challenges, address tough questions and find business solutions with leaders from various industries. How can you and your firm benefit?

By Donna DeFranco

Every business leader has heard the advice, “Work on your business, not in it.”

It’s a solid tip to focus on strategic issues leading to long-term growth while delegating day-to-day operational tasks and implementation to trusted employees. But hearing the advice isn’t quite the same as heeding it. It can be difficult to pull yourself away from the day-to-day when business seems to be moving at the speed of light.

“You may spend some time working on your business, but then an issue comes up, you get involved and all of a sudden you realize that a month, or six months, has flown by and you’ve been working in the business again,” said Audrey Hall, president, Eco Serve Pest Services, Orchard Park, N.Y.

Recognizing how stifling this pattern can become, Hall, along with a bevy of other forward-thinking pest control company leaders, has found a way to break the cycle. They have joined peer advisory, or mentorship, groups that help them maintain consistent strategic focus and develop as leaders.

“The countless issues that come at you during the day, the checklist that never ends — you leave it all at the door when you come into meetings,” said Hall, who belongs to three peer advisory groups including the University of Buffalo Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership Mastery Program, Niagara Business Associates Group and Vistage. “You share the challenges you’re facing, fellow members ask tough questions you may not have considered and you discuss potential solutions as a group. Essentially, you are forced to focus on the big-picture strategy of your business and your own development as a business leader.”

PEER MENTORSHIP AND ADVISORY GROUPS.

Vistage. Peer mentorship and advisory groups take a variety of forms, and may be local, regional, national or global in scope. One popular global organization, Vistage, breaks membership down into local groups of 12 to 16 members. Only one company from any given industry is allowed per group to eliminate the risk that competitors might reveal private concerns or information to each other. Additionally, there are different programs for CEOs, small business owners, key executives and emerging leaders. The goal of members, according to Vistage, is to help one another make better decisions, achieve better results and become better leaders.

WPO. Another global peer advisory and learning organization, the Women Presidents Organization (WPO), focuses on addressing business and leadership challenges, as well as issues of particular concern to women.

Sarah Thomas-Clark, vice president, Thomas Pest Services, Albany, N.Y., is a member. “I joined WPO in 2018 because I felt I needed to surround myself with a supportive network of women leaders who would understand the challenges we face as female entrepreneurs every day — a group of like-minded individuals who could share their own experiences, and offer guidance and expertise,” she said. “Since then, our company has experienced tremendous growth, in not only scale but maturity. My group has pushed me to develop my strategic skills and become a stronger leader, which translates into growth all around.”

Camille Burns, CEO of WPO, added, “Belonging to WPO is like having a board of advisers [containing]

“[In the meetings], you share the challenges you’re facing, fellow members ask tough questions you may not have considered and you discuss potential solutions as a group.”

— Audrey Hall, President, Eco Serve Pest Services, Orchard Park, N.Y.





“Belonging to WPO is like having a board of advisers [containing] CEOs, presidents and partners who get together to work on your business as well as their own.” — Camille Burns, WPO CEO

CEOs, presidents and partners who get together to work on your business as well as their own. Each chapter is a community of women who understand what it's like to have the responsibilities of leading a business on top of family responsibilities or other circumstances that impact your ability to lead your company. It's a safe space to work through challenges and experience tremendous support.”

DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES. Early in his career, Mike Rottler had a vision for growing the family business, Rottler Pest Solutions, St. Louis, Mo. “I realized there were other companies out there with more employees, more vehicles, more business, and thought we should take advantage of that greater opportunity. I had a wife and two kids at that point, and I didn't see how I could do my job well enough to support them while I went to college to learn how to grow the company. I decided my best option was to learn from other businesses and business leaders who had made that leap.”

Rottler visited other pest management companies to observe and learn. “Many people's inclination, when they look at how another company runs, is to compare how they do things with how you do things. I don't think that's the best way to learn,” he said. “Instead, you need to take the time to learn about what they're doing, how they're doing it and why they're doing it that way. Then, consider whether you could adopt some of those techniques in your own organization to solve problems and do a better job.”

This realization ultimately led Rottler, now chairman and CEO of Rottler Pest Solutions, to join Vistage.

While there are a whole range of peer groups within the pest management industry — Associated Pest Services, the U Group, the PMP Industry Insiders Peer Groups, etc. — that provide value to their members every day, the diversity of industries represented in his Vistage group, Rottler said, helped him gain new perspective.

“When you start talking with leaders in other industries, you find out pretty quick-

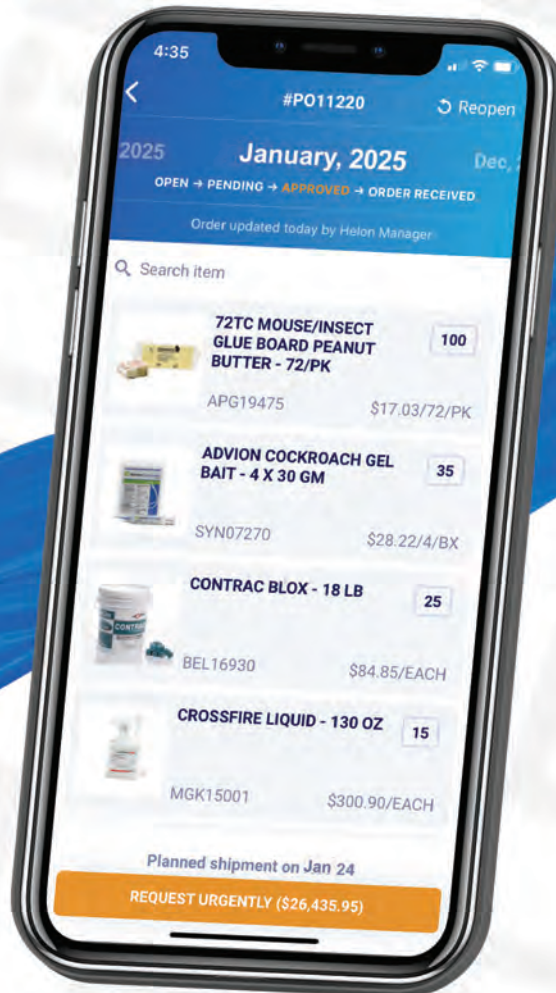
ly that there are a lot of commonalities,” he said. “All businesses need to generate revenue, for example, so you need salespeople, a sales process, marketing, accounting, etc. That was no surprise. What was a surprise to me was learning that seasonality isn't unique to the pest management industry — 95% of all businesses experience some form of seasonality. That's something we talk about within the industry all the time, but we seldom get to hear leaders in other industries discuss their approach to navigating seasonality. Hearing their ideas was eye-opening.”

Chase Hazelwood, owner and CEO, Go-Forth Pest Control, High Point, N.C., agreed.

“Over the past 10 years or so that I've been a member of a Vistage CEO group, I've realized that companies are not that different from one industry to the next,” he said. “Sometimes we in the industry don't see that. We tend to copy best practices from other PCOs and talk more about pest control technical challenges and treatment methodologies than solving business problems. Part of that is you may not want to give away your strategic secrets to competitors. But when you're in a group with someone who's running a \$300 million roofing company, he's happy to tell you every secret he has. That's a real benefit of this type of group.”

By way of example, Hazelwood pointed to advice he received related to the rule of 23 — a widely held standard in pest management. Companies that apply the rule of 23 aim for a combined growth rate and pre-tax profitability of 23%. In other words, if a branch is growing at 10%, and its pretax profitability is 13%, that branch

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is having a good year. “I shared this concept with my Vistage group, and the response from my peers in other industries was, ‘Wow, that’s very conservative. Why wouldn’t you want to grow 20% and profit 20%?’” Hazelwood said. “When you have people running businesses three to 10 times larger than yours, and they don’t know any of the broadly held assumptions of your industry, they ask you questions that make you start thinking differently about how your business operates, what makes it successful and what could make it even more successful.”

He shared two more examples of objective observations by his group that spurred him to make changes: adopting scheduling software to increase efficiency and lift the burden of self-scheduling from technicians; and switching to a subscription model, which resulted in Go-Forth Pest Control becoming one of the indus-

try’s early adopters of monthly billing. “It has been fascinating to see what we can achieve when we respond to fundamental challenges to the status quo,” he said.

The diversity of a mentorship group also encompasses a range of expertise, which can help you uncover solutions you may not have otherwise seen, according to retired PCO Jerry Batzner, partner, Mill Trail Growth Partners and Brady Development Group. Batzner is a huge proponent of peer mentorship and coaching based on his own positive experiences with Vistage, Strategic Coach and other organizations.

“You’re working with all different types of people, each with different skills,” he said. “One person might be more analytical or into the engineering mindset. Another might be a contractor or a leader of a professional service organization. Every person brings a unique perspective to the issues being discussed.”

Batzner added, “These programs are a way for CEOs, managers and owners of companies to build their knowledge and strategic skills more quickly than they could on their own. Every leader makes mistakes along the way, but having a peer advisory experience can help them make fewer crucial errors. Some groups can be likened to an MBA program — where members work together on an issue facing someone in the group, then come up with a gameplan for that member to execute. The great thing about the group is that you get to see the results of your plan, whereas in an MBA program, you’re just creating a business plan without executing it or seeing the end results.”

INSIDE THE GROUP STRUCTURE.

Although every peer group has its own format and expectations, in general, the groups meet on a structured schedule —



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“... you may not want to give away your strategic secrets to competitors. But when you’re in a group with someone who’s running a \$300 million roofing company, he’s happy to tell you every secret he has. That’s a real benefit of this type of group.”

— Chase Hazelwood, Owner & CEO, Go-Forth Pest Control



monthly, bimonthly, quarterly — have assigned moderators and spend the bulk of their meeting time discussing individual business leaders’ challenges and opportunities. Additionally, some bring in speakers to address topics of interest to the group.

Batzner shared a glimpse of the Vistage model, telling PCT, “Typically, you meet monthly, and a speaker comes in five or

six times a year to cover a topic that’s relevant to the group at that time — something that multiple members may be struggling with, for example. That person helps bring clarity and experience from their own career to help the others resolve their related issues. You also meet with your assigned coach once a month between meetings. They check in on how you’re doing, what’s

coming up and whether you’ve followed through on the goals you’ve shared in previous meetings. They hold you accountable to help you succeed.”

WPO follows a similar structure, holding monthly meetings and often including speaker presentations. Burns explained that the professional facilitators, which WPO calls chapter chairs, create an agenda for each meeting based on topics members share at the beginning of each year as areas they would like to explore. Once members convene, the group identifies who has the most pressing issue, and the chapter chair leads a roundtable discussion to help that business leader gain new insight.

“First, the group asks clarifying questions so they can get to the root of what’s going on,” Burns said. “Then we use the experience-sharing model rather than giving advice. Instead of saying, ‘You need to do XYZ,’ a member would say, ‘When I

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“I realized there were other companies out there with more employees, more vehicles, more business, and thought we should take advantage of that greater opportunity. I decided my best option was to learn from other businesses and business leaders who had made that leap.”

— Mike Rottler, Rottler Pest Solutions



based on other people’s experiences may not be enough to drive the needle forward. In my groups, we get creative, brainstorming ideas and ask, ‘Have you ever tried XYZ?’”

FIND YOUR IDEAL GROUP. Whether you plan to start with a local program or dive right into one with a global scope, the business leaders featured in this article shared this: Look for a group that will push you beyond your comfort zone. Stretch yourself, push away any hint of imposter syndrome you feel and immerse yourself in the process.

“Get comfortable being uncomfortable. That’s the name of the game in growing a business,” said Hall. “At every level of your business — whether you’re at \$1 million or \$300 million — every time you grow, there will be growing pains, and if you’re not uncomfortable, you’re not pushing yourself

was in a similar situation, I tried this and it worked really well or it went really wrong’ — whatever the experience was. The person who’s processing the issue gets a ton of help, and everyone at the table learns. You can always learn from a discussion around a situation someone else is going through because typically it’s something you’ve dealt with or will deal with in some way, shape or form — HR, business expansion,

exiting your company, whatever it may be.”

