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2023 State of the **RODENT** CONTROL MARKET

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BELL PROVIDES **REAL-WORLD SOLUTIONS** TO PMPs' EVERYDAY PROBLEMS

The last few years have presented the industry with a number of new and unexpected challenges. These challenges have taught us that it is important to have the organizational ability to both adapt and to be nimble.

We expect that our industry will continue to face challenges. It will be crucial to apply your best business acumen to navigate competitive labor markets, growing expenses, financially pressured customers, or an active regulatory environment.

At Bell, our commitment is to provide you with the tools, knowledge, and expertise to meet these dynamics and enable your business to thrive.


Helping You Today AND Tomorrow

The everyday demands of the PMP in the field drive Bell's commitment to being the world leader in rodent control. We work diligently to develop and deliver products that help technicians problem-solve at accounts, offering support along the way. Some examples of these activities include:

- Utilizing the broadest spectrum of active ingredients, we continually formulate, register, and support products to ensure that you always have options.
- Now, more than ever, working collaboratively with national and state organizations to assist in safeguarding and protecting industry rights.
- Providing a large variety of bait forms, such as pellets, meal, and liquid baits, to complement our widely used blox and soft bait formulations.
- Developing a full line of smart rodent sensing devices, which PMPs across the United States and the entire world have been using to save time and effort at their account's facilities.

Partnership with Solutions

Although no one can be quite certain what the future holds, to ensure success, it is critical to be surrounded by partners who have a thorough understanding of your business and can provide access to the best resources available. Whether through embracing new technology, navigating changing regulatory environments, or reducing labor costs through enhanced efficiency, we are here to help you.

Please get in touch with your Bell technical representatives so that they can go over the full range of solutions available and discuss how these tools can benefit your company. We wish you success in 2024, and we sincerely appreciate your support and business. 



Steve Levy

Steve Levy



President and CEO
Bell Laboratories



THE RAT RACE RAGES ON

If your pest management company is among the 94 percent that offer rodent control services, your service team isn't likely to be bored anytime soon.

Rodent activity continued to climb in 2023, with no signs of slowing down, according to the 2023 PCT State of the Rodent Control Market survey, sponsored by Bell Laboratories. Sixty percent of PMPs reported increases in rodent infestations over the past year, with another 38 percent saying infestations held steady.

Across the country, mice and rats were far and away the most commonly encountered rodent species, collectively representing 96 percent of all rodent service calls. House mice represented 44 percent of calls and other mice 4 percent, while roof rats represented 31 percent, Norway rats 15 percent and pack rats 2 percent.

Rats and mice are truly on a tear in the Northeast, where 70 percent of PMPs reported increasing numbers.

"We started seeing an uptick in rodents 10 or 12 years ago," said Ted Brayton of Griggs & Browne, which services accounts in southeastern Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. "We had a mild winter that year, and it was the first time calls kept coming right through the winter. Since then, we've been getting rodent calls year-round."


Other notable changes Brayton has witnessed since starting out in the business three decades ago are that rats, which had historically been an inner-city issue for his market, spread to the suburbs five or six years ago, and that calls for mice started outnumbering calls for ants four years ago. "That has been the case for three of the past four years," he said.

Rodent momentum is strong in the West as well: 65 percent of PMPs there reported rising rodent infestations. Greg Bausch said rodent calls (primarily for roof rats and house mice) are up 45 percent year-over-year at American City Pest & Termite in Gardena, Calif.

"I attribute this to a lot of different factors, including the really wet winter we had and the passage of AB 1788 by the California legislature, which pretty much eliminated the use of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) here in the Los Angeles market."

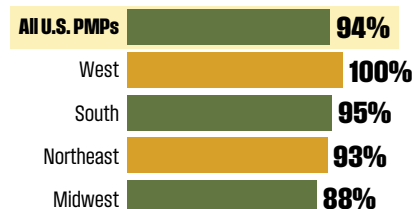
In the South, Shaun Graves of Havard Pest Control (Hattiesburg, Miss.) said that pressure is holding steady in his market.

"Rodents are just part of our everyday life. Mostly we see field mice and house mice on the residential side, with an occasional Norway or roof rat infestation. We also encounter a lot of rodent pressure in commercial locations that are situated near woodlines or in fields," he said, adding that those accounts can be as diverse as grain storage buildings, car dealerships and gas stations.

