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THE 2024 STATE OF THE **TICK CONTROL MARKET**

INSIDE:

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- » EXCLUSIVE RESEARCH!

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WHO'S AFRAID OF THE BIG BAD TICK?



As pests go, ticks get more than their share of press, particularly in spring and summer. It's not good publicity, of course. No one talks about what a delicious, nutritious meal ticks make for chickens, turkeys, ducks, songbirds, frogs, lizards, spiders and other beneficial animals, and how serving as that vital link in the food chain makes them valuable to a variety of ecosystems. Instead, the focus is on protecting ourselves and our pets from Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever and other diseases ticks may carry.

There's good reason for concern: The number of tick-borne diseases is rising each year, as milder winters allow more ticks to survive the cold season, and as these pests continually migrate to new geographic areas. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

CUSTOMERS ARE TUNED IN TO THE RISKS

Do your customers consider ticks a threat?



	Yes	No	Don't Know	No Answer
to public health	65%	18%	17%	0%
to pets	82%	7%	10%	1%

Source: Readex Research: Number of respondents: 168

reports that nearly a half-million Americans are diagnosed and treated annually for Lyme disease alone each year, and that number is steadily climbing. People are understandably frightened for the health of their families and pets. That fear motivates them to call for pest management services.

Phones start ringing with calls for tick services at the first hint of spring, and they continue through fall and sometimes beyond. The season is getting longer and the tick pressure more intense in the Midwest, reported Doug Foster,

entomologist and owner of Burt's Termite & Pest Control in Columbus, Ind.

"We normally start our program in March or April, depending on the weather, but this year we had some unseasonably warm weather in February, and we started getting some calls then," he said. "When I talked with the Indiana Department of Health, they said that they had started seeing tick activity in February, too. It cooled off a little in March, but by April, we were going full speed ahead with tick services. Our monthly program usually runs through

September or October.”

Foster added that he had talked with a PMP in Minnesota recently who said their season is becoming longer as well. “It’s interesting to see how tick pressure is increasing. The past couple years we’ve been hearing about this more and more, because the winters are so much easier — lighter.”

Indeed, pest management insiders can look at the increasing pressure as *interesting*, because they know that there are plenty of control measures in their arsenals for managing ticks.

But to outsiders, growing tick populations can be downright *scary*, and PMPs need to be equipped to assuage their fears.

COLLABORATION. With health concerns top of mind for consumers, it makes sense for PMPs to be knowledgeable about potential tick-borne diseases, prepared to answer questions and offer proactive educational support. Foster recommends building a solid working relationship with not only your local, but also state, health department. His relationship with the Indiana Department of Health, for example, keeps him up to date on new species, population trends and customer education.

“We get people bringing ticks into the office all the time, wanting to know what they are and if they carry Lyme or other diseases. We consult with the Indiana Department of Health when we need help with that. They’re on the front line just like us, monitoring the different tick species and tracking their activity,” he said. “In fact, that’s where I learned about the Asian longhorned tick, a fairly new invasive species here in the Midwest. They explained that it’s becoming commonplace for a farmer to find several hundred of these ticks on a cow or horse, and they asked us to let them know if we run into any of them, to help them track their numbers and locations.”

Like many other state health departments, the Indiana Department of Health provides customer-facing edu-



UPDATE ON TICK-BORNE DISEASES

Pest management professionals and consumers alike know that, though tiny, ticks can pack a powerful punch. The diseases they carry can be painful, chronic and even life-threatening to humans as well as pets. That’s why conscientious treatment of ticks is so important. This quick summary of the most common diseases ticks transmit in the U.S. will help keep you up to date.

Much of the following information was published in the CDC’s “Tickborne Diseases of the United States” reference manual in 2022. We’ve added alpha-gal syndrome (AGS), aka the red meat allergy, to their list. The lone star tick is primarily responsible for this allergic condition, which can cause severe, sometimes fatal, allergic reactions when people ingest alpha-gal, a sugar found in red meats, milk products, gelatin and other mammal-related products.