Hall added that, while sharing personal experience can certainly be helpful, it’s not the only way to go about workshoping individuals’ issues.

“The groups I’m in foster a lot of creativity — outside-the-box thinking,” she said. “If your goal is to reinvent yourself or do something that hasn’t been done before, limiting yourself to strategies that are

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enough. Your group(s) should put you into those uncomfortable positions sooner to help you become a better version of yourself, push your people to be better and find solutions to problems you didn't know you had. A little course correction now can save you a huge course correction later."

Thomas-Clark offered this advice, telling PCT, "Do some research [online or through discussions with other business leaders] to see what mentorship and coaching groups are available to you. Then, determine what resonates with your values and goals. It's important to find the right balance, meaning a group that at once supports you, challenges you and holds you accountable.

She added, "Ask to sit in on a meeting before you make a commitment; this is time you will spend away from your business, so you need to make sure it's going to be time well-spent. Ask yourself if the

group's dynamics — the leadership, culture and style of communication — all fit your needs. If not, keep looking."

Interview the leaders of the group, Hazelwood recommended.

"With the exception of industry groups, where it's fine to have members lead meetings, the best peer advisory groups have a paid leader that's not a business owner — their only job is to be a leader," he said. "Share information about what you're looking for and what concerns you may have. Ask them about the people in the group and whether they think their group would be a good fit for you. Also, I recommend that you choose a group with a dozen or more people who routinely show up. A larger group can provide more value than a smaller one."

IS THE ROI WORTH THE EXPENSE?

While it's true that membership in some

mentorship groups can be expensive, it's important to look at the return on investment (ROI) that can be gained, explained Hazelwood.

"Initially, the cost was a big turn-off for me," he said. "But having a mentor recommend it was enough of a push for me to give it a try. At the time I joined, I was considering pursuing my MBA, and that would have been a lot cheaper. However, I do not believe that it would have been as valuable — not even close."

When he joined in 2015, Hazelwood's business was doing \$4 million in revenue, he said. Today, Go-Forth Pest Control is a \$30 million company, and Hazelwood owns another \$10 million in other businesses.

"Have I gotten my ROI? Yes. Yes, I have," he said. **PCT**

The author is a frequent contributor to PCT.

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HOW TO SUCCEED WITH ERM

Electronic rodent monitoring offers huge potential to elevate your rodent control program. But to use it successfully, you'll need to figure out a few things first.

Editor's note: This is part 2 in a series about electronic rodent monitoring. Part 1 appeared in the February issue of PCT.

By Anne Nagro

Electronic rodent monitoring (ERM) promises to improve service efficiency, attract new hires and differentiate your pest management company from competitors.

It also can help you defend commercial facilities from rodents without relying so heavily on rodenticides, which look to be more

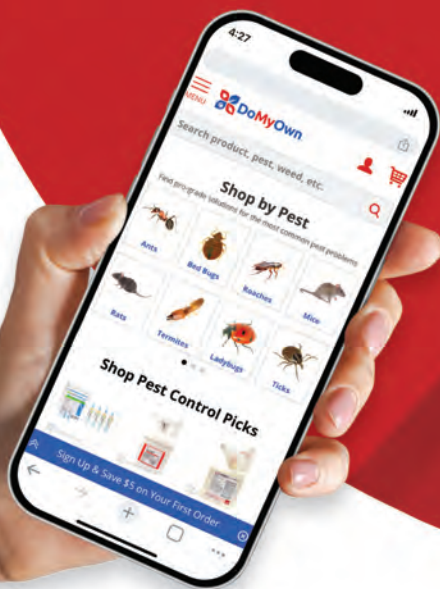
difficult to use as regulations become more restrictive in the future.

ERM is not without its challenges, however. Here are some things you'll need to figure out before going all in:

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Technicians at companies using ERM spend less time checking bait stations and more time observing for pest-conducive conditions like gaps in siding.

electronic monitors is completely different than when we did it before,” said Kevin Thorn, owner of Thorn Pest Services, Pleasant Grove, Utah, an early adopter of ERM. “Our service looks different even from the outside in.”

Using ERM, his service technicians gain intel prior to a site visit, or as soon as they arrive at a facility. “That 100% changes and flips the entire service,” he said.

“[Customers] still wanted to see us. Pest control is [a] very personalized service, and not seeing us was not something the customer was willing to do.” — Bill Hoffman, Hoffman’s Exterminating

ERM is not about spending less time at an account, cautioned Bill Hoffman, president, Hoffman’s Exterminating, Mantua, N.J. His team has used ERM at major sports and food processing facilities for more than five years.

PMPs thought this was a benefit early on, but it’s not a good idea, found Hoffman. “Problem is, the customer forgets who we are,” he said. “They still wanted to see us. Pest control is [a] very personalized service, and not seeing us was not something the customer was willing to do.”

Showing up less often doesn’t build relationships. Good relationships are what create long-term customers, he said. Nor is ERM about labor savings or doing the same amount of work with fewer employees.

“For every few hours we saved in the

field, we were making sure that we’re doing some back-end work. It’s just using the personnel at a different capacity, which I think for me, was a great recruitment tool,” Hoffman said.

Mark Ebner, technical sales director, Woodstream, which manufactures Victor VLink devices, agreed that time can be deployed in more meaningful ways by using ERM.

“That time can be utilized to perform a better inspection for the customer and really lower the whole risk of potential pest issues at that plant,” Hoffman said.

You also need a plan to use the data ERM generates to continuously improve your control program.

Initially, Hoffman thought customers would constantly be in the portal tracking the data for their facility. Turns out, most want to know the data exists, but they really don’t have time to monitor it.

Customers basically said, “I trust you to do what’s necessary for a great service, great audits, and I don’t have to worry about pest control,” Hoffman said.

INCREASED SERVICE COSTS. Using ERM makes rodent control more expensive. Your sales team needs to be able to

explain what customers are gaining for the higher cost.

“We sold it as another tool that we use in our toolbox that allows our service personnel to do other things that are going to enhance your program,” Hoffman said. This includes performing exclusion work and replacing door sweeps.

When done right, ERM differentiates your service. “It allows you to talk a different story to your potential customers,” he said.

As more companies adopt ERM, the price of the technology should decrease.

“The more we can mass produce some of these things, the cheaper they can get. And obviously, if we can get those prices down, there’s a lot more applications to them,” said Chelle Hartzer, president, 360 Pest Consulting. Then, cost savings can be passed on to customers.

Carly Best, marketing manager, Skyhawk Trapmate, manufacturer of battery-powered ERM solutions that work with existing traps and stations, said, “High initial costs, integration challenges and the need for user training can be barriers, especially for smaller operations.”

Thorn urged PMPs to not make price an obstacle to using ERM. “There are ways that you can work that out,” he said.

While the cost of ERM is higher than manually checking devices, the value it provides is much greater, said Patrick Lynch, president, Bell Sensing Technologies (BST). Bell Sensing Technologies power the iQ line of traps and bait stations, made by Bell Laboratories. “You’re buying efficiency for your labor force,” he said. “You’re buying the data of when rodents are coming in, where they’re coming in.”

There’s also an improved safety aspect, said Lynch, who added, “You’re simply looking at your phone instead of climbing ladders to check traps.”



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Using ERM can elevate one's business, said Lynch. "You're providing a better life for your people, you're providing a more professional service to your customers and ultimately, you're doing it with a more profitable business model because of the efficiency," he said. "The value of the labor and insurance cost savings far exceeds the purchase price of the products, and that's really starting to resonate with the industry."

MULTIPLE SYSTEMS CAN BE USED.

The key to ERM is having good oversight.

"When we show up on site, I want to know exactly which devices I've got to check first and where I need to spend my

time," Thorn said. "Or, if there's nothing, I want to know that quickly."

Generally, two types of ERM products exist: (1) 100% remote, and (2) technology requiring a technician to be on site to collect data. Thorn uses both. "I don't have a problem utilizing multiple technologies and utilizing multiple companies, he said.

All have applications. "I think it really depends on the client and what their needs are," he said. "It even comes down to what kind of building structure. There's a lot to consider. I don't think people have to choose all one or the other."

Switching between systems is not difficult for technicians, Thorn said. "None of the technology is hard to grasp. Our pro-

fessionals are adept at understanding it. Yes, there's some quick training that needs to be done, but it's nothing that's onerous. There's nothing that's hard about this."

Using multiple systems protects you from market dynamics. "You don't have to put all your eggs in one basket. You can use multiple technologies for different sites, even on the same site. Each product has advantages," Thorn said.

RAMPING UP IPM TRAINING. Tapping ERM's potential requires different training. Technicians and staff not only need to change mindsets, but what they're doing on site for customers.

At Hoffman's Exterminating, it took

BOBBY CORRIGAN WEIGHS IN

Editor's note: One of the biggest proponents of electronic remote monitoring is rodentologist Dr. Bobby Corrigan. While Corrigan acknowledged some of the challenges pest control companies have faced adopting this technology, he firmly believes that by integrating ERM into service offerings, pest control companies can provide more efficient, comprehensive pest management, ensuring better protection for their clients. He shared the following observations based on his in-the-field experience with ERM.

ERM systems provide pest professionals with incredible value by helping them efficiently access hard-to-reach areas and save time on tasks that would otherwise be labor-intensive. Important ways ERMs improve pest management operations include:

Inspection efficiency. For example, rodents often hide in suspended ceilings, requiring ladders and specialized inspection techniques. ERMs help pest technicians determine if these areas need treatment, saving time by allowing them to skip unnecessary inspections when no rodent activity is detected. In cases where treatment is needed, the technology directs the technician to the precise location for the most efficient service.

Crawlspaces. Many service technicians dislike working in crawlspaces due to physical discomfort and safety concerns. ERM technology allows for easier monitoring of these areas, reducing the need for technicians to perform exhaustive physical checks.

Trap and bait station efficiency. In large commercial facilities such as warehouses, food plants and shopping malls, 70% to 80% of traps and bait stations may not show any rodent activity. ERMs alert technicians to which equipment needs servicing, freeing up time to focus on other areas that might be overlooked in routine inspections.

Data for better decision-making. ERM systems provide valuable data for both the pest professional and the client, including:

- Rodent pressure — Identifying which areas have the highest and lowest rodent activity.
- Severity of activity — Understanding the severity (none, low,

moderate or heavy) to ensure the correct application of rodent bait, as per label directions.

- Activity timings — Knowing when rodents are most active can help in creating effective treatment plans.
- IPM monitoring — ERMs provide detailed tracking for Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs, showing activity before, during and after treatments — offering a compelling sales tool.



Bobby Corrigan

By leveraging ERM technology, pest companies can offer faster, more efficient service, with data-backed insights that improve both customer satisfaction and internal operations.

In addition to improving operational efficiencies, ERM can boost job satisfaction and help the industry attract a younger generation of service technicians. The younger generation is extremely tech-savvy and eager to work with smart devices. Pest control companies can attract this demographic by highlighting how ERM systems align with their interest in technology and innovation, including:

Engagement with technology. Today's young professionals are comfortable using technology in every aspect of their lives, and pest control is no exception. ERMs make the job more dynamic by incorporating digital tools for monitoring and data analysis.

Breaking the monotony. Traditional pest control work often involves repetitive tasks like checking traps and bait stations. Many young recruits quickly leave the industry after a short stint because the work is physically demanding and monotonous. ERMs can make the job more engaging by automating certain tasks and enabling technicians to focus on more critical problem-solving activities.

Career satisfaction. By integrating ERMs into pest control, technicians can take pride in using cutting-edge technology, which can lead to higher job satisfaction and a lower turnover rate.



