Brainstorm: Pest Control

The Brainstorm features industry experts sharing their perspectives on issues critical to the overall marketplace. In this edition, we ask: *What is the biggest contributor to pest control issues in manufacturing facilities, and what can processors do to avoid such problems?*

Ron Harrison, Ph.D., Director of Technical Services, Orkin LLC

Because pests are attracted to the food, water and shelter readily available in your building, pest control can be a challenge. While many factors can contribute to a pest control issue, the biggest contributor is generally a lack of consistency with the facility's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. An IPM approach stresses preventive measures over remediation and reduces chemical usage by limiting conditions conducive to pest infestations. By working closely with your pest management professional and your entire staff, it's essential that you tackle all aspects of IPM, including facility maintenance, sanitation and staff training, to prevent and reduce pest problems year-round.

Train your staff. Develop a checklist for your facility maintenance staff and assign roles for each task. Highlight key areas, such as pest "hot spots," and create a schedule for monitoring, sanitation and maintenance. Regularly evaluate the

checklist with your pest management professional.

Eliminate entry points. Cockroaches can squeeze through a crack as small as 1/16 of an inch and mice through a hole the size of a dime. Inspect your facility's exterior for gaps and crevices. Use weather-resistant sealant to seal any exposed cracks. Install weather stripping around all windows and doors.

Update your exterior landscaping. Keep trees, bushes and ground foliage trimmed at least two feet from exterior walls to discourage pest hiding spots. Pressure wash sidewalks and clean dumpsters to prevent grime and reduce odors.

Establish a partnership. A successful IPM program hinges on the partnership between you, your staff and your pest management professional. Enlist a partner that will work harmoniously with your internal team and provide a second set of eyes for your facility.

Chrissy Hansen, Media Coordinator, Bird-X

Birds are known to carry all kinds of infectious diseases, including salmonella. When it comes to food manufacturing, plant managers are hyper-aware of the importance of keeping pest bugs and rodents away, taking extreme caution to prevent these infestations. But pest birds seem to be the forgotten threat, while they are quite possibly the most dangerous pests of all. It seems that overlooking the birds could be one of the biggest mistakes we are making in the food manufacturing industry today.

Fortunately, there are many simple solutions that can be implemented to keep pest birds away from your facility. Bird-X offers a variety of products that are affordable, maintenance-free, humane, eco-friendly and extremely effective.

One method is barrier bird control — it works anywhere it is installed. Pigeons love to roost on surfaces that are easily available, like rooftops, ledges and wires. Bird spikes take away that option immediately. For larger areas, you can install exclusion netting to keep birds out.

A lower-profile option is roost-inhibiting gel. It makes any surface sticky and uncomfortable for birds, but is more discreet than spikes or netting.

Another highly-cost effective option for larger areas is sound/ultrasound devices. Sonic bird protection uses predator and distress calls to condition birds to avoid an area. For applications where silence is preferred, ultrasonic units emit high-frequency sounds that repel birds, but are inaudible to humans.

All of these solutions are safe, humane, non-toxic and environmentally friendly. And the cost would be negligible compared to the resources that would be preserved — finances, inventory, reputation and most

importantly, the health and safety of the American public.

Dr. James Sargent, Director of Technical Support & Regulatory Compliance, Copesan

Actively monitoring all entry points into a food manufacturing facility is the most critical element in pest control for food processors. Infestations indoors originate

outside; eliminating access prevents almost all potential problems.

Pests enter via two main access points — structural openings and delivery areas. Simple fixes such as sealing and screening roof and wall vents; openings around pipes and utilities; and wall cracks keep your structure secure. A thorough delivery inspection program excludes pests such as insects, spiders, mites and mice which may be hiding in pallets. And, make sure your supplier specifications protect you by allowing the right to refuse delivery of infested products. You may also consider inspecting a supplier's facility to proactively assess their pest prevention program.

Most importantly, build a relationship with your pest management technician. Discussing their concerns or observations and specific recommendations for your facility creates the most effective long-term pest management program.

Mary Blaser, Director of Marketing and Business Development, Frommelt Products Corp.

When looking to control pests in food processing facilities, identify their easiest points of entry, and seal those off first. Some of the largest and most gaping opportunities for pests to enter — and easiest to close off — are at the loading dock.

Vertical gaps at the sides of the trailer. Swing-open style trailer doors have hinge gaps that, if left unsealed, amount to a 2.5-square-foot hole in the wall. Not only are these enormous energy-loss gaps, they provide a major opportunity for dust and pests to fly right in. The solution? Tight-sealing foam compression dock seals, or dock shelters with hinge-gap sealing hooks on the shelter curtains.

Gaps where trailer, dock leveler, bumper and enclosure all meet. More open areas for unwelcome visitors to make their way into your plant. The solution? Small gap-sealing products with such descriptive names as "leveler lip corner seals," "bumper seals," "filler pads" and the like. Individual components that are fitted in addition to dock seals and shelters to seal out daylight, which means sealing out pests.

Gaps at the top of a trailer. The header of a dock seal or shelter often provides an incomplete seal on the wide variety of trailers being serviced. The solution? A weighted, gravity-based trailer top seal that compresses against short and tall trailers alike, and travels with the trailer throughout its movement.

Open pits beneath the dock levelers. Dirt and debris can collect and vermin come here to nest. The solution? A simple under-leveler sealing curtain that fits snugly across the front of the pit to help deter pest entry, prevent the accumulation of unwanted “stuff” in the pit, and control energy loss from your facility at the same time.

Marty Morgan, ProFume® Field Sales, Dow AgroSciences

Pests are well tuned for survival to their specific hosts, food sources and proliferation needs, and take advantage of any opportunity that presents itself. Our continuous challenge is to keep one step ahead.

My work in the industry involves using ProFume® gas fumigant in the food processing, milling and allied industries. Over the last 10 years in these industries, there has been considerable turmoil with the phase-out of methyl bromide. However, as we’ve demonstrated ProFume’s effectiveness, the fumigation community has successfully transitioned.

Besides availability of an effective fumigant, pest control takes a committed management process involving three basic, ongoing steps: planning, implementation and control. The planning step reviews ways you may be vulnerable to pests and develops the mechanisms to deal with them. Everything should be looked at in this step: mechanical and chemical controls, inspection procedures, review of vulnerabilities and more. The implementation step is not only putting the plan into practice, but staying committed to it. The control step includes a periodic review process to assess progress; then information gleaned is used to modify the

plan.

The characteristics that I see in facilities with successful pest management programs are:

- Pest control is a focus of upper management.
- The budget is in place to execute the plan.
- Investment is made in education and people on all levels are dedicated to carrying out the pest management plan.
- The role of the pest manager is valued in the organization and includes the necessary authority to implement plans.
- A positive relationship is fostered with pest control/fumigation providers.
- Consultants are used.
- Inspections are valued.

®Trademark of Dow AgroSciences LLC. ProFume is a federally Restricted Use Pesticide

Source URL (retrieved on *09/18/2014 - 5:44am*):
http://www.chem.info/articles/2011/05/brainstorm-pest-control