Though rodents continue to drive more business in fall and winter nationwide, as reported by a combined 59 percent of PMPs, 28 percent said their markets experience no seasonal difference. The Midwest is an exception, experiencing much more rodent business in fall and winter (a combined 78 percent), with only 14 percent indicating no seasonal difference. 

PMPs SAY YES TO RODENT CONTROL

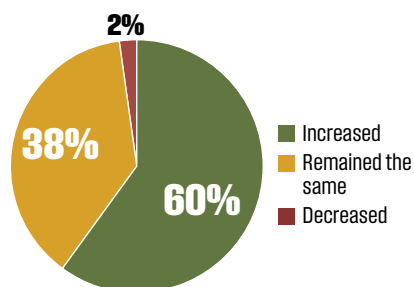
Respondents who said yes, their company location offers rodent control services:



Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 243

INFESTATION LEVELS ON THE RISE

Over the past year, have the number of rodent infestations in your location's market area increased, decreased or remained the same?



Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 229

BUSY SEASONS

	All U.S. PMPs	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Fall	31%	30%	59%	27%	22%
Winter	28%	22%	19%	33%	27%
Summer	10%	11%	5%	9%	16%
Spring	3%	0%	3%	6%	2%
No seasonal difference	28%	38%	14%	26%	33%

Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 229

8.6%

AVERAGE TYPICAL
CALLBACK RATE FOR
RODENT CONTROL
JOBS IN THE U.S.



BUILDING A BETTER TREATMENT PROTOCOL

Baits, traps and exclusion are essential tools for rodent control. How PMPs apply these and other control measures varies based on the type of rodent, level of infestation, customer preferences, technician preferences and other considerations. But no matter how you go about tackling the issue at hand, every rodent job begins the same way: with a thorough interior and exterior inspection.

“When you inspect a site, whether it’s commercial or residential, you have to look not only at structural issues but also the surrounding environment,” said Todd Barber, Barber’s Best Termite and Pest, Tallahassee, Fla.

“In southeast Florida, for example, the land can be swampy, so we look at the entire site around the property. If it’s in

a residential neighborhood, we’re looking for a park, a body of water, drainage canals or a woodline close to the property. Any of those conditions can contribute to the overall rodent population in the area. Conducting that thorough site inspection in addition to your structural inspection helps you determine what game plan, what course of action, to use for rodent control,” he said.


Like many PMPs, Barber has found that structural modifications, exclusion and monitoring can go a long way in helping with long-term rodent control. For shorter-term rodent management, he uses everything from mechanical and glue traps to liquid, solid and fine-crushed meal baits, depending on the scenario.

“Rats get trap- and bait-shy, so product

rotation is critical,” he said.

Judging from the small number of PMPs who reported experiencing rodenticide resistance — just 21 percent — and the broad variety of products they said they use (see accompanying chart), product rotation is a widely accepted practice.

“The key to successful rodent control is recognizing that there’s not a standard one-size-fits-all protocol,” Barber concluded.

“Each situation is different, each structure is different; it comes with its own nuances as to what you’ll need to do to gain control. There are protocols you put into place at a bare minimum, but to really solve the problem and keep the rodents away, you need to determine on a case-by-case basis what’s going to be best for that site.” 



THE POWER OF CLEAN

Early in Andrea Brubaker’s pest management career, she recognized the need for sanitation in controlling rodents and other pests by eliminating conditions that attract and sustain rodent populations. If you have restaurant clients, Brubaker’s experiences in servicing accounts may feel familiar:

“We’d go to a site, do our service, check out the common areas and exterior, and then notate sanitation deficiencies: overflowing trash containers, grease spilling on the ground, wide-open doors,” she said. “We’d write all that in the sanitation section of our service report and talk it over with the client. We’d come back the next week or month and see that the door was still open, the grease was worse and the trash was still overflowing.”

