



Minnesota Pest Management Association

Authors Needed

If you are an Active or Allied member and you'd like to contribute an article to the newsletter pertaining to a current pest of concern, proper equipment use and care, application techniques, pesticide safety, choosing formulations and active ingredients, pesticide rotation – this list could go on and on – send your articles to Christina Valdivia, cc: minnpest1@gmail.com. We'd like to have a store of articles that we can use as the need arises.

The Importance of Winterizing Your Equipment

By Kevin White, Owner, Contree Sprayer & Equipment Company

With down time typically costing more than preventative maintenance, proper equipment winterizing can save you money.

If you are not planning on using your sprayer for a period of time, triple rinse it with fresh water and store it empty or with a mix of 50% antifreeze and water. Using automotive antifreeze is best as it has a rust inhibitor. Save the antifreeze containers, label them, and pump the mixture back into them when you are ready to use the sprayer again. This is the procedure for winterizing also. Do not store the sprayer using oil or diesel fuel, as it may affect the seals, o-rings, or certain types of plastics that are in your sprayer.



Before you store your sprayer for the off season, replace any broken and leaking parts. Pre-off season storage is a great time to replace the diaphragms and other consumable sprayer items on diaphragm pumps. Change engine oil (detergent SAE 30), spark plug and air cleaner. You will want to fill the sprayer fuel tank with premium fuel which does not have ethanol in it. Start engine and shut off fuel valve then run the engine until it runs out of fuel. However, do not run a Centrifugal, piston or roller pump dry. This will shorten their life and/or damage them. This will help prevent the carburetor from varnishing up. After this step, put fuel stabilizer in the fuel tank. Next, check air pressure in the pulsation dampener chamber. Pressure should be at least 10 psi or 20% of your regular operating pressure. Your suction strainer should be cleaned, the screen should be replaced, and the bowl o-ring should be checked to see if it appears used or damaged. The diaphragm pump can be used as an air compressor to pump air through the sprayer in order to winterize it.

To prep a roller pump for off-season, you may want to separate the pump and install new bearings, seals, and rollers. Belt drive centrifugal drive pump off season storage consists of removing the belt to check it for cracks and wear. Be sure to replace the belt if you are in doubt that it will last another season. While the belt is off, take your hand and spin the pump shaft, feeling to see if the bearings feel dry or rough. You can also listen to hear if they sound like they are running smoothly. If they sound rough, replace them and the pump seal. Check the belt tensioner spring to see that it is not stretched out. Be sure that it moves freely and is greased. Also check the idler bearing to ensure that it is not dry or running rough. Remember a dry or rough bearing will generate excess amounts of heat and damage your belt or pump shaft and/or seal. Piston pumps are complicated. If you winterize them properly and never run them dry they should last a long time before they need repairs.

Please can contact Contree if you need assistance or advice.

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Leveraging New Marketing Tools to Expand Your Brand

By Aly McGrew, President, Plunkett's Pest Control, Inc

Building a brand and growing a customer base takes hard work. And in today's world there are more and more tools to support marketing and brand building efforts. More options are great on the one hand, but they also represent an ever-growing list of initiatives and tools that need to be managed and supported. In my experience, it is helpful to maintain existing strategies while also exploring new tools like AI.

Residential and commercial customers have different needs and expectations. Residential customers often rely heavily on brand awareness, word-of-mouth recommendations, social media platforms, and google searches to discover and engage with service providers. Building and maintaining a strong brand presence through these channels is important for attracting and retaining residential customers. One of the ways we do this is by engaging with negative and neutral feedback. We try to understand why the customer is dissatisfied or upset and work to make it right for them as much as possible. They may not sing

our praises but hopefully won't rake us over the coals with their neighbors and friends. People remember when a company goes above and beyond and shows they care about solving their problem.

Many of us can remember a time before social media. Today, businesses rely and depend on social media to grow their brand and reach more customers. There is no right way to do this. In my experience, most companies start building their social media presence by building awareness on one or two of the main platforms (Facebook, TikTok). I have found it helpful to have someone dedicated to social media. This can be an internal role, or it can be outsourced. A newer option for either internal or external efforts is using AI powered tools to develop targeted social media campaigns.

AI algorithms can analyze vast amounts of data, including user preferences, interests, and online behavior, to identify the most effective content and timing for your social media posts. By tailoring your messaging and imagery to resonate with

your target audience, you can increase brand visibility and customer engagement.