- **Lone star tick:** ehrlichiosis, tularemia, Heartland virus, Bourbon virus, Southern tick-associated rash illness (STARI), AGS
- **Blacklegged tick:** Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, relapsing fever, ehrlichiosis, babesiosis, Powassan virus disease
- **American dog tick:** tularemia, Rocky Mountain spotted fever
- **Brown dog tick:** Rocky Mountain spotted fever
- **Groundhog tick:** Powassan virus disease
- **Gulf Coast tick:** spotted fever
- **Rocky Mountain wood tick:** Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Colorado tick fever, tularemia
- **Soft tick:** tick-borne relapsing fever (TBRF)
- **Western blacklegged tick:** anaplasmosis, Lyme disease, relapsing fever

cational materials to help PMPs keep their clientele informed. “They give us cards, about the size of a credit card, sharing images of the species to watch for in Indiana, plus instructions for protecting yourself from tick bites and removing ticks when they attach,” Foster explained. “We pass these out like Halloween candy! People love them because, while they may know a lot about mosquitoes, cockroaches and ants, they don’t know much about ticks, and ticks frighten them. These cards offer them reassurance. They also give us instant credibility

when customers see we’re working with the Department of Health.”

CONTINUED GROWTH. Results of the 2024 PCT State of the Tick Control Market report, summarized in the following pages, reflect optimism toward the growing business potential of tick management services. PMPs shared their insights into the relative importance of tick work to their bottom lines and detailed the treatment protocols they’re using to keep populations in check. 🦋



SERVICES TICKING UP

To get an idea of how prevalent tick issues are becoming in the U.S., we need only look at this key takeaway from the 2024 PCT State of the Tick Control Market report: The number of pest management companies offering tick control services has increased 7 percent over 2023, now standing at 80 percent of all companies surveyed.

In the past, people may have thought of ticks as primarily a Northeastern U.S. problem, but those in other areas are discovering that they can infest their neighborhoods, homes and businesses, too. In addition to the Northeast, the upper Midwest and Northwest see a lot of tick pressure; in fact, all 50 states are home to ticks of one species or another. And while ticks tend to be particularly active from spring through fall, they are in some locations a year-round pest, which is why so many veterinarians



now recommend continual preventative treatment for dogs and cats.

What all of this means to pest management companies is that the business potential of tick services is growing. More companies are getting into the tick control game because demand is on an upward trajectory.

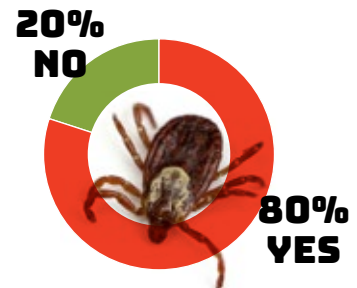
Consider this: Nearly every pest management company (98 percent) that provides tick control services told PCT in our recent survey that they expect their tick services to maintain (54 percent) or

exceed (44 percent) the percentage of revenue they now represent over the next year. About a third of respondents (32 percent) said tick services have become more significant to their businesses over the past five years.

WHAT PMPs ARE SEEING. As might be expected, the residential mar-

TICK, TICK?

Do you offer tick control services?




Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 209

ket accounts for the highest tick revenue for 92 percent of PMPs. Understanding why homes are attracting ticks is the first step in getting them under control. For example, Angie English, service manager, Vinx Pest Control, Virginia Beach, Va., attributes heavy tick pressure in her market to wildlife displacement. That calls for treatment measures that address not only the primary pest but also its hosts.

“About 20 percent of our calls last spring and summer involved ticks,” English explained. “In addition to the plentiful water and overgrowth here, we have a lot of construction going on that is pushing wildlife out of its habitats. As neighborhoods and businesses are being built, these animals will come right into people’s yards and make themselves at home. I expect many more calls from customers reporting not just ticks but rodents and other unwanted wildlife.”

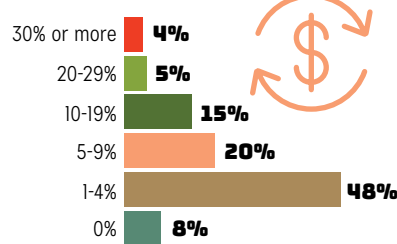
In other areas, weather is the impetus behind burgeoning populations. Entomologist Michael Russell, who co-owns LifeSpace Pest Solutions, said of the Cape Cod region, “We’ve had no substantial winter — very few days of subfreezing weather — in two years, so there is no natural check on populations. Ticks continue to proliferate here, and customers are calling us to spray much earlier than in years past.”