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technicians time to realize their job wasn't to go from trap to trap. "That as long as they opened it, cleaned it and scanned it, they did their job," said Hoffman, who added the team had to figure out, "What do we do when this thing is sending us data?"

When ERM is deployed, a technician's role expands from trap checking to conducting inspections and identifying conditions leading to pest and rodent problems.

"If companies can do that successfully and transfer over to that real IPM technician, that provides a much higher level of service to our customers, and better IPM service and preventative systems," said Hartzer.

ERM will never replace a skilled technician, Hoffman said. At one time, his company had 700 ERM devices deployed at a large sports stadium. This provided a mere 700 square feet of coverage in a facility that was 1.4 million square feet.

"There's still nothing as good as a technician with a flashlight walking through

the facility, putting his eyes on things, talking to his contacts and making sure that there are no other issues," he said. Remote monitoring provides another layer of defense, "but it is never going to replace a good technician with a good flashlight."

IT'S NOT SET AND FORGET IT. ERM requires constant adjustments. "You don't just go in and turn the button on and there you go. There's a constant movement of parts," Hoffman said. This includes moving and resetting ERM devices to ensure they capture the results and data you're after.

For instance, if you've deployed an ERM device in a space and it has not recorded any rodent activity for considerable time, it's probably time to move it elsewhere.

ERM can help you deploy other technology, like cameras. You can use movement sensors to figure out where things are happening and then install cameras, which cover a greater area, said Charles Paumelle, co-founder of Microshare, man-

ufacturer of EverSmart rodent sensors. "In a million-square-foot facility, it's very much the right technology for the right use," he said.

Be strategic in deploying ERM, advised Hoffman. His team places devices in hard-to-reach, dark, quiet and cluttered areas. "There's no reason to put the remote monitoring by the device at the door. You want to walk in and check that one anyway."

Nor is ERM a good fit for every facility. There's no reason for clients to pay for "bells and whistles," he said. **PCT**

The author is a frequent PCT contributor.

Online Extra: For a Q&A with Corrigan about ERM, including how he thinks ERM can best be used in commercial and residential accounts; the pros and cons of local vs. remote alerts; and what he thinks rodent control will look like 10 years from now, visit bit.ly/3JccnWU.

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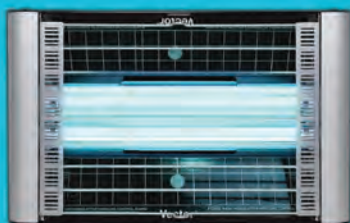
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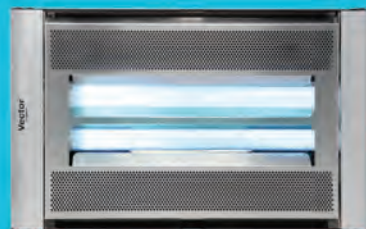
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MAPPING TERMITE MOVEMENT

The North American Termite Survey working group is partnering with scientists and PMPs to investigate the distribution of Formosan subterranean termites.

By Santos Portugal, Aaron Ashbrook, Anamika Sharma

Coptotermes formosanus (Shiraki), commonly referred to as the Formosan subterranean termite, is an invasive species of termite that has threatened structures and challenged pest management professionals (PMPs) in the southern United States for almost 60 years. This termite poses a substantially larger threat than our native *Reticulitermes* spp. subterranean termites not only due to its larger colony size, foraging range and higher consumption rate, but also due to its ability to establish an aerial carton nest — eliminating its need to access soil below for moisture, and as such, negating common soil-based management solutions. The Formosan subterranean termite continues to increase its range within North America, often encountering PMPs that have little or no training on how to identify and treat for them.

The North American Termite Survey (NATS) Working Group, originally the “Surveying Termite Diversity in the Southern United States Working Group,” was established in 2024 as part of a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) grant funded by the Southern Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Center. Aaron Ashbrook of the department of entomology, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, La.; Anamika Sharma of the entomology department and center for biological control, College of Agriculture and Food Sciences, Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, Fla.; and Santos Portugal of the department of agricultural science and plant protection, Mississippi State University, Starkville, Miss.; recognized that there had not been any recent large-scale surveys to determine distribution of the Formosan subterranean termite

in the U.S. Additionally, these investigators recognized the potential opportunity to collaborate in trapping, monitoring and communicating about this termite with entomologists from other states and institutions, PMPs, extension personnel and a variety of citizen scientists.

After being awarded the grant, these investigators recruited 37 project collaborators in 12 states, from the pest control industry, state and municipal agencies, and at least 13 different universities.

One of the goals of the NATS working group is to develop project outputs that train and assist target clients in identifying termites.

Another goal of the NATS group is to implement a trap-based termite alate survey during swarm season and specimen submission program in collaboration with PMPs, extension agents and other interested groups to create a termite distribution map for North America.

NORTH AMERICAN TERMITE SURVEY 2024. The NATS group was very busy in 2024. Many in the group met in May 2024 at the National Conference on Urban Entomology (NCUE) in Mobile, Ala., to determine responsibilities and map out how NATS goals would be achieved. To leverage collaborator expertise and to continue to work towards project goals, the group split into three different subcommittees:

- 1. Identification training/presentation subcommittee:** Create internal termite training for working group collaborators, develop identification guides and other training content.
- 2. Survey and mapping subcommittee:** Compile current

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records, create a trapping standard operating procedure (SOP), coordinate alate trapping program and specimen submission program.

3. Digital materials and identification guide subcommittee: Develop logo, graphics and webpage, and serve as lead for printings and publications.

The group as a whole and each of the subcommittees met virtually dozens of times in 2024 to continue to drive the NATS project forward. A logo was created and the NATS name solidified to represent the project. An organizational website is still under development but will soon be accessible at www.termitesurvey.org. It will serve not only to provide information on the Formosan subterranean termite to interested parties, but also will allow for individuals in states impacted by this termite to identify extension specialists with-

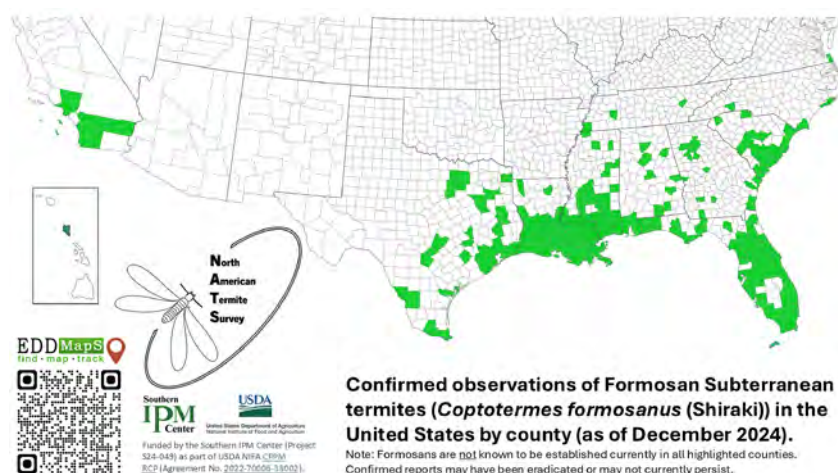


Fig. 1: Confirmed observations of the Formosan subterranean termite in the United States as of December 2024, by county.

in their area that can provide technical expertise and help answer further questions.

Formosan termite distribution data will continue to be collected and compiled as

part of the project, and a continuously updated map of known Formosan termite activity will be maintained via the EDDMaps group.




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The NATS Group is recruiting partners for an alate active trapping project that will begin in spring 2025. Additionally, it is looking to build collaboration between PMPs and academia/extension. PMPs make up what is likely the largest group of entomology professionals in the world and are very knowledgeable about the normal pests they encounter every day. The NATS group will provide educational content for PMPs to correctly identify Formosan termites, understand known distribution in their state (Fig. 1, page 46), and coordinate with their state extension service to provide samples/data so that entomologists can track the spread of this species.

ALATE TRAPPING PROJECT. Collaborators in the NATS group are coordinating with PMPs, master gardeners, master naturalists, extension agents and other citizen scientists within their states to build

networks of volunteer partners. During spring and early summer 2025, these selected partners will coordinate with NATS collaborators to deploy hundreds of traps across 12 states. Traps and the trapping protocol used in this survey is based on SOP used by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Alate traps utilize a specialized insect glueboard — not the glueboards used by PMPs — attached to a stake with zip ties (Fig. 2, page 50). These glueboards will be provided to partners selected for the project. NATS collaborators will coordinate with the volunteer partners within each state on what months to deploy the traps — based on Formosan termite swarming seasonality by state — as well as where to place them. Collaborators will be looking to target urban and peri-urban areas that have the highest chance of potentially seeing new Formosan termite activity. Ad-

ditionally, as Formosan termite alates are highly attracted to light and swarm during darker hours, NATS partners will use this behavior to increase their chances of trapping alates by placing traps under or adjacent to bright light sources. Partners will check the traps one to two times a week for approximately three months.

Any suspected Formosan termite alates caught on glueboards will be mailed using the included pre-paid envelopes to a local or state NATS collaborator for confirmatory identification. To aid in the process, individuals selected as participants will receive a free 30x jeweler's loupe, as well as identification materials.

If you are interested in becoming a NATS partner to help with alate trapping, please fill out the interest survey found at termite-survey.org.

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Fig. 2: Formosan subterranean termite alate trapping images. **A.** Glueboard attached to stake next to utility light pole. **B.** Glueboard attached to front porch light on exterior of home. **C.** Formosan alates (and other bycatch) on glueboard.

working group is looking to build a culture of collaboration between PMPs, state extension services, universities and governmental organizations to facilitate sample submissions of suspected Formosan subterranean termites throughout the year that will add to known state distribution. Member states have contributed data that has been compiled in the current map (Fig. 1, page 46), but the group looks to build up this map and add further resolution (GPS) to it in the future, below the county level.

Every NATS member state has or is developing a process — usually through the existing state extension insect identification services — to receive Formosan termite samples from PMPs and others to confirm identification and add the data to the existing map. By having PMPs submit physical, or even sometimes photographic, samples from areas where this species is not currently or not commonly found, the NATS working group will be able to better map out the actual current distributions of this invasive species. This map will be available to PMPs and the public alike.

EDUCATIONAL OUTPUT. Providing education on identification and management of the Formosan subterranean termite is a priority of the NATS working group, and there are different means by which they plan to do this. On Jan. 24, 2025, the first such opportunity was provided via a four-hour live webinar, titled “Distribution, Status, and Management of Native and Invasive Termites in USA.” It was free of charge and qualified for either full or partial CEU credit in 13 states. At least 1,013 individuals tuned in from around world. The NATS group is working to put together an identification guide that will likely be available both digitally and in physical form. If you have additional questions, email Santos Portugal at sportugal@entomology.msstate.edu. **PCT**

Portugal is with the department of agricultural science and plant protection, Mississippi State University, Starkville, Miss.; Ashbrook is with the department of entomology, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, La.; and Sharma is with the center for biological control, college of agriculture and food sciences, Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, Fla.

BED BUG SUPPLEMENT



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BED BUG INFESTATION

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

From dermatitis and allergy symptoms to psychological distress and disease transmission, bed bugs are an often overlooked risk to public safety.

By Simona Principato and Zachary DeVries

Bed bugs continue to be a concern all over the world. Fear over widespread outbreaks continue to pop up from time to time, largely driven by a news story catching fire and going viral. That said, the invasive capabilities of this insect are second to none, as evident through historical records documenting their ubiquity in society throughout recorded history. As such, it is imperative not to lower our guard regarding bed bugs, as they have extraordinary adaptability, an uncommon resistance to pesticides and the potential to harm humans.

Despite their effects on human health often being marginalized, it is worth noting that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) all

consider bed bugs a public health pest. This characterization is primarily due to the bites bed bugs can cause with their piercing-sucking mouthparts.