I suggest starting small with AI. Bard (Google's AI tool) and ChatGPT both offer free products. I have used them both and found them easy to use. For those that benefit from a more formal introduction, LinkedIn (among others) offer introductory classes on AI. There are also many free videos and tutorials available online. Bard has helped me refine a PR statement, offered me two different versions of a speech I drafted but wanted to rework, and generated social media posts.

Search engines, particularly Google, play a crucial role in helping potential customers find our businesses.

Optimizing websites and search results is essential for standing out. AI can assist in this process by analyzing search trends, keywords, and user behavior to enhance your website's visibility and improve your ranking in search engine results pages. An investment in learning how to use AI in this space could pay off quickly.



While residential marketing thrives on digital platforms, business-to-business (B2B) marketing requires a different approach. In this realm, industry conferences, cultivating relationships, and employing direct sales strategies play an important role. Our company's LinkedIn profile has helped develop awareness in the commercial space and been a place to highlight our experience serving commercial customers. We have not fully explored using AI to support B2B marketing but are keeping it on our radar. I know other industries have used AI in this space to identify and create lead lists for prospecting.

As technology continues to advance, we have the opportunity to advance as well. I suggest starting small and finding the best way for your company to take advantage of AI and other new tools. I do believe AI has the potential to play a significant role in shaping and enhancing marketing

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strategies. And I know people will still be at the center of it all - setting direction and strategy - but the ability to pair people with AI is a powerful combination. I encourage all of you to learn more and test options,

many which are free, to see how they can benefit your business.

Wishing you all continued success in your marketing endeavors!

Marketing Terms to Know

AI Algorithm. An algorithm is a set of instructions to be followed in calculations or other operations. An AI algorithm is the programming that tells the computer how to learn to operate on its own.

Artificial Intelligence (AI), also known as machine intelligence, is the ability of a computer to do tasks that are usually done by humans because they require human intelligence and discernment. It is the science of making machines that can think like humans. AI can do things that are considered “smart” and can process large amounts of data. The goal for AI is to be able to do things such as recognize patterns, make decisions, and judge like humans.

Brand is the sum of how a product or business is perceived by those who experience it—including customers, employees, the media, and more. Branding is the process of shaping these perceptions.

Business to Business (B2B) Marketing is the marketing of products or services to other companies. Its goal is often to improve lead quality and conversion rates.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process of improving your website to increase its visibility in Google, Microsoft Bing, and other search engines whenever people search for the services you provide (pest control, mosquito treatment, bed bug treatment, etc).

Social Media is digital technology that allows the sharing of ideas and information, including text and visuals, through virtual networks and communities. Social media typically features user-generated content that lends itself to engagement via likes, shares, comments, and discussion.

Website Optimization is the process of using tools and experiments to improve the performance of your website, such as increasing traffic or visits to the site. One of the most critical aspects of website optimization is search engine optimization (see above).

Sources: *tableau, hcltech, ignyte, actitime, Investopedia, VWO, linkedin*



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Perfect Pulse Baiting for Rodents

From Sara Knilans, Bell Laboratories, Inc.



Pulse baiting is a rodent management tool that allows pest management professionals (PMPs) to get the “pulse” of the account. It’s a great management system for sensitive accounts like schools, food warehouses, homes, or other businesses that need to, or want to, be extremely careful with using rodenticides.

Inspection

The initial step of any type of baiting is the inspection. This is where the PMP can look over the account to get a general understanding of the infestation by looking for any entry points or signs of damage.

Pulse Baiting

After the initial inspection, pulse baiting requires using a non-toxic bait such as DETEX with Lumitrack, which utilizes Bell’s highly palatable bait formulation with food-grade ingredients and a special additive that

makes rodent droppings glow under black light. Moreso, the non-toxic bait offers the same weatherability and acceptance as Bell’s collection of active baits. PMPs do not need to worry about DETEX with Lumitrack faltering in humid, hot, or cold environments. Without a stable, palatable, and acceptable bait, PMPs would be unable to get an accurate pulse of an account.

After the bait is consumed, PMPs can detect several critical details like where rodents are traveling from, where they are going, and how many are present.

Knockdown Phase

With this vital information, PMPs can begin to devise an attack plan, like where to set snap traps, bait, and/or bait stations for the knockdown phase. This next phase is where the PMP switches the non-toxic bait out for an active bait.

