THE MAKING OF AN ANT SUPER-COLONY
By Sylvia Kenmuir, Page 8

THE TAIL WAGS THE DOG
By Paul J. Bello, Page 10

PEST INDUSTRY CONTRACTS
By Andy McGinty, Page 16
Imidacloprid and Fipronil are truly a pair of aces. Control Solutions has combined these two active ingredients to give you a winning hand. FUSE™ Termiticide/Insecticide is labeled for termite and perimeter pest control applications. Available in 27.5 fl.oz. and 137.5 fl.oz. containers.

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On January 31st, 2014, 157 member companies from Nevada, Arizona and California attended the Nevada Pest Association 2014 Expo, making this the largest expo in Nevada ever. I would like to personally thank Jeffrey Weier BCE from Sprague Pest Control, Stan Cope PhD from Terminix and Sylvia Kenmuir BCE from Target Specialty Products on their outstanding topics and presentations. Six CEU’s were given for Nevada, Five CEU’s for Arizona and 5.5 hours for California.

Our Vendor participation was the largest ever. Thirty-eight vendors made their way to the warmth of Las Vegas. Some came from the brutally cold east coast to brave the 70 degree weather in our fair city.

With 404 attendees, the staff at the Orleans Hotel and Casino did a fantastic job with all the accommodations. Our Meet & Greet on the eve of the expo was well received by all that attended. Our special thanks to Rob Ives from Control Solutions and Art Guzman from Modern Methods for their co-sponsorship of our event.

Special thank you shout out goes to Margie Koehler and BASF for their generosity in inviting non-members of the NPMA to become members of that association. Non-members of the NPMA received a full year membership to the NPMA free of charge on behalf of BASF.

We also had the privilege of the Marine Color Guard who presented the colors at the beginning of our expo and the singing of our National Anthem by The Singing Statesmen Barbershop Choir. There are many veterans in our industry that attended our expo and their past service to our great country was and is greatly appreciated.

Through the generosity of our association members, we were able to donate $1,700.00 to our Outreach Charity, Marines Las Vegas Toys for Tots. This contribution will put many smiles on the faces of well-deserved children in our community.

Continued on page 22
MAINTAINING YOUR RESIDENTIAL ACCOUNTS

The best way for a PMP firm to grow is to maintain your current accounts and build on them for recommendations. One of the best ways to retain your account is to communicate with them. In order to do this, you need to have some information to help you bond.

HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES:
- What was the original reason you signed up the account?
- How many children do they have, age, name?
- What are their hobbies and favorite sport teams?
- When do they go on vacation?
- Do they have hummingbird feeders?
- Do they have a swimming pool?
- Do they have a barbecue?
- What type of work do both spouses do?
- How many large trees are on the property? What type of trees?
- Are they planning to expand the house?

DO NOT TALK politics, religion and negatively about your competitor and your own pest management firm.

HERE ARE SIMPLE WAYS TO MAKE YOU LOOK GOOD:
- Be on time and with a smile.
- Remember to ask if they have any special concerns.
- Explain what you will be doing before you start, and again what you did when finished.
- Wear booties when coming into the house. Put them on as they answer the door to let you in.
- Place safety cones in front and behind your vehicle. Park where you do not block someone who has to leave or who may be coming home.
- Bring the newspaper in on the way in and offer to take the trash out on your exit.
- Wear a clean neat uniform. This means your shirt should be tucked in.

Change in the economy means we have to work SMARTER, not HARDER!

Lloyd Merritt Singel

Our economy has changed and we have to change with it. I am still involved with the Discovery retreats, which are designed to help you make the necessary changes to advance in this economy not just stay afloat or be happy to make payroll.

It is time for YOU to invest in YOU and LEARN what you need to know to establish a PLAN to move forward.

If you stand still, you will be trampled to death.

Call Terry NOW for consulting information and to order Lloyd’s latest book, Bug People to Business People at (760) 751-0336 or email: terrycarroll@att.net
For Retreat information, please contact Dena at (760) 941-8140
www.lloydsmrigal.com

By Austin Frishman, Ph.D., B.C.E.
President
AMF Pest Management Services, Inc.