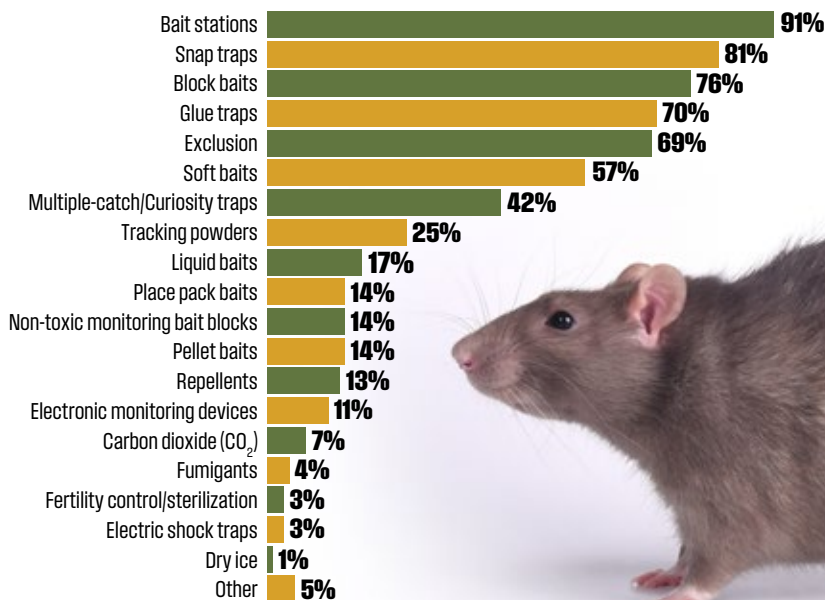
Brubaker decided to take a different tack in the battle against rodent infestations. She and her husband established District Enviro Services, a hot water pressure-washing and steam-cleaning company serving commercial facilities in the Washington, D.C., Metro region.

“Every property with trash needs to clean its exterior – the containers, the areas where the containers are placed, and the surrounding areas. You need to remove the food odors and break up the pheromone trails that attract rodents,” she explained.

“Whether you are able to engage the client in cleaning properly or hire a professional company to do it, sanitation is a critical element of any rodent management program.”

LOTS OF CONTROL OPTIONS

Which types of products/services does your location use to control rodents?



Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 229; Respondents could select multiple answers

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The 2023 PCT State of the Rodent Control Market survey was sponsored by Bell Laboratories and compiled by Readex Research, a privately held research firm in Stillwater, Minn. A sample of 4,349 pest control company owners, operators, technical directors and managers was systematically selected from the PCT database. Data was collected from 243 respondents – a 6 percent response rate – via online survey from Aug. 9-23, 2023. Respondents who did not offer rodent control services were eliminated. The margin of error for percentages based on the remaining 229 respondents is 6.4 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. Charts may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

RODENTICIDE USAGE AND CONCERNS

Here’s what your peers said about their use of rodenticides:

66%

of PMPs are concerned about impending EPA label changes for rodenticides.

36%

have either modified or are planning to modify their rodent management program due to these upcoming changes.

16%

are less dependent on rodenticides than five years ago; 22 percent are more dependent; 55 percent are holding steady with rodenticide use.

33%

have increased their use of non-toxic rodent control products/services in the past 12 months.

Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 229

PACKAGING YOUR PROGRAM FOR PROFITABILITY

As the demand for rodent services continues to rise, it's important to evaluate your business model to ensure you're providing these services as profitably as possible. How that plays out from one company to the next can be very different, depending on the type of accounts and infestations encountered.

For example, Logan Bourque's team at Beyond Pest Services in New Bedford, Mass., does a *lot* of rodent control work, with a solid 40 percent of overall revenues attributable to these services. The company's primarily commercial clients typically come to Beyond Pest Services when their current program isn't getting the job done. Almost without exception, Bourque finds a lack of appropriate exclusion. That's why he automatically includes exclusion services in his contracts.

"When I take over a rodent account, I review their current IPM plan and tell the customer frankly, 'Look, you're having

a problem because of XYZ. Here's how they're getting in, and here's what we need to do,'" Bourque said. "I provide them with an all-inclusive price, making sure they understand how important the exclusion is. I know in my heart of hearts that's going to solve the problem best, so we get that work done, then deploy interior trapping or exterior baiting, depending on the pressure."

To Bundle or Not to Bundle? Another factor that weighs into profitability is how rodent services are packaged: as part of, or separate from, recurring service programs.

Most PMPs (61 percent) reported they were flexible, including rodent in some of their general pest service contracts but marketing it as a standalone service in others. How they make that determination differs.


For example, Greg Bausch, American City Pest & Termite, considers the type of service. "If a customer is on a recurring service, we include interior rodent trap-

ping, but exterior baiting programs are an add-on service," he explained.

Bourque, on the other hand, considers the type of client. "Commercial accounts don't get an option. They need to have rodents, roaches, flies and other pests controlled, so they automatically get the full program. Residentially, we'll sometimes do a rodent package without general pest," he said.