Bell advises using an acute bait such as Fastrac, Bell’s premium bromethalin formulation, during the opening chapter of the knockdown phase. This formulation can help knock down the rodent population while they are most vulnerable.

Using DETEX in conjunction with an active bait can help eliminate the rodent population while simultaneously tracking the account’s rodent activity. This can help PMPs adjust their rodent control program if a larger infestation arises. As a result, it’s always better to over-prepare for a rodent infestation than under-prepare. Under-preparing may not eliminate the infestation and provides the opportunity for it to re-fester in the next several months after the birth of successive litters.

After the knockdown phase, the PMP can switch to a bait like Contrac. The advantage of using an anticoagulant during this phase is that any remaining rodents that may have been bait shy during the knockdown phase may consume the slower acting rodenticide.

Use a Bait Station

It’s also advised for PMPs to use a bait station when using a bait or snap traps. Bait stations keep bait fresher and prevent non-target animals or children from accidentally accessing the bait or trap.

Monitoring Phase

The final phase of Pulse Baiting is monitoring. During this phase, the PMP will continue to use DETEX with Lumitrack - this helps the PMP maintain the rodent activity baseline and make any necessary adjustments, if needed. The PMP may not be as actively engaging with the account during this but will need to remain attentive in case of a spike in activity. If rodent activity does reduce, the amount of bait dispersed can also be reduced.

New Logo and Upcoming Partnership with the Girl Scouts of Minnesota & Wisconsin River Valleys Event



The Minnesota Chapter of Professional Women in Pest Management (PWIPM MN) is excited to share our new, very appropriate, logo! Embracing the image of our great state with what could be called our actual state bird, the mosquito. Watch for our new logo to appear on our communications and some merch coming very soon.

We are also embarking on a partnership between PWIPM MN and the Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys (GSRV). This will be the first ever Exclusive Bug Masters Partnership and will provide programming for girls in grades 2-3 to explore the world of bugs and for girls in grades 6-8 to learn more about the pest management industry from our cross-company experts on STEM related nature and environmental jobs. Many thanks to ECOLAB, Plunkett's, and Adam's Pest Control for financially sponsoring this program. Our first event is in November and will be hosted at the Plunkett's office in Fridley. If you have a Girl Scout in grades 6-8 and would like to attend, have their leader [check us out](#).

PWIPM is an affiliate group of the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) whose mission is to attract, develop and support women in the pest management industry through educational programs, resources and peer networking. Keep tabs on the programming through #GSRV. For more information, see www.PWIPM.org. Send additional questions to Julie Baskerville, Co-Chair PWIPM MN at julieb@adamspestcontrol.com.

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* US Field Trials: Indiana Grain Farm (2017); NC Pig Farm (2016)

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MPMA Board of Directors Meeting October 10, 2023

Office of Rove Pest Control, Oakdale, MN 55128

Prior to the meeting, MPMA Active and Allied members were notified of the meeting date and time, and that it was to take place both in-person at the offices of Rove Pest Control, and remotely via Zoom. The link to the Zoom session for the meeting was provided.

Attending in person

Matt Eickman, Abra Kadabra Environmental
Kathy Watrin, Granite Pest Control
Troy Timermanis, Bear Pest Control
Morgan Manderfield, Ecolab
Kelly Rogotzke, Done Right Pest Solutions
Dr. Stephen Kells, University of Minnesota
Lane Zimmerman, Rainbow Pest Control
Keith Gordon, Veseris
Nate Heider, Spidexx Pest Control
Caroline Kohnert, Plunkett's Pest Control
Rob Greer, Rove Pest Control
Dr. Mohammed El Damir, Adam's Pest Control
Todd Leyse, Adam's Pest Control

Attending remotely via Zoom

We got a late start on our Zoom connection, and some who planned to attend via Zoom missed out. Planned attendees included:

Josh Reynolds, NPMA
Mike Weissman, Syngenta
Dave Johnson, Catchmaster
Travis Chambers, BASF
Roger Mackedanz, MDA
Brian Elm, Veseris
Shawn Wilson, Cardinal Professional Products

Matt Eickman, President:

Matt called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm.