- Have your service slip on a neat clip board with your name and the company name on the clip board visible as they sign.
- Have your name on your uniform.
- Be involved in community activities. This goes for both the firm and, whenever possible, the technician.
- On occasion, call the customer and ask how the service can be improved.
- Use e-mail and a company newsletter to write something positive about the technicians on the route.
- I am not writing these words as a result of a Ph.D., sitting behind my desk. I was a service technician for two years and learned how to communicate with my customers. It makes a difference. My day was more pleasant. I could have some flexibility with the customers if running late. And it made me a more effective technician. Granted, this was 54 years ago, but it has always been a part of my life to ride with a technician in the field even as this column goes to press.

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I AM THE BOSS?

Let’s just take one topic this issue – routing. Who does the routing? How often is it done? Many small companies do not have computer programs that do an ongoing schedule with route optimization built in. Some companies are not even using computer programs specifically designed for our industry. This does NOT mean that they can not make money or that they are ignorant. I recall having less problems with the old route cards than we have with the newer advances with technologically sound computer programs. You can stop laughing now.

The point is that gas prices go up and down and then back up again and again. It will probably be $5 a gallon before you know it. We all need to prepare for that as well as additional taxes.

So part of the solution is to route more efficiently to increase production, employee pay (if they are on some sort of commission pay), gas, oil, repairs, etc.

Some companies have not rerouted in years. The point is that this should be reviewed, at least annually. In many cases this is done by the boss. Sometimes it is done by supervisors, and sometimes the route person will do it or the administrative assistants. (In the old days they were referred to as secretaries.)

In my opinion, routing should include all of these individuals. By Lloyd Merritt Smigel

Care Management Consultants

If you exclude any of them – you could have problems.

Each will look at it from their perspective. If you get ALL of their input and steer the decision making, you will have less problems and more efficiency.

The old saying that “two heads are better than one” is true. The true boss will include others in their decision making process. It makes life easier for everyone.

This attitude of “ME boss – you not!” is the old autocratic style of management. There may be times when that is needed – but rarely.

If the boss makes ALL of the decisions, the message to employees is sort of “Shut Up...Don’t Think...Who asked you?... Just do what you’re told.”

That MAY have worked in the good ol’ days, but times – they are a changin’. What happens with that old way of thinking is that you weed out the thinkers and innovators. They go to your competitors with those ideas and/or they become your new competitors.

In another scenario, there are bosses that I have worked with that ask for input but generally ignore it. Nice.

In either situation, you will have turnover. In our industry, the least I have heard that it costs for a single employee is about $9,000 for one turnover. Supervisors and managers are even more expensive.

So we want to hire properly and then maintain (and grow) our employees. By including them in the decision making process, you will lessen your turnover.

You may be the boss, but your success and the success of your company always comes down to your employees. If they feel like they are part of the team and feel appreciated – life is good.

NEVADA PEST CONTROL ASSOCIATION
UPCOMING 2014-2015 EVENTS

APRIL 24, 2014
NPCA - AHB Class
Orleans Hotel 6 – 8 PM

September 25, 2014
Quarterly NPCA Meeting
Orleans Hotel 6 – 8 PM

December 4, 2014
Quarterly NPCA Meeting
Orleans Hotel 6 – 8 PM

January 29, 2015
Nevada Pest Control Association
Meet & Greet
Orleans Hotel 6 – 8 PM

January 30, 2015
Nevada Pest Control Association
Pest Expo 2015
Orleans Hotel 7 AM – 4:30 PM

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The Making of an Ant Super-Colony: Expanding Concept Among Tramp Ants of the West

Sylvia Kenmuir, Board Certified Entomologist, Training and Strategic Marketing Director, Target Specialty Products

Reading or learning about ant management in the last few years has required some vocabulary additions for the Pest Management Professional (PMP). Some of the terms that have been used are “polymorphic” meaning many body types, “polydomous” meaning many homes, “polygyrous” meaning many queens, and “unicolional” meaning one colony and no boundaries. These are all words used to describe the behavior of ants and to try and explain their success as our number one pest call. All are important pieces of the puzzle the PMP must use when managing these ants. It is the last word “unicolional” which has led to the important concept of the “ant super-colony”. The ant species we are most familiar with displaying this behavior in the west is the argentite ant (Linepithema humile). This concept of one “massive related colony” has been recently used when describing the behavior of two other tramp ants (invasive ants) of the west, the odorous house ant, (Tapinoma sessile) and velvety tree ant (Liometopum spp.). When you look at the research from the scientific communities, you will find they are divided on the concept of the “super-colony”. But when a PMP observes the sheer number of worker ants on a seemingly endless trail, the concept of a “super-colony” can be quite convincing. So where did this terminology come from and what does it mean in terms of management?