Driven by the heat, chemical odors and carbon dioxide we emit, bed bugs can easily locate us so that they can probe our skin in search of a blood vessel to acquire their blood meal, typically leaving a bite with each probe they make. Their saliva contains numerous components including anticoagulants and vasodilatory proteins which help bed bugs acquire blood.

While many of these compounds are necessary for acquiring a blood meal, they also can lead to allergic reactions in humans. In fact, our reaction to these compounds is the main reason people develop red and swollen areas on their skin, like dermatitis. These bites are usually very itchy, although everyone

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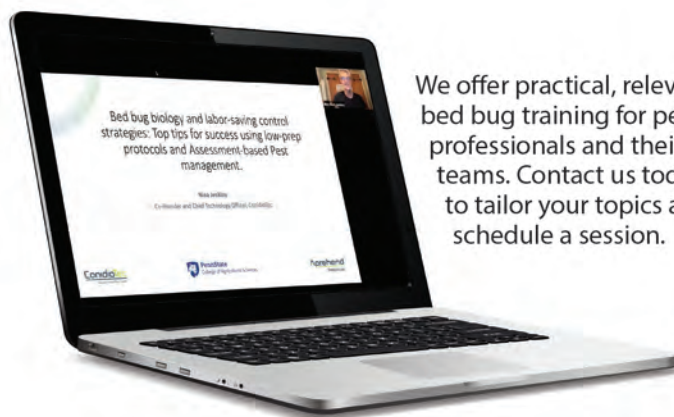


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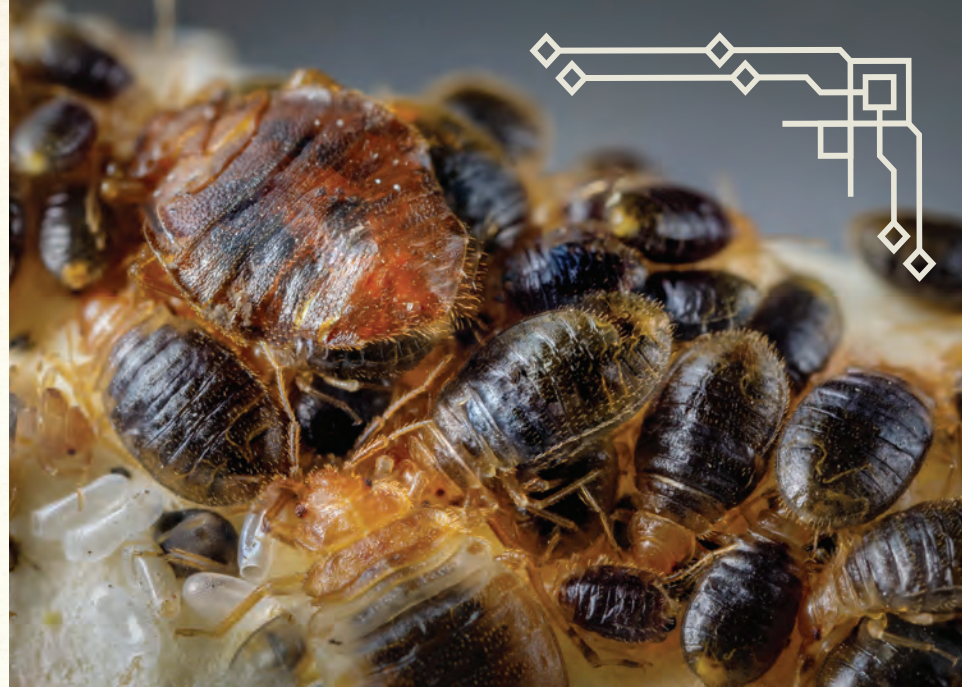
reacts differently, and our individual reactions can change over time. In some individuals, the incessant need for scratching due to severe itchiness also could lead to secondary infections from open wounds.

Bed bug infestations sometimes are only realized when people complain about waking up with unknown bites. Reactions to bed bug bites typically appear on uncovered areas of the body like the legs, arms and neck — areas where bed bugs are traditionally known to probe. However, it should be noted that many blood-feeders like to feed on exposed areas of the skin, and bed bug bites are not limited to these areas. Thus, a bite mark alone is not necessarily indicative of a bed bug problem, and treating based on bites alone is not advised.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS. In addition to dermatitis and other skin issues, bed bugs also are associated with psychological distress. Many people develop symptoms of anxiety, stress, depression and obsessive thoughts when dealing with bed bugs. In fact, these symptoms can appear long after bed bugs have been eradicated from the home and sometimes even when bed bugs are not present.¹

The belief that one's body or home is infested, when in fact it is not, is known as delusional parasitosis. Given the connection between bed bugs and delusional parasitosis, it is critical that all pest control technicians do thorough inspections with proper identification and documentation.

Furthermore, when dealing with bed bug infestations, there also is a general concern about their potential to transmit serious diseases like their close blood-feeding relatives, kissing bugs (Family Reduviidae), which are known to be vectors of *Trypanosoma cruzi* — the causative agent of Chagas disease. Disease transmission by bed bugs remains an area of some controversy. Bed bugs have been shown capable of harboring more than 50 pathogens; however, successful acquisition and transmission have only ever been documented under laboratory-controlled conditions for *Trypanosoma cruzi*, *Bartonella quintana* —



Bed bugs have been identified as the primary source of environmental histamine in the U.S.

causative agent of trench Fever, and *Borrelia recurrentis* — causative agent of louse-borne relapsing fever.^{2,3,4}

One perspective on this topic is that bed bugs can resist common pathogens.⁵ This was given some support by a recent paper that found antimicrobial peptides in the bed bug midgut may be able to impede the growth of bacteria like *Bacillus subtilis* and *Escherichia coli*.⁶ However, another recent study provided the first laboratory experimental evidence that bed bugs can successfully acquire and transmit methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), a bacterial infection that is very common in the U.S. and can lead to cellulitis, bacteremia and endocarditis.⁷ Additionally, they demonstrated that MRSA could replicate internally in bed bugs and be transmitted to another surface via contact. Although this does not prove that bed bugs are vectors of MRSA in natural settings, it suggests that in certain conditions, bed bugs may be able to contribute to the spread of MRSA.

It is important to note that MRSA can survive on surfaces for months. Therefore, the likelihood of MRSA transmission through bed bugs in communities where members suffer from both MRSA and bed bug infestations seems highly probable, especially in settings that can be crowded with people and where bed bug infestations can easily spread like hospitals, prisons and homeless shelters.

OTHER RISKS. Bed bugs also are associated with additional health risks related to emerging contaminants. One contaminant of concern is histamine — a biogenic amine found in their feces as a component of their aggregation pheromone.⁸ In the human body, histamine helps to regulate the mammalian immune response. When our bodies react to benign compounds (e.g., allergens), histamine can turn against us, leading to diseases like asthma.

Research has demonstrated that histamine from bed bugs can persist in house dust for at least three months after an infestation is eradicated.⁹ This suggests that humans may still be exposed to bed bug histamine through contact or inhalation even months after eradicating bed bug infestations, potentially leading to the onset or worsening of allergic reactions.

Bed bugs also have been identified as the primary source of environmental histamine, particularly in the U.S., with an unmatched ability to heavily contaminate indoor spaces with significant amounts of feces that contains histamine.^{10,11} This is especially concerning given the highest concentrations of histamine that can be found in areas where people spend extended time, such as in and around the bed/sleeping area.¹² While the health risks remain unknown, all PCOs should be aware of the possibility.

Tropomyosin, a protein found in bed bugs, is another contaminant that could

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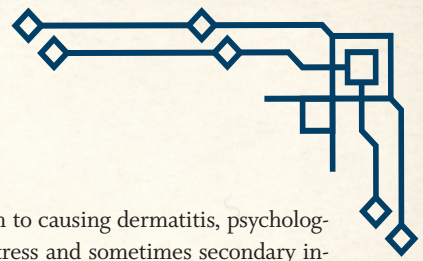


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Bed bugs are associated with dermatitis, skin issues, disease transmission and mental distress.

develop allergies to tropomyosin from invertebrates, such as shellfish, cockroaches or house dust mites. Due to the similarity between bed bug tropomyosin and that of other indoor pests, cross-reactivity could occur.¹³ As a result, sensitivity to bed bug tropomyosin may lead to sensitivity to the tropomyosin of other arthropods, potentially causing new or worsening allergic reactions.

addition to causing dermatitis, psychological distress and sometimes secondary infections, there also is growing evidence of their involvement in disease transmission, although there is an ongoing debate about their true disease transmission potential. Furthermore, emerging bed bug-derived contaminants, such as histamine and tropomyosin, may introduce new health risks that could trigger or exacerbate allergy symptoms.

These factors underscore the need for increased attention to the clinical implications of bed bug infestations. **PCT**

Principato is a graduate research assistant at the University of Kentucky. DeVries is a Bill Gattton Foundation assistant professor, urban entomology, University of Kentucky.

potentially affect human health. This protein is very similar across different animals, including arthropods, crustaceans and even humans. Some individuals may

MORE ATTENTION NEEDED. Given the widespread presence of bed bugs, their impact on human health could be more significant than previously recognized. In

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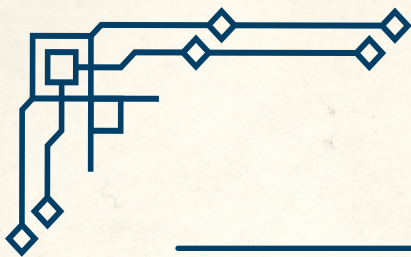
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BED BUGS IN THE NEWS

Everything you need to know about bed bugs hitting the headlines.



New study furthers understanding of bed bug insecticide resistance.

UT ARLINGTON STUDY: NEW BED BUG GENOME ANALYSIS MAY HELP PREVENT OUTBREAKS

A new University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) study published in the *Journal of Heredity* shows that scientists now have a better genetic understanding of bed bugs. The research offers an updated genome analysis of the common bed bug, *Cimex lectularius*, providing new insight for those working to prevent bed bug infestations, develop remediation strategies and track pesticide resistance.

“This new high-quality reference genome provides a valuable resource for enhancing scientific investigations into this medically and economically resurging pest,” said Todd Castoe, professor of biology at UTA and study author.

“We now have an important additional tool for studying patterns of human-associated evolution and adaption for this insect that has wreaked havoc on human populations since the beginning of civilization,” said co-author Yannick Francioli, a Ph.D. student in Castoe’s lab.

Bed bugs have been mentioned in the written record for more than 3,000 years, and rose to prominence in the 1940s when infestations plagued military bases during World War II. With the introduction of DDT, the insect was thought to be eradicated in many industrialized nations.

In the 1990s, a combination of factors, like the elimination of DDT use due to health concerns, increased pesticide resistance among insects and increased international travel, helped fuel a resurgence of bed bug infestations.

Bed bug outbreaks around the world now routinely make headlines, such as the infestation in Paris, France, hotels before the summer 2024 Olympic Games.

To better understand the genetics of the bed bug, Castoe and Francioli, along with researchers from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, the University of Arkansas, the Dana-Farber Cancer Center, Harvard Medical School and the Broad Institute of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University, obtained a sample specimen of the insect and flash froze it to allow its DNA to be extracted.

From that extraction, the team was able to create a chromosome-level reference genome for the insect using PacBio long-read and Omni-C proximity genetic sequencing tools. This approach, combined with sampling additional male and female individuals, allowed the team to map a contiguous bed bug genome with 15 chromosomes (13 autosomes and two sex chromosomes: X1 and X2), providing a comprehensive genetic map that enhances the understanding of the pest’s biology, evolution and insecticide resistance.

Specifically, the identification of the sex chromosomes will help researchers understand the genetic basis of sex determination in bed bugs. This can be particularly useful for developing targeted pest control strategies that exploit sex-specific traits.

