



PUTTING A TO BED BUGS

University of Florida professor Dr. Phil Koehler told PMPs at an event sponsored by Allergy Technologies this summer that the best approach to bed bug management is to prevent an infestation from occurring in the first place. That means putting in place an effective prevention program focused on monitoring, identification and customer education. By Jeff Fenner

Bed bugs remain a consistent source of pain for homeowners, office workers, apartment and condominium dwellers, and the hospitality industry. Despite anecdotal reports that the market may be slowing in some regions of the country, Specialty Consultants reports that bed bug service revenue topped \$611 million in 2016, growing 6.6 percent from the previous year. Consequently, PMPs are still receiving a steady stream of calls to eliminate these prolific pests.

Noted researcher and extension entomologist Dr. Phil Koehler of the University of Florida addressed the role prevention plays in bed bug management at the Allergy Technologies' Florida Bed Bug Symposium, held in three cities throughout the Sunshine State this past summer (Orlando, Ft. Lauderdale and Tampa).

Koehler told the PMPs that taking preventive action

Customer Education Tips

When it comes to customer education, focusing on how residents and employees can contribute to the success of a bed bug program is important. Information on where bed bugs are most often found and how to properly inspect can be shared face-to-face, in printed handouts or on a website or social media.



WHERE TO LOOK FOR BED BUGS:

- Check the sheets, pillows and blankets for bugs and stains
- Thoroughly inspect the headboard, bed frame, mattress and box spring
- Look under the mattress and pillows
- Check the seams and puckers of the mattress and box spring
- Look at the bed frame for bugs and stains
- Check the floor, carpet edges and moldings
- Look inside and underneath drawers
- Inspect radios, phones, clocks near the bed or on a nightstand; they may also be hiding places for bed bugs
- Baseboards, carpets, mini blinds/curtains, ceiling tiles, and closet tracks

WHAT CAN RESIDENTS/EMPLOYEES DO:

- Check for bed bugs in luggage, backpacks and clothes when returning home from a trip
- Look for bed bugs or signs of infestation on secondhand items before bringing the items home
- Reduce clutter where bed bugs can hide
- Physically remove bed bugs through cleaning
- Promptly report any bed bug sightings to the property manager, maintenance staff or HR department



against bed bugs not only delivers higher levels of customer satisfaction but can provide new business opportunities.

Due to their highly mobile nature bed bugs are particularly challenging to manage in multi-tenant apartment and condominium complexes, office buildings and the hospitality industry, where the combination of a high volume of inhabitants and daily coming and going make it easier for bed bugs to be introduced.

“The best approach to bed bug management is to prevent an infestation from occurring in the first place,” Koehler told attendees. “That means putting in place an effective prevention program focused on monitoring, identification and customer education.”

What is the value of preventive action to a commercial customer? Koehler shared a story about a housing manager at the University of Florida who contacted him regarding a bed bug infestation in a dormitory. “He told me they had had bed bugs in the furniture and he had thrown out all of the furniture,” recalled Koehler. “\$60,000 later when the replacement furniture arrived and the bed bugs were still there, he called me to ask what I thought he should have done.”

The takeaway from this example is that

if the call to Koehler was made *before* action was taken, a different, potentially less costly solution could have been found.

In the seminar Koehler discussed the IPM bed bug program used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as one that pest professionals may want to reference and adapt into a bed bug prevention program. Many of the steps will look familiar to PMPs since they likely deploy them in existing preventive programs for other pests. And while bed bugs are a little trickier to eliminate than some of their other creepy and crawling insect brethren, the mind-set to prevention is similar.

What does the HUD IPM bed bug program focus on? It emphasizes the following:

1. Inspection and monitoring
2. Proper identification
3. Establishing acceptable thresholds
4. Developing a control plan
5. Ensuring the effectiveness of the plan
6. Customer education

PMPs have numerous options when it comes to the inspection and monitoring



Dr. Phil Koehler

component of their bed bug program including canines and human inspectors, interceptor traps, active mattress liners and encasements (*see related article below*).

How often are your apartment or condominium or office building clients proactive when it comes to bed bugs? The answer is most likely not very often.

A pest professional is not usually brought into the mix until a resident or employee contacts their property manager, human resources department or hotel management with a complaint. This is where preventive programs can be a premium upsell to forward-looking clients.

“It is much easier to kill one or two bed bugs that were brought in on a piece of clothing vs. 3,000 10 weeks later,” Koehler told attendees. “It is also more beneficial, both monetarily and reputation wise, to the client to invest in a prevention program.”

In addition to the physical monitoring and inspections, pest professionals should make sure residents or employees are part of the program. This includes:

- When an account is at high risk for bed bugs (i.e. it has experienced prior infestations), regular inspections are recommended.
- Actively engage residents or employees in efforts to prevent bed bugs. Education and involvement of tenants is a critical

Active Mattress Liners Provide Protection Through Prevention

As the old saying goes, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

That saying, while certainly not originally intended for pest management, certainly applies to the approach regulators, consumers and pest management professionals have toward managing pests.