As an entomologist and myrmecologist (ant specialist), I was fascinated by my first encounter with the term “super-colony” in a Los Angeles Times article back in 2002 called, “For Argentine Ants in Europe, Life is a Picnic” by Lee McFarlane. The article discussed the newly discovered Mediterranean Argentine ant super-colony in Europe. It stretched for 6,000 kilometers (3728 miles) from northern Italy to the Atlantic coast of Spain. The super-colony was described as having billions of related argentite ants. In their native country of Argentina, the ants form separate nests normally fight each other to the death. However, ants from the super-colony have the ability to recognize each other and co-operate as nest mates. The article also mentioned the California argentite ant super-colony discovered two years earlier. This super-colony extended over 900 kilometers (560 miles) along the coast of California. My first reaction to this article was “holy guacamole,” this may explain “why” this particular ant has been such a management challenge for PMP’s in the western U.S. One ant colony can already be a tough assignment but a super-colony of connected ant highways is quite a task.

The California super-colony research came from a team of researchers led by Dr. Neil Tutsui, Ecologist and Evolutionary Biologist from UC Berkeley (then at UC San Diego). According to Dr. Tutsui’s website (http://nature.berkeley.edu/tsutsuilab/), “Introduced populations of Argentine ants are ‘unicolional,’ forming massive ‘super-colonies’ that can extend for thousands of kilometers. The lack of aggression and territoriality within these super-colonies allows introduced populations to thrive and dominate invaded habitats. Because many other invasive ants are also unicolional, the factors that allow Argentine ants to become such successful invaders may also explain the success of many other invasive social insects.” It is the last statement that is proving true when dealing with other “tramp ants.” The term super-colony has been used most recently to describe both odorous house ants (Tapitoma sessile) and velvety tree ants (Liometopum spp.) in recent association lectures. Both of these ants are on the top of the list of difficult ants to manage in the west.

The odorous house ant (Tapitoma sessile) is an ant that has been a challenge to manage for many years. Much of this has been some lack of knowledge of their biology. Back in October 2013 at the National Pest Management Association Pest World conference in Phoenix, Arizona, Dr. Gary Bennett from Purdue University discussed some research being conducted on odorous house ants and the concept of “super-colonies” when describing their nesting habits. It is an all-too-familiar concept for those of us in the west to understand. This super-colony concept could be that one puzzle piece that would explain why odorous house ants are such a challenge to manage and the lack of elimination in some accounts. Using this information when developing a management strategy will be a key component for PMP’s dealing with this ant.

An up and coming tramp ant in the west is the velvety tree ant (Liometopum spp.). Velvety tree ants get their name from a glistening abdomen comprised of dense, fine hairs. In the west we have two species that may infest structures: the red and black “California velvety tree ant” (Liometopum occidentale) and a second, entirely different species that may infest structures: the red and black “California velvety tree ant” (Liometopum occidentale). The California super-colony research came from a team of researchers led by Dr. Neil Tutsui, Ecologist and Evolutionary Biologist from UC Berkeley (then at UC San Diego). According to Dr. Tutsui’s website (http://nature.berkeley.edu/tsutsuilab/), “Introduced populations of Argentine ants are ‘unicolional,’ forming massive ‘super-colonies’ that can extend for thousands of kilometers. The lack of aggression and territoriality within these super-colonies allows introduced populations to thrive and dominate invaded habitats. Because many other invasive ants are also unicolional, the factors that allow Argentine ants to become such successful invaders may also explain the success of many other invasive social insects.” It is the last statement that is proving true when dealing with other “tramp ants.” The term super-colony has been used most recently to describe both odorous house ants (Tapitoma sessile) and velvety tree ants (Liometopum spp.) in recent association lectures. Both of these ants are on the top of the list of difficult ants to manage in the west.