“The creation of a chromosome-level reference genome gives us a new and highly accurate contiguous map of the bed bug’s genetic material,” Castoe said. “This new foundational resource will allow researchers to further understand the genetic basis of traits for the insect that cause issues such as insecticide resistance, which is crucial for developing more effective pest control strategies.” — Source: University of Texas at Arlington

This research was supported by the National Science Foundation Division of Environmental Biology (DEB-1754394), startup funds from the University of Tulsa and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and the Joseph R. and Mary W. Wilson Urban Entomology Endowment. Additional funding came from a National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant (DEB-1401747).

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/// BED BUG SUPPLEMENT

ACTION TERMITE AND PEST CONTROL WELCOMES DAISY, BED BUG DETECTION DOG

Action Termite and Pest Control, Phoenix, Ariz., announced the addition of a new bed bug detection dog, Daisy. Daisy is a highly trained bed bug dog that is a 2-year-old mixed breed rescue. She will be available for both residential and commercial clients facing bed bug concerns.

As PMPs know, bed bug detection dogs are specifically trained to identify the scent of live bed bugs and their eggs with a high level of accuracy. The addition of Daisy to the company's bed bug dog team will support its technicians in identifying infestations quickly and precisely, enabling faster treatment and peace of mind for clients, according to Action Termite and Pest Control.

"Our new bed bug dog, Daisy, brings an exciting edge to our pest control services," said John Russell, president of Action Termite and Pest Control. "We're dedicated to maintaining the highest standards in pest detection, and our bed bug detection dog is an invaluable addition to our existing team that will allow us to serve our clients with even greater accuracy and efficiency. Bed bugs can be challenging to detect, especially in larger or multi-unit properties, and having a canine partner trained to pinpoint the exact locations of infestations is a wonderful addition to our team."

Daisy has been trained to alert its handler when it detects bed bugs, making inspections faster and more thorough, according to Action Termite and Pest Control, which said it will provide new and existing clients access to the service.

ALLERGY TECHNOLOGIES PRESENTS ON PEST-FREE AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT NAHRO CONFERENCE

Joseph Latino, Allergy Technologies president, and Dominique Sauvage, company senior vice president, gave a presentation

about addressing the formidable challenges that affordable housing communities face when attempting to remediate bed bugs and other public health nuisance pests at the National Association of Housing and Re-development Officials (NAHRO) national conference and exhibition in September, in Orlando, Fla.

The presentation, according to the company, countered a misconception among housing authorities that pests are a fact of life.

Using case studies, Latino described how sustainable ATAHC and ATAHC Plus programs can help communities become more than 95% pest-free while delegating the responsibilities pest issues require to an independent third party with full oversight over the pest control process.

"Traditionally, the pest control model has been a 'whack-a-mole' approach," said Latino. "You may get rid of bed bugs in one apartment only to see them pop up in another down the hall or on a different floor."

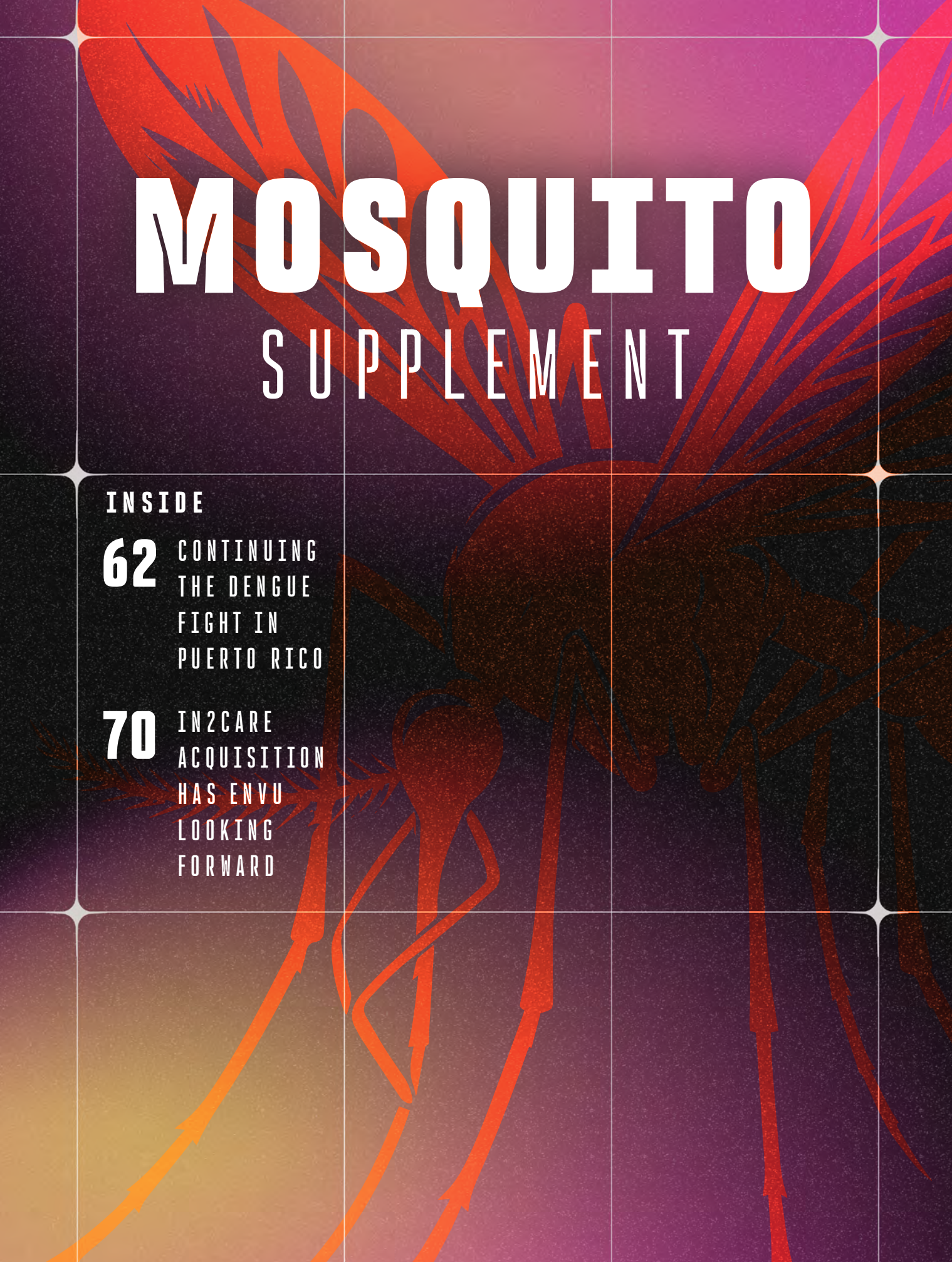
By taking a systematic, facility-wide control and preventive approach, ATAHC is highly effective and greatly improves quality of life for residents and staff, Latino said.

The program aims to reduce complaints about bed bugs and other public health nuisance pests and lightens staff workload, allowing them to focus on other community issues.

"This turnkey strategy for the prevention and control of bed bugs and other pests in affordable housing has been extremely well received," Sauvage said. "Particularly because it not only saves time and money for the managers of affordable housing communities but also improves the day-to-day lives of both residents and staff in the industry in tangible ways."

Sauvage added, "ATAHC faces many of the challenges associated with pest control in affordable housing by partnering directly with residents and staff, and earning their cooperation and collaboration buy-in by focusing on dignity, compassion, empathy and respect in everything we do." PCT

To learn more about NAHRO, visit the website: <https://www.nahro.org>.



MOSQUITO

SUPPLEMENT

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HAS ENVU
LOOKING
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Rentokil technicians targeted shaded areas in vegetation and near windows and doors.

CONTINUING THE DENGUE FIGHT IN PUERTO RICO

An update on Rentokil Terminix and the Puerto Rico Vector Control Unit's joint effort against dengue fever-carrying mosquitoes swarming the U.S. territory.

By Dr. Sydney E. Crawley, Josiah Ritchey, Nexilianne Borrero-Segara

Dengue fever remains a serious public health concern in Puerto Rico, with 4,798 confirmed cases reported by the end of 2024 — as of epi week 48 (Nov. 24-30). To address this challenge, the Puerto Rico Vector Control Unit (PRVCU) has joined forces with Rentokil Terminix's Puerto Rico branch to evaluate the impact of outdoor residual spraying (ORS) on *Aedes aegypti* populations.

The collaborative effort, led by PRVCU's executive director Grayson Brown and project manager Nexilianne Borrero-Segarra, and supported by Rentokil Terminix experts Sydney Crawley, principal vector scientist, and Josiah Ritchey, senior vector scientist, focuses on applying Suspend Polyzone as a perimeter treatment to prevent mosquitoes from entering outdoor settings. The study aims to provide data-driven insights into the effectiveness of

Javier Córdova, a vector management technician, counting and identifying mosquitoes captured by an AGO trap.



SYDNEY CRAWLEY



(Left to right) Dr. Grayson Brown, Dr. Sydney Crawley, Noemí Martínez and Nexilianna Borrero.

ORS as a justifiable mosquito control strategy that can reduce nuisance biting and, ultimately, disease incidences.

WHAT'S BEING DONE? The project targets 42 homes in Ponce, Puerto Rico, evenly split between intervention homes — which receive a monthly ORS treatment, and control homes — which receive

no treatment. PRVCU employees are currently monitoring mosquito activity — pre- and post-treatment — throughout the field study.

Since the study started, the PRVCU and Rentokil Terminix teams have completed 88 ORS applications and 15 weekly mosquito population surveys using autocidal gravid ovitraps (AGOs).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT. A critical component of this project is community participation. PRVCU's vector management team has conducted numerous educational campaigns to raise awareness about mosquito breeding site elimination and to encourage resident involvement in vector control initiatives. This proactive approach has been key to securing enrollment success in the study by the public.

CURRENT RESULTS. Table 1 (page 68) illustrates the average weekly captures of *Aedes aegypti* females in AGO traps between control and intervention homes over several epidemiological weeks. Note that ORS applications were delivered during weeks 38, 44, 47 and 51, marked by red vertical dashed lines. The following conclusions can be drawn at this early stage in the experiment:

- After the first application (week 38),

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TOP 10 THINGS TO KNOW

In2Care's success is due to it being the only system that uses mosquitoes to deliver a potent larvicide to mosquito breeding sites. The In2Care Mosquito Station does it with a pioneering, cutting-edge technology called autodissemination. If you are looking for an excellent solution for mosquito control, the In2Care Mosquito Station is your choice! Read further to learn the 10 most important things that can make In2Care an essential product in your portfolio.

1 Effective

Thanks to its autodissemination principle, In2Care keeps mosquito populations sustainably low throughout the season. It reduces the upsurge of adult mosquitoes emerging from breeding sites around the Station. Therefore, In2Care is available in all U.S. states, and more than 45 countries worldwide with excellent results. Its efficiency is enhanced when installation is done early in the season.

2 Dual Action Effectivity

Unlike conventional products, In2Care targets larvae and adult mosquitoes on two fronts. It kills the larvae inside and around the Station and those beyond the yard. In addition, it kills the adult mosquitoes that enter the Station. It is a mosquito control solution that works 24/7, all year round.

3 Sustainable Mosquito Control

Thanks to its autodissemination principle, In2Care keeps mosquito populations sustainably low throughout the season. It reduces the upsurge of adult mosquitoes emerging from breeding sites around the Station.

4 Environmentally Friendly

In2Care offers a green and practical approach to mosquito control without harming beneficial insects. It is also safe for pets and koi fish. Using In2Care Stations for mosquito control reduces the amount and frequency of chemical treatments. The Station is

made of recycled plastic, lasting at least five years.