Shaun Graves, Havard Pest, does bundle rodent services as part of broader pest programs, but advises caution. "If rodent control is bundled into a program and then a big infestation develops, you may have to spend additional time at no additional cost. We train our technicians to do good inspections up front. Then we can anticipate the level of service that will be required and build that into the contract."

The time-intensive nature of rodent work is something that should always be taken into account, Ted Brayton, Griggs & Browne, added. "The huge influx of rodent calls we've had over the past several years puts more pressure on our technicians and our pricing.

"Where an ant or a bee call might require a single visit, a mouse call is likely three or four, and each visit is much more time-consuming. You can raise the price somewhat to cover the additional labor and material costs, but at some point, that price may become prohibitive to the homeowner," Brayton explained. 

CASHING IN ON THE BUSINESS POTENTIAL

As evidence of a multi-year trend whose momentum seems to have no bounds, 59 percent of PMPs nationwide and 73 percent in the Northeast said that rodent work is more significant to their businesses this year than it was five years ago (a mere 1 percent said it is less significant).

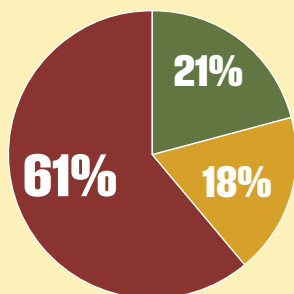
The majority expect to see this growth reflected in 2023 revenues: Overall, 61 percent (70 percent in the Northeast) look for a year-over-year increase in the percentage of revenue attributable to rodent work. Only 3 percent expect to see a decline in that percentage.





STAND-ALONE OR INCLUDED?

Is rodent control a stand-alone paid service or included as part of your recurring service program?

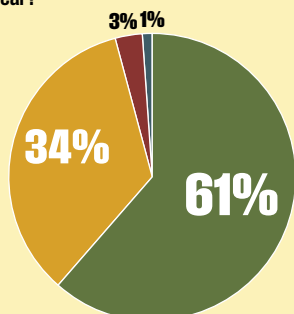


- Part of recurring service program
- As a standalone service
- Both of the above

Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 229

MORE \$ IN 2023

Compared with last year, how do you expect the percentage of revenue generated from your location's rodent control services to change this year?

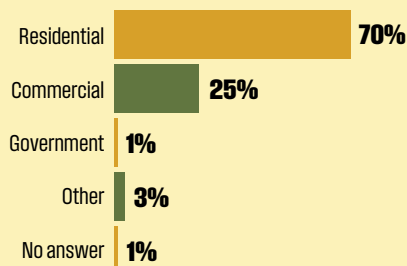


- Increase
- Stay the same
- Decrease
- No answer

Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 229

WHO BUYS RODENT CONTROL?

What rodent control market generates the most income for your location?



Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 229

RODENT SERVICES COMMAND A HIGHER PRICE

The median or typical price that pest management companies were charging in 2023 for a residential rodent control job was \$247, with Midwestern companies on the low side (\$175) and Western companies on the high side (\$350). This represents a nearly 18 percent increase over 2022, when the median price was \$210.



The median is the value that lies at the middle of a distribution, so 50 percent of values are above it and 50 percent are below. It represents the "typical" response and is not influenced by extreme values compared to a mean (or average).

OF GREATER IMPORTANCE

In the past five years, has rodent control become a more or less significant portion of your location's business?

	All U.S. PMPs	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
More significant	59%	73%	54%	55%	59%
Same	34%	22%	38%	38%	29%
Less significant	1%	0%	3%	0%	2%
Can't compare; not involved 5 years ago	7%	5%	5%	7%	10%

Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 229

CHA-CHING!

What percentage of your location's overall service revenue in the last calendar year was generated by rodent control services?

	All U.S. PMPs	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
50% or more	12%	27%	6%	8%	12%
30-49%	27%	43%	27%	22%	24%
10-29%	40%	22%	49%	43%	44%
Less than 10%	19%	8%	17%	26%	20%

Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 229

ONE KEY, ENDLESS SOLUTIONS



- High quality and durable rodent stations
- Product solutions for trapping and baiting
- We've got you covered for every type of account



FROM THE BRAND YOU TRUST

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Product **EVO EDGE**

Product **EVO TUNNEL**

Product **EVO LANDSCAPE
WEIGHTED**



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