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ver the years we’ve all heard a bunch of “sayings” including but not limited to: a penny saved is a penny earned, don’t judge a book by its cover, time waits for no man, don’t cry over spilt milk, don’t count your chickens before they hatch, never say never, don’t let the bed bugs bite and don’t let the tail wag the dog. Of particular interest to pest professionals are the last two.

My work as an expert witness in bed bug related cases has provided many interesting circumstances to discuss, as well as many key learning points of particular interest to pest professionals. Pest professionals actively engaged in bed bug management work for hospitality, property management and other commercial accounts will benefit by paying particular attention to certain recurring points commonly encountered in bed bug related cases.

Any competent bed bug professional well knows how a bed bug infestation can grow and spread from unit to unit, room to room, floor to floor and building to building at both hospitality and multifamily account locations. Such pros know to inform their customers that adjoining rooms and units must be suitably inspected when conducting proper bed bug remediation work at infested locations. They know that undiscovered bed bug infestations may exist in those rooms or units adjacent to the infested room or unit originally reported as infested.

An often asked question is: “How do bed bugs get from room to room and/or unit to unit?” The truth of the matter is that there are a number of ways that a bed bug infestation may grow and spread at an infested account location. Such modes of travel for bed bugs include, but are not limited to: utility penetrations, service equipment and carts, luggage, service personnel, simply walking the hall and other methodologies.

Knowing this, a competent bed bug professional will inform his customer that it will be necessary for him to inspect and treat adjoining rooms or units. However, a common observation shared by many bed bug professionals is that the customer may choose to forgo such inspections and treatments of adjoining rooms or units. Why would a properly informed customer choose to not inspect or treat an adjoining room or unit despite being well informed by their pest professional that doing so is important? Of course we may not know all the motivations of our customers. However, bed bug professionals seem to agree that this is because the customer is looking to save money by not having work done in rooms or units beyond that of the initial complaint.

As pest professionals, we must realize that not every customer is going to go along with every one of our recommendations, no matter how entomologically sound these recommendations may be. Sure, we may know it is recommended to inspect and treat adjoining rooms and units, but there are some customers who will not authorize the additional work due to the additional associated cost. This seems to be a common occurrence in bed bug cases. In fact, this was documented in the landmark litigation Mathias case.

In this case, the pest professional recommended the inspection and treatment of the adjoining rooms including the inspection and treatment of all the rooms at the location. However, the customer told the pest pro to only inspect and treat those rooms that the customer requested. When this occurs, it is wise for the pest professional to make an effort to inform the customer why it is important to inspect and treat adjoining rooms or units. If this is done and the customer persists in his position, then the pest professional must document that the customer has refused recommended treatments. Such documentation must be placed within the customer file. It is also wise to inform the customer of this in writing as well.

While we all know that it is unwise to allow the tail to wag the dog (i.e. to allow the customer to tell the pest professional what to do and what not to do), the pest professional may be powerless opposite the customer’s wishes. When this happens, the pest professional is wise to properly communicate the underlying pertinent reasons that these recommendations should be followed and document these communications within the customer file for future reference if needed.

Be smart, don’t let the tail wag the dog and be sure to protect yourself and your business by proper communications and documentation.

The author is an independent urban and industrial consulting entomologist as well as author of The Bed Bug Combat Manual. He may be reached for comment and questions via www.pest-consultant.com.
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One of the priorities of your business this year is to make sure your pest, termite/WDO, bed bug, fumigation and other contracts and documents are up-to-date. The claims we have seen over the last few years clearly show that a number of pest professionals have outdated contracts that need to be made current for today’s civil climate, as well as issuing contracts on certain pest services. What we would like to do in this two-part article is go over contracts for the most common pest services provided by the industry as well as a general comment or two of some mistakes we are seeing overall. Contracts are just like certain pest products, tools and training – they need to be updated from time to time.

We would like to start off quickly on why an updated contract or contract is needed at all. We see marketing efforts from some PMPs about “contract free” services for their customers. We can see this for competitive reasons, but what most PMPs do not understand is what happens down the road should a claim, or even worse a suit, occur? That is the issue.