5 Important for Public Health

The In2Care Station targets mosquitoes that pose a risk to public health (*Aedes* and *Culex* mosquitoes) due to their ability to vector diseases such as dengue fever virus, chikungunya virus, yellow fever virus, Zika virus, and West Nile virus. In targeting these mosquitoes, In2Care is a powerful tool that helps reduce the incidence of mosquito-borne virus transmission in communities worldwide.

6 Versatile

The Station is a suitable and easy add-on solution for mosquito control programs offered by pest control, lawn care, and arborist companies. It is a product that helps to gain new customers while retaining the existing ones.

7 Easy Implementation

Hassle-free and quick to install and maintain, the Station integrates into any mosquito control program and environment.

8 Profitable

In2Care's hard plastics are a one-time investment for at least five



years. The Station's servicing with the In2Mix Refills fits the recurring business model. Furthermore, it reduces callbacks, lowers costs, and promotes superior customer service.

9 Customizable

In2Care is easy to customize for all needs and projects for residential, commercial, or public open spaces. It is also an excellent solution for pest control professionals looking to level up the overall guest experience in golf courses and country clubs.

10 Scientifically Proven

Backed by scientific research, In2Care is a trusted solution recommended by experts worldwide. With its field-validated and published results, the Mosquito Station keeps delivering on its promise to be an effective solution to control mosquitoes.

1. Mosquito attracted to Station

2. Lands on static gauze, picks up a larvicide and an adulticide

3. Contaminates surrounding mosquito breeding sites* with larvicide

4. Dies within a few days due to the adulticide, before transmitting a disease

*All larvae are killed inside the Station

*Larvae are killed



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Figure 1: (Left) PRVCU staff deployed AGO traps for the surveillance system and (right) a Rentokil technician applied an outdoor residual spray treatment.



female *Aedes aegypti* captures were higher on average at treatment homes compared to the control homes. However, within two weeks of the first application — at week 40 — mosquito captures at the treatment houses normalized to capture rates observed at the controls. We can conclude that ORS was effective in reducing mosquitoes to a baseline level, but elimination was not achieved.

- A similar trend in mosquito population dynamics was observed during weeks 48 to 50, where mean mosquito captures at the treatment homes began to increase compared to mean capture rates at control homes. However, after the final ORS

application in week 51, the mean capture rates at the control and treatment properties were approximately equivalent once again.

- Despite fluctuations in mean capture rates at both control and treatment properties, mosquito density — as determined by the number of captures — at treatment properties was approximately equivalent to mean capture rates at the control. When mosquito populations at the treatment properties increased and became higher than populations at the control properties, subsequent ORS applications quickly reduced the number of mosquitoes present back to or below baseline.

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The Buzz Patrol is the perfect all around system for efficient perimeter pest treatment as well as mosquito control treatments.

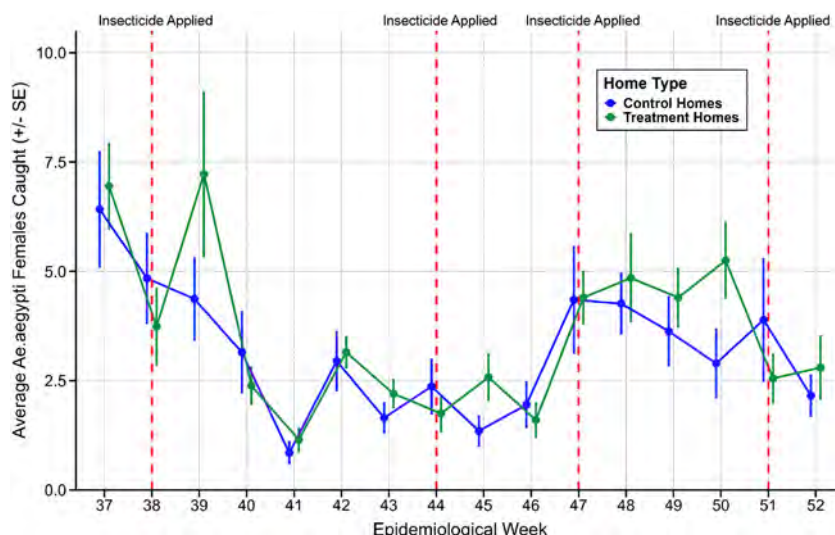
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We believe that high mosquito capture rates early in the season likely resulted from a lack of preventive intervention during the early season. It will be interesting to see if capture rates at homes receiving treatments for the last 16 weeks are reduced in 2025 compared to 2024.

The current findings reveal a positive, yet variable, effect of periodic ORS applications in reducing *Aedes aegypti* populations around structures and we hypothesize that an integrated approach would be required to consistently reduce these population numbers to levels below that of baseline.

LOOKING AHEAD. We expected to see a more pronounced reduction in mean *Aedes aegypti* capture rates in intervention homes with the ORS approach. It is possible that this approach could significantly impact other mosquitoes, with a less impact on anthropophilic mosquitoes. Thus,

Table 1: Mosquitoes Captured per Epi-Week in ORS Treatment & Control Homes



this year, we plan to set CDC light traps in addition to AGO traps to ensure that we are capturing an accurate depiction of the

efficacy of ORS in controlling urban mosquito species. In addition, we will continue to administer monthly ORS applications



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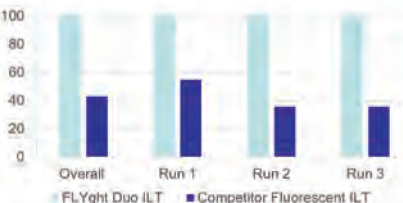
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and engage in regular mosquito population monitoring for *Aedes aegypti*. The data collected will contribute to evaluating the long-term effectiveness of ORS in reducing *Aedes aegypti* populations and, ultimately, Dengue transmission risks in Puerto Rico.

At the current stage, results indicate that while outdoor residual sprays are a valuable tool in reducing mosquitoes in real-time, for season-long control, an integrated approach is most likely preferable. Further studies will be designed to evaluate this hypothesis.

"This partnership underscores the importance of collaboration in addressing vector-borne diseases," Brown said. "By combining technical expertise with community engagement, we are making significant strides to protect public health." **PCT**

Crawley is principal vector scientist at Rentokil Terminix, Ritchey is senior vector scientist at Rentokil Terminix and Borrero-Segarra is PRVCU project manager.

Author's note: The authors would like to acknowledge the PRVCU team and Rentokil Terminix technicians for their hard work.

What's an Epi week?

An epidemiological week, commonly referred to as an epi week or a CDC week, is a standardized approach in vector data reporting where the annual calendar is divided into weeks that typically begin on Sunday, and end on Saturday. This allows for an easy comparison of vector data year after year.

They are also referred to as CDC weeks because the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention uses them when reporting vector-borne disease risk and mosquito capture rates. This approach can be an issue for global vector tracking, however, as some countries report the first day of the week to be Sunday, Monday or even Saturday.

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IN2CARE ACQUISITION HAS ENVU LOOKING FORWARD

In early January, Envu completed its acquisition of Netherlands-based In2Care, a company specializing in novel mosquito control technologies. Bernard Jacqmin, head of global innovation, Envu, provided PCT with an update on the In2Care integration and how this technology will shape the company moving forward.

For existing In2Care customers, there will be no immediate changes to products or services. Envu will maintain the In2Care operations and team in the Netherlands, Jacqmin said, and the company is exploring options for a larger facility nearby to meet growing demand. Jacqmin said a key Envu goal is to review and expand its supply chain to enhance efficiency and increase capacity for future needs “so that any Envu customers who are interested in In2Care will have access to it.”

Jacqmin believes In2Care appeals to pest management professionals (PMPs) because it stands apart from traditional methods. In2Care’s core technology, InsecTech, is a patented method using static-charged netting that transfers lethal doses of biocide powders to mosquitoes. Two benefits cited by Jacqmin are:

- **Enhanced biocide effectiveness.** The technology improves the activity of biocides on mosquitoes, making it a powerful solution to combat resistance to traditional insecticides. It enhances pest control by ensuring the biocides are more effective in killing mosquitoes.
- **Leveraging mosquito behavior.** The In2Care Mosquito Station uses mosquitoes themselves as natural spreaders. As mosquitoes carry biocides to various breeding sites they visit, the spread of biocides is increased, making the technology more efficient in reaching more areas for better control.



In2Care station in a yard.

For PMPs already using Envu products for mosquito control, the In2Care Mosquito Station can complement existing products, such as Suspend PolyZone insecticide, Envu said. “Combining this modern mosquito device with other existing technologies gives you a more powerful toolbox for controlling mosquitoes,” Jacqmin said.

Envu soon will be launching Barricor Essential Mosquito Control, a 25(b) botanical-based insecticide, which also can be used with In2Care. “Combining these two [In2Care Mosquito Station and Barricor Essential Mosquito Control] will be an interesting approach for offering a more integrated nature-positive solution for controlling mosquitoes,” he said.

Envu also is working to gain regulatory approval from the various regulatory bodies in different countries in order to expand the technology’s availability to customers globally.

Looking ahead, Jacqmin is excited about In2Care’s potential to manage oth-

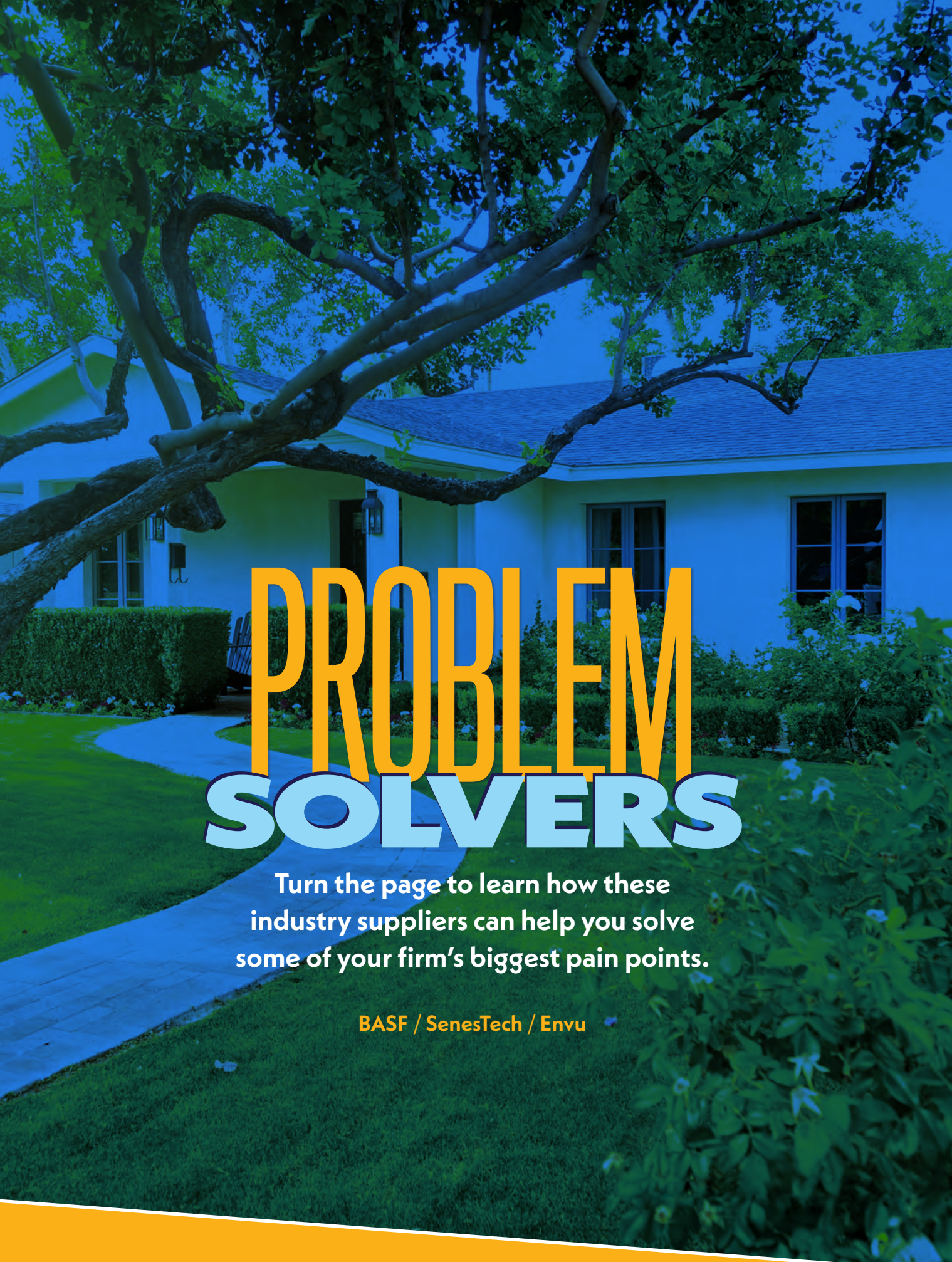
er insects. “The next step involves collaboration and innovation from the team to make the technology more accessible and adaptable,” Jacqmin said. “The goal is to further develop the technology, extend its applications beyond mosquitoes and prepare it for broader use.”