In his presentation at the Allergy Technologies’ Florida Bed Bug Symposium, Dr. Phil Koehler of the University of Florida emphasized to attendees that effective bed bug management programs are rooted in IPM principles.

“Like a pyramid, bed bug control has several layers with the base focused on education and prevention,” says Koehler. “Active mattress liners, encasements and interceptor traps assist pest management



ActiveGuard Mattress Liners are impregnated with permethrin.

professionals achieve and deliver a preventive first punch.”

Active mattress liners can assist technicians, housekeeping staff and consumers with early detection of bed bugs on mattresses or box springs. This product protects against bed bugs infesting mattresses and box springs and can also act as a monitor, since activity can easily be detected on the product’s surface.

ActiveGuard Mattress Liners provide pest professionals with an easy-to-install tool that can be added to a comprehensive, multi-faceted bed bug management program. The liners are constructed of sturdy polyester netting that prevent the wear and tear most encasements are subjected to, and is the only registered product that provides prevention against infestation for up to two years, according to the manufacturer.

The liners are impregnated with permethrin and start killing bed bugs that come in contact with it within 10 minutes. These liners, which also eliminate dust mites, carry no warnings or use restrictions and can be used in conjunction with other bed bug control methods.

For more information, visit <http://allergytechnologies.com>.

RESEARCH ILLUSTRATES Value of Monitoring Programs

What is the value of a bed bug monitoring program? In findings released earlier this year in the *Journal of Economic Entomology*, Dr. Karen Vail, a professor and extension urban entomologist at the University of Tennessee, says bed bug monitoring devices are an effective early-warning detection tool in high-rise multi-tenant structures.

Vail says she hopes her research will inspire building managers and their pest management service providers to implement more robust bed bug monitoring programs.

"The lower cost of using fewer monitors and less time required to place them may encourage pest management professionals and housing managers to use them more frequently and thus detect bed bugs before they spread," Vail told *Entomology Today*.

Other researchers concurred with the findings of Vail's study and emphasized that monitoring needs to be a consistent element in any IPM-based management program.

"Dr. Vail's study provides further scientific proof that bed bug monitors are valuable tools in bed bug management," says Dr. Changlu Wang with the Department of Entomology at Rutgers University "They can help detect the presence of bed bugs and evaluate the effectiveness of the bed bug management programs."

To read more from the study visit <http://bit.ly/2khwc5e>.



Dr. Karen Vail

component of IPM for bed bugs. Bed bugs may often go undetected and unreported because they are active at night and residents, employees or hotel staff may not be aware of their presence.

- Consider holding town hall or lunch and learn sessions to help teach basic identification skills, how to eliminate pest conducive conditions, and to report suspicions of bed bugs as soon as possible.

- Provide an orientation session for new residents and staff, and post signs and handouts regarding bed bug prevention (*see related article on page 106*).

- Provide training for property managers/maintenance staff on pest ID and make sure the preventive steps included in the program are being followed. **PCT**

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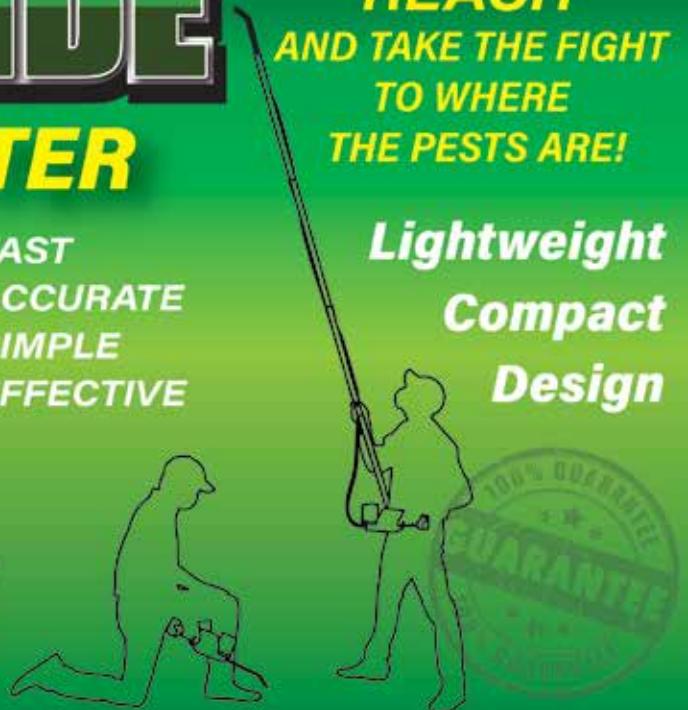
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