COMMERCIAL ACCOUNTS. In Houston, Brad Hudson, area district manager of Environmental Coalition and Presto-X Pest Control, said his company, which overall services a 70:30 ratio of commercial to residential, encounters ticks in commercial settings as well as residential.

“The landscaping around office buildings can serve as harborage for ticks, and some of the warehouses we service are adjacent to fields where drought-tolerant grasses and weeds can grow very tall. That attracts rodent activity which, in turn, attracts ticks.” 

OVER ALL

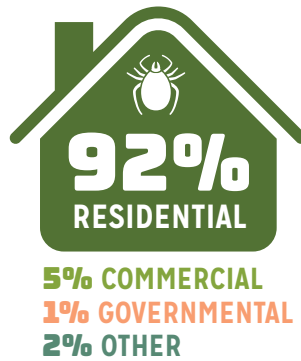
What percentage of your location’s overall revenue was derived from tick control services in 2023?



Source: Readex Research. Number of respondents: 168

HOMEBODIES

What market represents the largest percentage of your tick control service revenue?

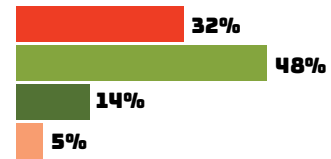


Source: Readex Research. Number of respondents: 168



SIGNIFICANT SOURCE

In the past five years, have tick control services become a more or less significant portion of your location’s business?

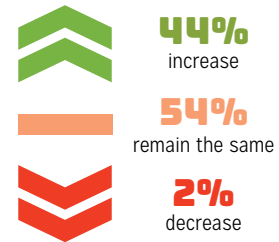


- more significant
- no change
- less significant
- not involved 5 years ago

Source: Readex Research. Number of respondents: 168


GOING UP!

Compared to 2023, how do you expect the percentage of revenue generated by your location’s tick control services to change in 2024?



Source: Readex Research. Number of respondents: 168





THE FRONT LINES

OF RESIDENTIAL TICK CONTROL



HOW TO PROTECT RESIDENTIAL CLIENTS FROM RISING TICK POPULATIONS

*Pest control professionals are on the front lines of protecting people, animals, and indoor and outdoor spaces from harmful pests. One of the biggest challenges today is the increasing tick population, which brings with it a higher risk of tick-borne diseases like Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, and Babesiosis. **According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC)** and their in-depth tick studies, cases of these diseases have more than doubled in the United States over the past two decades. In our recent State of the Tick survey, respondents reported that over 92% of tick control revenue came from residential accounts. It's crucial to understand why tick populations are growing and how to help residential clients protect their homes.*

UNDERSTANDING THE RISE IN TICK POPULATIONS

Tick populations are expanding due to a combination of climate change, urbanization, and wildlife conservation efforts. Warmer winters and wetter springs create ideal conditions for ticks to reproduce and thrive, leading to longer tick seasons. Urbanization displaces tick carrying hosts from their natural habitats, driving them into residential areas, parks, and yards. Additionally, growing populations of deer and other wildlife provide more hosts for ticks, facilitating their spread.

Pest control professionals need to address these factors when planning tick control strategies for residential clients. Here's how you ensure effective protection against ticks.

COMPREHENSIVE INSPECTION AND RISK

ASSESSMENT Begin by conducting a thorough inspection of your client's property. Look for common tick habitats such as tall grass, dense shrubs, leaf litter, and wooded edges. Identify areas where ticks might hide and assess the level of risk. Pay special attention to areas where pets or children play, as these are prime locations for tick encounters.

IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE TICK CONTROL

MEASURES After assessing the property, develop a tailored tick control plan that addresses the specific needs of your client. Consider the following strategies:



Perimeter Treatments: Apply a barrier treatment around the edges of the property to create a protective zone. This helps to keep ticks from migrating from wooded areas into residential spaces.



Lawn and Vegetation Management: Advise your clients on proper lawn care, including regular mowing, removing leaf litter, and trimming shrubs to reduce tick habitats. Encourage them to create a clear buffer zone between wooded areas and their yard.



Tick-Targeted Insecticides: Use tick-specific insecticides, such as Essentria® Mosquito & Tick Concentrate, an essential oil based, FIFRA 25b insecticide specifically formulated for the control of mosquitoes and ticks, or Lambda 9.7 CS, to treat lawns and other high-risk areas. These products from Zoëcon Professional Products offer targeted protection against ticks and can be integrated into regular maintenance programs. Visit www.zoëcon.com/insect/ticks to learn more about proper identification and treatment of ticks with more control solutions.