Jacqmin said Envu is actively building partnerships to expand its mosquito control and vector-borne disease prevention efforts. These partnerships include collaborations with external organizations like Indiana University-Bloomington, where they are developing a nature-positive technology alternative to chemical methods for mosquito management.

Envu also is working with BioGene, an Australian company, to develop a “nature identical substance” for use in mosquito management. The manufacturer said its broader strategy involves a 360° innovation plan, which focuses on creating a range of customer-focused solutions through partnerships, aiming to enhance its product portfolio and provide more effective tools to combat mosquito-borne diseases. — Brad Harbison PCT



Bernard Jacqmin



PROBLEM SOLVERS

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BASF / SenesTech / Envu

When Speedy Results Matter

Ridesco WG Insecticide can quickly reduce the pest population through its precise ingredient combination and easy-to-use and flexible label.

Everyone wants quick results, especially when it comes to pests being where they aren't wanted. For a clean-out, an initial visit or a one-time service, both homeowners and pest management professionals (PMPs) want to solve the problem as quickly as possible.

But what if the situation is out of control and calls for fast, visible action?

Ridesco® WG Insecticide, the newest innovation from BASF, can meet the challenge. When used against listed pests, this insecticide can quickly reduce the pest population, which makes it ideal for initial or one-time services and callbacks. It's a rapid-results heavy hitter that can even be used prior to a customer's special event, ensuring their plans aren't interrupted by an invasion of unwanted guests. Ridesco WG Insecticide excels at controlling spiders, occasional invaders and other perimeter pests, and large peridomestic cockroaches, just to name a few of the labeled pests.

Here are just a few reasons why Ridesco WG Insecticide holds a unique place in the BASF portfolio:

- It is a highly effective, broad-spectrum insecticide with an easy-to-use and flexible label. One rate for all your needs indoor and outdoor, in residential and commercial accounts, including food/feed handling establishments.
- The right combination of the two active ingredients. Dinotefuran at 20% and Alpha-Cypermethrin at 10% makes it a deadly combination with a rapid response to active infestations.
- Ridesco WG Insecticide uses two different physiological pathways (modes of action) to target the pest's central nervous system, which means it is an excellent insecticide resistance management tool.
- It is the only dry water-soluble granules in the market with dual modes of action and a quick release formulation (non-microencapsulated) to deliver an overwhelming upfront strike.

It is important to mention that the flexibility of Ridesco WG Insecticide is

not only based on the single application rate of 0.15%, but also that the product can be applied through different types of equipment: air-compressed handheld sprayer, backpack sprayer, truck-mounted sprayer, mist blower and even by adding a foaming agent for void applications. In addition to crack and crevice, spot, general surface and perimeter applications, Ridesco WG Insecticide can reach under mulch, rock aggregates or any other pervious surfaces while still maintaining the same full-label rate of 0.15%.

For PMPs who need a powerful product to use against tough perimeter pests in both residential and commercial accounts that is particularly designed for one-time/initial services, look no further than Ridesco WG Insecticide. Customers will be impressed, and relieved, by the visible results after the first application, which should lead them into a regular maintenance program. ■



Rodent Fertility Control Provides Birthrate Solution

SenesTech fertility control solutions, like Contrapest® and Evolve™, complement other rodent control products and enhance results.

Revolutionary products don't come along every day. In the rodent control world, we have seen drastic improvements over the decades since the first commercial trap was introduced in the late 1800s. Technology has literally made the mouse trap better. One issue has never truly been addressed, until now.

SenesTech's line of rodent reproductive inhibiting baits finally allow us to address a host of issues, leading with the birthrate of rats. Much like IGRs have influenced the way we control insects, SenesTech's rodent control products can eliminate new populations before they are born.

SenesTech solutions complement other rodent control products and enhance results. While rodenticides can knock down the population quickly, any remaining survivors can quickly repopulate because of rats' short reproductive cycles, large litter sizes and ability to invade new areas. Fertility control prevents rats from increasing their numbers for an outcome that is more effective and long-term. Rodenticides — first available in the 1940s — can become less effective over time due to rodent behavior, bait aversion, genetic resistance or increased tolerance. Rats that survive in the population are typically the ones that won't consume rodenticides or learn to outsmart traps. Additionally, since SenesTech's products are generally deemed as safe, you limit the exposure for secondary poisoning or other unwanted circumstances. Giving your customers peace of mind, while limiting your liability is a great added benefit.

This addition to your integrated pest management (IPM) program helps avoid the frustration of spending time, money and labor in reducing your rat population, only to have your hard work reversed. In circumstances where rodenticides are not available for use or are limited, fertility control products like liquid Contrapest or Evolve soft baits give you options where none may have existed before. Accounts that are animal sensitive, food producing or otherwise regulated, make up a significant market for rodent control where rodenticides



are not an option. The great news is that rats have a relatively short life cycle that will allow for control using rodent fertility products as a stand-alone solution. Now *that's* revolutionary. SenesTech products include:

ContraPest® — An EPA-registered rat contraceptive bait in the form of a highly palatable liquid, developed specifically for Norway (brown) rats and roof (black or ship) rats.

Isolate Bait System™ with ContraPest® — A delivery system ideal for standard infestations that is efficient and easy to use for rapid placement and setup.

Elevate Bait System™ with ContraPest® — A delivery system for baiting in elevated areas that are hard-to-reach with standard bait stations and can be mounted on horizontal or vertical surfaces.

Ultimate Bait System™ with ContraPest® — A delivery system ideal for large deployments, that can be serviced less often and is great for high infestation areas.

Evolve™ Soft Bait — A highly palatable, contraceptive soft bait that is cost-effective, and easy to deploy for versatile use.

For more information on SenesTech and its solutions, please visit: www.senestech.com. ■

Outlast, Outwork and Outsmart Pests With the Suspend® Portfolio

Envu completes the pest management hat trick with the Suspend® portfolio.

When it comes to pest management, the solution that provides sufficient protection and control today may fall flat tomorrow. Pests have a way of keeping us guessing. They're constantly bobbing, weaving and adapting.

For PMPs, there's no magic bullet. No single, one-and-done solution. That's why Envu made three. The Suspend® portfolio gives PMPs a game-changing trifecta to take the fight to pests from every angle, lock down the perimeter and reduce call-backs.

"The tendency might be to use cheaper products that don't necessarily work," said Shawn Mullen, Envu mosquito management key account manager. "But if a customer gets a bite after a treatment, they may cancel the service."

By having access to a portfolio of proven, high-impact options on their truck, PMPs have the tools needed to perform routine maintenance applications efficiently and effectively while also mitigating the risk of future pest adaptations.

It all starts with Suspend® PolyZone® insecticide, the core Envu solution for long-lasting control and foundational protection. It gives PMPs the power to outlast even their toughest pest challenges, providing up to 90 days of control thanks to a polymer barrier that protects the active ingredient even in tough weather conditions and on the most challenging surfaces. By using an advanced solution that offers a more uniform distribution of active ingredient particles, Suspend PolyZone insecticide increases the likelihood of contact with insects that have adapted to avoid treated areas.

"Suspend PolyZone insecticide is a foundational product for pest management professionals because you can really build an entire program around it," said Chad Noyes, Envu customer marketing manager. "It's a product that you start with and rotate from."

Not to be outdone, Suspend® SC insecticide gives PMPs another impactful, reliable tool for their toolbox. It's an ad-



vanced-generation pyrethroid that fights more than 50 pests and works at remarkably low concentrations, providing fast knockdown with a long residual to keep PMPs outworking all their adversaries. To boot, it has a flexible label that allows application on mattresses, box springs, carpet and upholstery as well as in food service areas.

Rounding out the Suspend portfolio is the new Suspend® Contact & Residual Aerosol. Combining knockdown in less than two minutes with long-lasting control, it's a versatile, cost-effective tool that's allowing PMPs to outsmart pests like never before.

One Envu stakeholder remarked, "'Ready to go' is a nice way to think about Suspend Contact & Residual Aerosol. It's discreet and convenient, plus you get two products in one — quick knockdown and long-lasting control — saving our customers time and money."

In the ever-evolving landscape of pest management, adaptability is not just an advantage — it's a necessity. Ants, bed bugs, cockroaches and other common pests have proven themselves to be remarkably resilient, evolving strategies to overcome conventional control measures.

With Suspend PolyZone insecticide's 90-day defense, Suspend SC insecticide's versatility, and the targeted precision of Suspend Contact & Residual Aerosol, PMPs can keep pace with pests' every move. ■

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It Can't Always Be the Hammer

A few years back, my neighbor bought one of those fancy wooden swing sets for his kids. He chose to assemble it himself rather than pay a company to do it for him. After it got delivered, he told me he needed to head to our local big-box hardware store to get some tools, as all he currently had was a hammer and two screwdrivers. We joked about how hard it would be and how long it would take to put the thing together using just a hammer. It was a lighthearted moment, but it serves as a practical reminder for us as PMPs: Success often hinges on using the right tools at the right time.

When it comes to ant control, this analogy is particularly relevant. Are we as experts utilizing the full breadth of tools and techniques available to us? Or are we relying on a single solution?

INSPECTION: PRECISION IS KEY. Our most important tools are our eyes and our minds. Are we taking the time to identify our target species, or are we going with the “see ant, place bait” strategy? Different ant species have different harborage areas and behaviors. Don’t set yourself up for failure by not properly identifying your target and taking advantage of what you know about them.

Speaking of harborages, it’s best to make bait placements close to nesting sites. Why make an ant walk all the way across the kitchen to feed on bait in one crack only to walk all the way back across the kitchen to return to the nest? Not only does this lessen the likelihood of ants finding your bait, but it also increases the chances that your customer continues to see ants all over the place, resulting in them calling in for extra service. Take the time to monitor foraging behaviors and place bait where they trail.

PRODUCT CHOICE: LET THE ANTS DECIDE.

I get it, we all have our favorite ant bait — that’s the first one we reach for every time we get an ant management call. Instead of using OUR favorite ant bait, we should be using THE ANTS’ favorite bait. How do we figure out which bait that is? Let the ants tell you!



Take the time to monitor ant foraging behavior before placing bait.

Provide ants with different bait options; this should include different active ingredients and matrices. Ants will tell you what they want based on what they feed on. How about mixing in a granular option as well?

Incorporating the use of non-repellent residuals with baiting strategies will increase efficacy exponentially.

But wait, bait and spray in the same area? It may seem counterintuitive, but yes! The bait will help to attract more ants to the treated areas and allow for the transfer of both bait and residual due to their social nature.

COMMUNICATION: EDUCATE & ENGAGE.