Also, what about contracts that have not been updated for 10, 20 or 30 years? Whether the structure has been retreated or not, these old contracts are still around and most are probably outdated. I am hopeful the following will show how serious this issue is and will be of benefit for your business.

General Pest Residential
We can understand how many pest companies do not want to have contracts that might scare off residential customers. The customers do not want to feel that they are being “pressured” and want the freedom to be able to stop whatever service they are receiving. Again, we understand, though we feel this is a mistake. While it is true that if we get a general pest claim it will probably come from a commercial account, the odds are small but when we do get one it can be quite severe.

Example: Insured used a certain product for a simple general pest application. The insured did not have a contract with the customer and did not document the product used. This insured is really a great PMP and knows his stuff. Known him for years but just made the simple mistake of no contract and not documenting the product used. It should not have happen but it did unfortunately for this insured.

Well to make a long story short, the plaintiff is suing the insured for using Lindane inside the home. Samples were taken and Lindane was found (very, very small sample amounts). This insured did not use Lindane. We know the product used, but again it is not documented. There is no contract to confirm what the limitations are for the PMP if there is a claim or suit. By the time this matter will be over our expenses to defend will probably be over $100,000. Win or lose this insured now has at least a six figure claim on their loss run. Not great for their loss history. But simple wording can really save your company in the long run.

Commercial
Over the last 5 years, we have seen a dramatic increase in general pest claims, especially dealing with commercial accounts-multi dwelling buildings. The most common are inhalation claims (which most are bogus), target insect issues, bed bugs (which we will discuss later), other insect bites, misdiagnosis, theft allegations, carpet stains, lost keys and more types of exposures that can easily be addressed in a simple contract.

We cannot tell you how many claims that we have been able to get our insured out of or mitigate with an effective contract that rarely affect their loss history. Again just simple clauses in the contract like limits of liability, exclusions for bodily injury and property damage (except due to gross negligence), identifying specific target insects in the contract. Also wording that excludes non-treated or serviced insects, chemical sensitivity, fungus/mold etc. What about rodent work and what can happen to these pests should they die in inaccessible places? It is the claim you don’t expect that will get you!

Yes we have handled all of these types of claims. With good contracts, we are usually successful. With no contracts, outdated or weak contracts, we do not have near the success in handling or defending the claim. Seems pretty simple when you really think about it.

In the next issue we will address contract recommendations for specific applications, along with some mistakes to avoid.

Andy McGinty is the EVP/COO of the LIPCA Insurance National Pest and Lawn Program. He has handled thousands of pest control claims and exposures and has reviewed pest industry contracts/documents for over 20yrs. Andy is a speaker at pest and lawn conventions, conferences and CEU venues throughout the United States. He can be reached at 800-893-9887 ext 7016 and/or andy.mcginty@lipca.com
Thanks to Control Solutions, it just got tougher to be a bug.

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Building a Better Formulation

FUSE, approved by the EPA in late 2013, features both imidacloprid and fipronil in a single product. Labelled for both termite and perimeter pest control applications, FUSE offers IMPs, yet another tool from CSI for their pest management toolbox. FUSE has been designed to control pest ants including carpenter, Argentine, Caribbean crazy, carpenter, pavement and thief ants, as well as perimeter pests including Asian lady beetles, cellar spiders, pill bugs, darkling beetles, cluster flies and house crickets.

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As most of you know, Lee Lawrence retired last October after more than 24 years working for the Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA). Lee started when the pest control industry in Nevada was much smaller than it is today. Lee worked with the Nevada State Legislature and leaders in the Nevada pest control industry to help build the current regulatory framework. Lee leaves behind a lot of friends in the industry, a strong team of regulators and inspectors, and a legacy to be proud of.

I had the privilege of overlapping with Lee for a week before he retired, and I took over the reins of the pest control operator licensing and enforcement program. I've also had the benefit of a great team of inspectors and regulatory officials to help me learn the ropes. The Nevada Department of Agriculture is a great place to work, and the pest control licensing and enforcement program is an integral part of the Department.