Pet Protection: Recommend tick control products for pets, like Zoëcon's Petcor® 2 Flea & Tick Spray, which contains (S)-methoprene, an insect growth regulator that prevents flea larvae from maturing into breeding adults. Pets can bring ticks indoors, so it's important to control ticks on pets as part of an overall strategy.

EDUCATING YOUR CLIENTS

A key aspect of your role is educating your clients about tick prevention and control. Provide them with information on the risks of ticks and the importance of regular checks for both people and pets. Encourage them to inspect themselves and their pets after spending time outdoors, especially in wooded or grassy areas.

Additionally, explain the signs of tick-borne diseases and what to do if they suspect a tick bite. Encourage them to seek medical advice if they experience symptoms such as fever, fatigue, or joint pain.

PARTNERING WITH CLIENTS FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS

Establish a strong relationship with your clients to ensure ongoing success in tick control. Offer regular follow-up visits to monitor tick populations and adjust your treatment plan as needed. Encourage your clients to contact you with any concerns or questions about tick prevention.

The range of tick control products offered by Zoëcon Professional Products can be instrumental in your strategy to combat rising tick populations in residential areas. Whether you're treating lawns with Essentria® Mosquito & Tick Concentrate, Lambda 9.7 CS or helping clients protect their pets with Petcor® 2 Flea & Tick Spray, Zoëcon offers solutions to address your clients' needs. With your expertise and Zoëcon's trusted products, you can keep ticks at bay and ensure a safer environment for your residential clients.



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TACKLING TICKS TOGETHER

While ticks aren't particularly difficult to treat, they do require a multifaceted approach and meticulous attention to detail. Brad Hudson of Presto-X Pest Control shared insights into how his team approaches a tick infestation. "Tick control requires a lot of habitat modification — working with customers to create tick-safe zones and eliminate rodents. Doing things like clearing tall grasses and moving play equipment to sunny areas away from ditches is very important. You need to clearly explain to the customer what you did, why you did it, how it works, and why you really need to team up to take care of these pests."

Doug Foster of Burt's Termite & Pest Control said that sometimes getting customers to be part of that team can be a challenge. "We explain that ticks aren't attracted to normal lawns, so as long as you keep your grass 1-3 inches in height, you're going to be in pretty

good shape. But if you let that grass grow higher, you make your property more appealing to ticks. They crawl to the top of tall grass to quest — to wait for a host to walk by, whether that's a person, a pet or a wild animal. Even with that warning, some people just don't want to go out and mow."

Angie English of Vinx Pest Control added, "Customers do need to understand this is a two-way street. Our product applications will help, but environmental controls are really key to resolving the issue. For treatment to be completely effective, they have to do their part as far as keeping the grass short, keeping weeds cut back and creating little moats around mulch so the water drains. It's a collaborative process."

TREATMENT PROTOCOLS. In terms of product applications, almost all PMPs (92 percent) surveyed said they use residual pesticides. It's also not uncommon to mix an insect growth

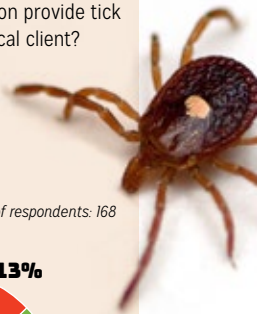
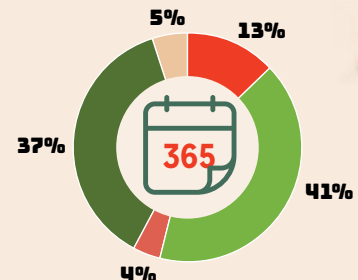
regulator (IGR) with an adulticide — 45 percent said they use IGRs — to wipe out a couple of generations in one fell swoop. This may be particularly

SEASONAL DEMAND

How often does your location provide tick control services to the typical client?