Customer communication is as vital as the service itself. Take the time to let your customers know what you found, what you did and when you’ll check back on the issue. Let them know they may still see activity for a time after you leave, since ant treatments aren’t always a one and done. Help them understand that they should avoid smashing ants they see, since we rely on those workers to take the bait back to their nestmates. Advise them not to use caustic cleaners, as it may negatively impact the attractiveness of the baits.

Don’t forget to convey any recommendations you may have regarding sanitation or structural issues; this includes food debris that

may be attracting ants or openings that allow easy entry into the structure. Don’t forget recommendations on the exterior such as heavy leaf litter, excessively deep mulch or accumulation of debris in gutters that may be providing a harborage for their ant colony.

STAYING AHEAD WITH INNOVATION.

As PMPs, we live in a pretty amazing time. Manufacturers are constantly creating more and better options to help us in our battle to keep pests at bay. It’s up to us to stay informed and ensure we are using ALL of the tools at our disposal, at the right time, the right way and in the right places.

By leveraging the full potential of our toolkit and educating customers on best practices, we can elevate our service and maintain our reputation as trusted experts. After all, pest management is not about a single tool or tactic — it’s about a strategic, comprehensive approach that delivers results. **PCT**

The author is an associate certified entomologist (A.C.E.) with a public health entomology certification and is a technical service manager for Rentokil Terminix. Thome has more than 22 years in pest management and serves as a member of the Urban Pest Management Technical Committee (upmtc.org).



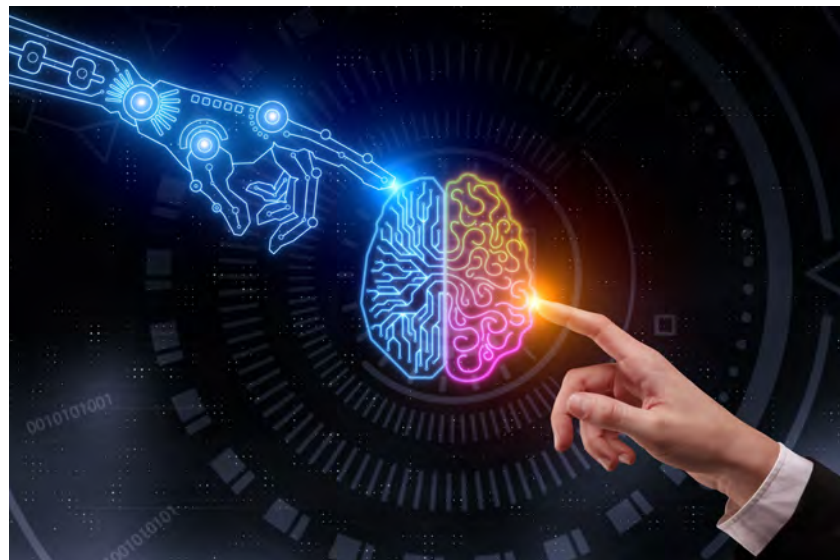
Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for Your Marketing Program

It's hard to go a day without hearing about it in the news: artificial intelligence (AI). The use of AI tools seems to increase more and more every day, with 77% of companies using or exploring the use of AI in their businesses, according to National University. To some, this futuristic concept is daunting. Many question its accuracy, its capabilities and even if it will become advanced enough to reshape the job market. But, without even knowing it, you've likely been using AI for years, whether that be Apple's Siri or chatting with a company's online customer service AI bot. What's for certain is that small businesses should consider the use of AI to bolster their own marketing programs.

AI FOR SMALL BUSINESSES. As AI grows in popularity and technology advances, companies will begin seeing more options for the types of tools that are available for use. Some AI tools provide free versions, while others that provide a more sophisticated or customized service require a fee varying in cost. ChatGPT, an AI program created by OpenAI, is a tool that generates content in response to a human prompt and provides both a free and paid version. As of August 2024, OpenAI reported ChatGPT had more than 200 million weekly active users, according to Reuters.

How can you take advantage of these tools as a small business? For time-strapped business owners and employees, launching and managing a marketing program can be stressful when trying to coordinate social media accounts, media relations efforts and website materials. AI tools can draft social media copy, write pitches to journalists and create article outlines when prompted. There are tools to create AI-generated images and video or that can pull social media mentions.

Sometimes it's difficult coming up with a new angle for your copy month after month, and AI does a great job of jumpstarting the writing process in just a few seconds. If a user prompts it correctly, AI tools can provide a response that is tailored to what you're ask-



ing for. It's important to define your goal, be specific and refine your ask.

AI PROS & CONS. While AI is a useful tool, there are some drawbacks. It's important to test tools out thoroughly before using them for your business.

Pros:

- **Cost Efficiency:** For small businesses who don't have the budget to expand their marketing team, AI can be a resource to help support current employees who have a long list of to-dos.
- **Time Savings:** If you need something written quickly, AI is a great way to get an article outline or Instagram post drafted within minutes.
- **Data Analysis:** AI platforms can analyze data from multiple sources.

Cons:

- **Technology Reliance:** AI tools are great to leverage occasionally, but using them often could impact creative thinking skills. If you rely too much on these tools to develop materials, it could cause difficulty down the line if you need to create without it.
- **Data and Security Concerns:** It's critical

to avoid inputting sensitive data, such as financial or personal information, into AI.

- **Accuracy:** It's important to not lose your business' personal touch when it comes to communicating to customers. AI is far from perfect, so it is best to rework its output in your own voice and review all materials closely before sharing.

CONCLUSION. AI is here to stay, but there will likely be more regulation around it as it becomes more advanced. If your business hasn't started using it, it's best to start small and prepare to learn. Try using it for simple tasks first before you're fully comfortable and read up on the specific tool you are using for best practices. There will likely be bumps in the road as you get started, but with an interest in learning and a general idea of how to use it, AI can be a great tool to help you grow your business. **PCT**

Jim Fredericks is the executive director of the Professional Pest Management Alliance and senior vice president of public affairs for the National Pest Management Association. For more about PPMA, visit www.npmapestworld.org/ppma.



You work hard every day to grow your business. Why? For yourself, for your family, for your colleagues, for your community — you know that your company's success will mean a better, brighter future for all those you care about. The Professional Pest Management Alliance (PPMA) agrees. For the past 25 years, PPMA has been steadfastly dedicated to growing, promoting, protecting and defending the professional pest control industry nationwide through consumer marketing and education programs. Working side-by-side with all kinds of businesses — from family-owned to corporations, suppliers to distributors, PPMA drives market growth today to ensure a strong and vibrant future for everyone tomorrow.

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New Products /// MARCH

Bell Laboratories

www.belllabs.com

Bell Laboratories announced the latest addition to its iQ line-up: the new Mouse iQ smart mouse trap. Powered by Bell Sensing Technologies, Mouse iQ contains Bluetooth technology, which means PMPs can use their smart device to check traps up to 100 feet away. Mouse iQ has a small footprint so technicians can target mice where they travel (heat registers, drop ceilings, rafters, etc.). With Mouse iQ, pest management professionals can provide more efficient service, giving technicians extra time to perform better pest control and ultimately grow their business, the company said.



Automatic Trap Company

www.automatictrap.com

The TerraTrap California Ground Squirrel Kit is a self-resetting humane-kill trap designed exclusively for the California ground squirrel. The trap looks like a rock, but inside is a Goodnature A18 self-resetting trap.



Ground squirrels are more likely to approach a trap that mimics the natural environment they are used to, said Automatic Trap Company. The design encourages tunneling into the trap. The system kills instantly, and the dead squirrel is released and scavenged by birds or other animals. Once scavengers in the area are acclimatized to checking the trap, it can produce a kill each day, as the scavengers will clear out the trap, the manufacturer said.

The system uses a CO₂-powered self-resetting trap that kills up to 18 times before needing a new cartridge. The lure can be anything that squirrels accept; in-shell peanuts work well, said the company.

GPS Sprayers

www.pa2duster.com

The PA2 Duster is a CO₂-powered wasp treatment solution. Engineered and built in the UK, it allows the user to treat wasp, yellowjacket and hornet nests with a reach of more than 20 feet. The product harnesses the power of CO₂ gas to fire insecticide dust into the treatment area. The design prohibits blockages and wastage, said GPS Sprayers, resulting in more nests treated in less time. The product comes with a compact carry case and lightweight extension poles. GPS Sprayers ships internationally.



OcuTrap

www.ocutrap.com

OcuTrap is a wildlife control solution designed to humanely manage nuisance animals. Its online dashboard provides control and monitoring from any device, while cellular connectivity allows access from anywhere.



The traps offer long battery life, allowing for extended field use with minimal maintenance, said OcuTrap. The remote door control enables users to open and close traps from anywhere. The image recognition system identifies captured animals for informed decision-making. **PCT**

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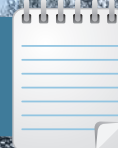
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Mounds created by yellow meadow ants, Hertfordshire, UK.



How Termites, Ants and Others are Earth's Architects

A new study led by Gemma Harvey, professor, Queen Mary University of London, revealed how hundreds of species shape the landscapes humans depend on, from vast termite mounds visible from space to hippos carving drainage systems and beavers creating entire wetlands.

Published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*, this global synthesis identified 603 species, genera or families that influence Earth's surface processes. From tiny ants shifting soil to salmon reshaping riverbeds, the study highlights the diversity and scale of animal impacts across all freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems.

By estimating the collective energy of these natural engineers, the research shows that their geomorphic contributions rival those of hundreds of thousands of major floods. Key findings included:

Unexpected Diversity. Beyond examples like beavers and salmon, the study identifies hundreds of species — including insects, mam-

mals, fish, birds and reptiles — that shape landscapes in different ways.

Freshwater Ecosystems in Focus. Despite covering just 2.4% of the planet's surface, freshwater habitats host over one-third of these species.

Large Energy Output. Animals collectively contribute at least 76,000 gigajoules of energy annually to shape the Earth's surface — a figure comparable to hundreds of thousands of extreme floods. This estimate is likely conservative, as significant knowledge gaps exist, particularly in tropical and subtropical regions where biodiversity is highest but research is limited.

TERMITES, FOR EXAMPLE. Termites build vast networks of mounds in Brazil, some covering thousands of square kilometers, while salmon spawning can shift as much sediment as annual flooding. Even ants, through their tiny but countless actions, alter soil structure and drainage.

Harvey said the research shows that the role of animals in shaping Earth's landscapes is much more significant than previously recognized. "From beavers creating wetlands to ants building mounds of soil, these diverse natural processes are crucial, yet we risk losing them as biodiversity declines," she said.

LOOKING AHEAD. Nearly 30% of the identified species are rare, endemic or threatened, meaning vital geomorphic processes could cease before their full significance is understood. This loss could have profound consequences for ecosystems and the landscapes they support, according to the study.

This research provides new insights for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration. It suggests that rewilding and species reintroduction projects, like the reintroduction of beavers to restore wetlands, show how harnessing these natural processes could help combat environmental challenges like erosion and flooding. — *Source: EurekaAlert PCT*



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At Vesperis, we're proud to distribute **MGK**, a leader in innovative pest control solutions. Our knowledgeable sales and service team is here to support you every step of the way—providing the expertise and products you need to succeed in the field. Two MGK products we love for getting the job done:



VENDETTA® 360 COCKROACH GEL BAIT

SKU 884263

- ▶ Dual Modes of Action
- ▶ Durable and Easy to Apply
- ▶ Ideal for Rotational Use



ONSLAUGHT® FASTCAP SPIDER & SCORPION INSECTICIDE

SKUs 803774 (16 oz), 806817 (1 gal), 811292 (30 gal drum)

- ▶ Quick Knockdown and Residual Control
- ▶ Versatile Application
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- Pressure relief valve: no chemical spraying across top of tank!
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- Stainless steel pump barrel
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- O-ring piston for smoother action and reduced friction
- Neoprene strainer with greater surface area (more durable and easier to clean)
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