For those of you who don’t know me and whom I haven’t had the opportunity to meet yet, let me tell you a little about my background. I was born in the Las Vegas area, grew up here, and attended Las Vegas High School through my junior year before my family moved to California. I got a Ph.D. in pest management (Weed Science) way back in 1978 at Michigan State University. I then worked for the DuPont Company in pesticide development for almost 20 years, followed by almost 14 years of pest management for the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Now I’m back home in Nevada and loving it.

As Lee mentioned in his last article for the Nevada Pest Control Association News, the office for pest control operator licensing and enforcement program has been moved from the NDA Sparks headquarters to the NDA Las Vegas office. This move made sense because most of the state’s pest control industry is based in southern Nevada. In addition to me as the program manager, there are three inspectors and one administrative assistant in the Las Vegas office (702-668-4590). For licensing and relicensing questions, ask for Jay Steele. For continuing education credit questions, ask for Scott Ochowicz. And for termite and wood destroying pest related questions, ask for Suzanne Suter. For general questions and to arrange for testing, contact Kathleen Bednarz.

Meanwhile, the pest control licensing and enforcement program is still alive and well in northern Nevada. For any questions and concerns in northern Nevada, contact Mary Hossay (775-353-3712). If Mary can’t help you, she can put you in contact with the appropriate scientist or inspector in the Sparks NDA headquarters.

Jay and the crew have been working since early December on relicensing. Relicensing is a complex work flow as it involves applications, fee processing, checking of insurance and checking of continuing education hours. This year also added collecting of Social Security numbers and business licenses numbers for corporations.

By Robert Leavitt
Nevada Department of Agriculture – Las Vegas Office
Recently someone asked how to tell bees from wasps. Well the answer is that bees generally are very hairy, especially their legs or abdomens for collecting pollen, and wasps are generally predators and have very few hairs. As always there are exceptions to this. Wasps will be discussed in an upcoming article.

Carpenter bees (3 species in the genus *Xylocopa*) are our only pest bee we have in Nevada other than Africanized honey bees. All of the other 3000 or so species are very beneficial as pollinators. Carpenter bees can generally be recognized by their large size and solid black coloration (Fig 1). However, in a common species in Nevada the males are a tan color.

Carpenter bees rarely cause structural damage to newer homes but may be a problem in older structures, especially where the wood is slightly decayed. These bees are not eating the wood, only nesting in it. Carpenter bees do not form colonies like honey bees or bumble bees, but may nest in groups. It is when these groups get very large we see extensive damage to structures. In Las Vegas they may also nest in the trimmed fronds of Canary Island palms, causing them to prematurely fall off the tree. They are attracted to the softer centers of the cut palms (Fig 2) to nest.

The only bee that may be confused with a carpenter bee in Nevada would be bumble bees. These bees are truly social bees, but have relatively small colonies of 200 or so worker bees and one queen. They can be easily separated from carpenter bees by the very hairy bodies and every species in Nevada has either yellow or white bands across the abdomen (Fig 3).

Africanized honey bees look just like their close relative the European honey bee (which comes in numerous varieties) and can only be told apart by wing length (less than 9mm) or by genetic analysis.

When applying any pesticides we should always remember to protect the pollinators we have and don’t apply pesticides to flowering plants. There are a number of changes to many pesticide labels regarding pollinator protection and you should carefully re-read your label if applying pesticides to plants.

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I am pleased to announce that we have retained Dr. Paul Bello, Sylvia Kenmuir from Target Specialty Products and Bert Lopez from Univar Environmental Sciences, as our featured speakers for our upcoming 2015 pest expo.

We are currently updating our website at www.nevadapca.org with all the photos from our 2014 Pest Expo. We are also adding digital copies of our magazine (present and past issues) on the website.

It is an honor and privilege to be your President of the Nevada Pest Control Association. But without the team effort of our Vice-President, John Parins Jr., Treasurer, Steve Vach, and the countless volunteers who help throughout the entire year to put on the expo and help produce our publications, we wouldn’t be able to accomplish any of it. Thanks to all and I hope everyone has an outstanding buggy season.
At Univar Environmental Sciences, we’ve got more than just the right products for the job. Our team has the experience and the advice you can count on to help your business thrive. So get in touch today.

Call us at 800-888-4897 or go to PestWeb.com.