- year-round
- seasonally
- once per year
- as needed
- other

Source: Readex Research: Number of respondents: 168

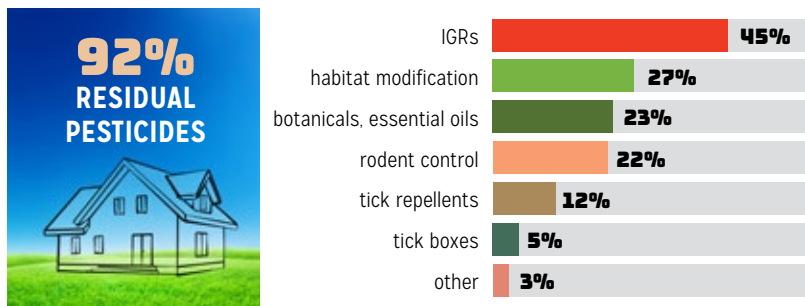


THE AVERAGE CALLBACK RATE FOR TICKS IS JUST **2.7%**, WITH **46%** OF PMPs REPORTING NO CALLBACKS AT ALL.



PRODUCTS AND PROTOCOLS

Which products/approaches does your location use to manage ticks?



Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 168; Respondents could select more than one answer

true when tick services are bundled with flea and/or mosquito services; an IGR mixed with a broad-spectrum pesticide can be quite effective at controlling all three populations.

Habitat modification (used by 27 percent of PMPs), botanicals (23 percent) and rodent control (22 percent) are all commonly used as well, with some PMPs throwing tick repellents (12 percent), tick boxes (5 percent) and other tools (3 percent) into the mix.

“We use a combination of things, primarily bifenthrin granules,” said Foster. “Bifenthrin is one of the best products we’ve found to kill ticks. You can easily broadcast it into high-grass or high-weed areas, and the granules provide prolonged exposure. That slow release gets down into thick underbrush or foliage that sometimes you can’t penetrate very well with a power sprayer or a mosquito mister. That being said, we also use power sprayers or mosquito misters to deliver a liquid bifenthrin. Sometimes you can reach areas you couldn’t otherwise.”

Nate Heider, national operations director at Spidexx, attributes his team’s tick management success to knowing where and how to use the “combination of tactics” at their disposal. “You have to think about where people will be walking and playing as you choose whether to apply an adulticide or use tick boxes or tubes in certain areas. We encounter a lot of playhouses, for example, and you’re sure not going to spray there. Environmental modifications are important, too. You won’t get very far if there’s a lot of leaf clutter or other harborage for the ticks.”

TREATING WILDLIFE HOSTS.

You won’t get far either if rodents, deer, raccoons or other wildlife are running around looking like a tick buffet. “You need to treat for the ticks and for the rodents, which are the source of the ticks,” said Brad Hudson of Presto-X Pest Control.

Hudson recommends a thorough inspection prior to treatments. “We know

we’re looking for some type of mammal, and if pets aren’t the source, then we inspect for rodent harborages and burrows; look for traces of raccoons or other animals — basically, we try to find signs of the host(s) so we know what we’re dealing with. We combine that very detailed inspection with common sense to come up with the correct action or treatment plan to help that customer resolve their pest issues.”

Depending on the type of host discovered, that treatment plan may include exclusion work to keep the animals out of the house, trapping, habitat modification, repellents, baits or other means. Here’s another instance where customer collaboration is essential, as basic sanitation practices — keeping trash tightly sealed, not leaving pet food out and eliminating standing water — can go a long way in discouraging wildlife traffic.

KEEPING TECHNICIANS SAFE.

Like mosquitoes, ticks are one of the pests that can be a true danger to technicians should they get bitten during or after a treatment. Personal protective equipment (PPE) and education can help keep them safe.

“We don’t want our people exposed to anything that could be potentially dangerous, so we train them to stay out of the infested areas as much as possible while treating (working around the perimeters instead). At the same time, we have them use a repellent on their pants, socks, ankles and shoes,” Foster said. “Checking yourself is important, too. We tell everyone to pull their pants legs up and look closely, since the foot/ankle area is most vulnerable, and then shower and check yourself again at the end of the day.”

Make sure technicians are prepared to remove ticks properly should they need to, Foster added. He equips his team with tweezers (some PMPs prefer tick spoons), as well as education to ensure they remove the entire tick every time.

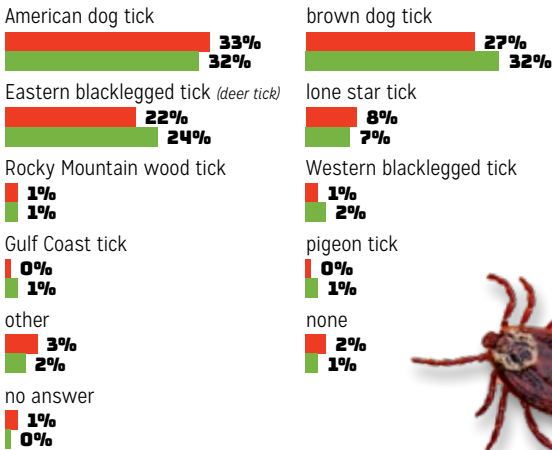
TICK TYPES & MARKETING HYPE



MOST PREVALENT SPECIES

What species of tick is most prevalent in your market area?

2023 / 2024



Source: Readex Research: Number of respondents: 143 (2023), 168 (2024)

TOUTING TICKS

What aspects of your tick control services are featured in your company's marketing efforts?

	2023	2024	Change
certified technicians	45%	39%	⬇️
preventive service	43%	38%	⬇️
health risks	36%	38%	⬆️
excellent control	31%	27%	⬇️
IPM	31%	29%	⬇️
free inspection	29%	32%	⬆️
service guarantee	23%	33%	⬆️
do not market tick services	29%	33%	⬆️

Source: Readex Research: Number of respondents: 143 (2023), 168 (2024); Respondents could select more than one answer

The results of the 2024 State of the Tick Control survey indicate that the most prevalent tick species haven't changed much from last year, aside from a 5 percent jump in PMPs saying the brown dog tick is the top species they see. Brown dog ticks and American dog ticks are now tied for the No. 1 spot in terms of prevalence, at 32 percent. At No. 2 is the Eastern blacklegged, or deer, tick, with 24 percent of respondents naming it the top tick in their markets.

Nate Heider of Spidexx reported that Minnesota is seeing increasing numbers of both American dog and deer ticks. "We've watched them increase year after year and, unfortunately, sometimes it's in places where we have limited treatment options. That's because ticks like to hang out in the same places as rusty patched bumblebees, which are protected under the Endangered Species Act. We can use tubes and boxes in those areas, but not adulticides."

In addition to looking at the most prevalent species, it's interesting to explore tick species that are moving into new territory. Notably, the lone star tick, once considered a South/South Central pest is continuing a migration that has to date taken it as far north as Maine.

"Lone star ticks are now among the species we see in Cape Cod; they weren't here six years ago," said Michael Russell of LifeSpace Pest Solutions. "It's concerning because they carry diseases such as alpha-gal syndrome (AGS), which causes allergies to red meat."

Lone star ticks are present in Virginia Beach, too, reported Angie English of Vinx Pest Control. "I've been in pest management for 24 years, so I've watched the different progressions. You never used to hear about lone star ticks, but over the past three or four years, they've been migrating farther north and are become a concern to many more areas."

FEAR-BASED MARKETING? Perhaps surprisingly, PMPs' focus on the health risks associated with ticks isn't increasing much year-over-year. While those risks are among the top three responses to the question "What aspects of your tick control services are featured in your company's marketing efforts?" (with certified technicians, at 39 percent, and preventive service, at 38 percent), health risks' 38 percent represents just a slight (2 percent) bump over last year. Many PMPs believe that the media has scared people enough about tick-borne diseases.

"Newspapers and other media outlets have fanned the flames of fear about Lyme disease, anaplasmosis and, related to mosquitoes, West Nile virus," said Russell. "When they call us for service, we see that as an opportunity to put their minds at ease. We educate them about how we can help them protect themselves, their pets and their homes. That gives them confidence and peace of mind." 🕷️

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The PCT 2024 State of the Tick Control Market survey was sponsored by Central Life Sciences/Zoëcon and compiled by Readex Research, a privately held research firm in Stillwater, Minn. A sample of 8,443 pest control company owners, operators, executives, technical directors, general managers and managers was systematically selected from the PCT database. Data was collected from 209 respondents – a 2 percent response rate – via online survey from March 13-27. The margin of error for percentages is +/- 6.7 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. Charts may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

DID YOU KNOW?

Ticks are not the only concern for your dog. Mosquito bites can transmit heartworm.



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