Dr. Stephen Kells, University of Minnesota:

Plans for the 2024 MN PMP Conference – content and venue

- An online program will be available this year; MDA has approved it.
- The biggest problem in 2023 was incorrect entry of applicator numbers.
- Venue: Minneapolis Convention Center is not available for this year. But we have fewer people, so will go back to Earle Brown Heritage Center.
- Dr. Kells is expecting 300-400 people to attend the 2024 Conference in person.
- The MPMA Board likes the Earle Brown Center as a venue; and parking is great.
- Dr. Kells is giving high priority to consideration of vendors' needs.
- The Conference will be March 4 and 5, 2024.
- 3 required special sessions will be covered in 2024: Categories N, P and L
- In odd years: Categories J and E will be covered; and N will be covered again.
- The main session will be on Tuesday March 5, which will allow vendors to set up on Monday, so that they don't have to travel on Sunday. In-person special sessions will be held on Monday, March 4.
- MPMA President Matt Eickman asked if a motion to approve Dr. Kells' meeting plans was in order, since at least nominally, MPMA is a co-sponsor of this event. A motion was made to approve the Conference plans as they stand; it was voted on and unanimously approved.

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October Board Meeting Minutes, cont

Morgan Manderfield reminded the group that Jay Bruesch wrote an email to MDA on July 28, asking them to consider allowing MPMA members to review the category A, Structural and Category L (mosquitoes) exams. Morgan has sent employees to take the structural licensing/certification exams, and Caroline Kohnert received reports from employees who took the category L exam; in both cases, bad questions were reported. Morgan forwarded the July 28 email to Jay, who forwarded it on to G. and to Roger Mackedanz. (Originally, the email was addressed to Robyn Frederick and Brian Clark; Dr. Kells indicated that the email really should have gone to G. and Roger, since they are the decision-makers on matters of licensing and certification exams. We'll revisit this topic at our January 24, 2024 meeting, by which time we should have a reply from MDA.

Support is strong among PMP companies for the online option, due to cost savings; Steve wants to make this a good deal for vendors too, however.

There was a spirited discussion of networking opportunities to be planned for the dates of the 2024 PMP Conference:

One of these is to be an MPMA-sponsored breakfast for managers and owners of pest control companies. A motion was made and seconded to have Jay Bruesch and Allison Forcier organize this breakfast; the motion was unanimously approved.

Another planned networking event is a "Happy Hour," to take place on Monday evening, March 4. This will be sponsored by MPMA, but we hope to get vendor support to help pay for this. Food will be provided, and liquor available on a cash-bar basis. Dr. Kells would like to get someone from one of the vendor firms to discuss regulatory issues; we could bring someone in from MDA to talk to vendors and other attendees during Happy Hour. Steve will bring in speakers; but MDA would have to handle catering, etc.

A motion was made to have a Happy Hour sponsored by MPMA but paid for by vendors. This was seconded, voted on and unanimously approved. We hope to have food provided by a generous vendor sponsor; liquor on a cash-bar basis, though vendors tend to pay for liquor anyway by buying rounds for groups of attendees – their customer base.

Happy Hour is for everyone; MPMA will have a booth at this event, along with vendor booths. We should try to get NPMA to send swag to give away at Happy Hour.

A vote was taken to approve July 2023 meetings; the motion carried.

Keith Gordon mentioned that Marc Bramhall would be willing to do a new-products talk at the 2024 Conference, or at others going forward; he just needs enough lead time to prepare this. Dr. Kells thanked him for the offer and will contact Marc when he needs this talk; the agenda is more or less formalized for 2024, so it doesn't look like Marc will need to step in for 2024.

Jay Bruesch: Financials

A vote was taken to approve the July 2023 meeting minutes; these were approved.

A financial report for July 2023-October 2023 was presented. It was voted on and approved.

There was some discussion on possibly better use of our funds to make them work for us a little (checking offers no interest; our savings rate is low).

Morgan Manderfield asked: What about high-yield accounts? Money market accounts? Credit unions? Kelly Rogotzke noted that credit unions are currently paying 5.02%; Kathy Watrin said that CDs are paying 5.75%.

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October Board Meeting Minutes, cont

Florida's State Association does lots of fund-raisers – golf tournaments, and things of that nature. But the industry in Florida is big compared to us; they have more pest control companies in a square mile or two than we have in the entire state, and less than a quarter of Minnesota companies are members of our Association. We are small, and our money has less earning potential.

Todd Leyse mentioned that, from the Board's perspective, we could surely use more money; but he is comfortable with where we are at, financially. We have a revenue-generating season coming up (Allied and Active membership renewals, booth reservations, advertising), which will replenish our war chest, and we'll be fine. We do have an outside newsletter publisher now, which costs money; and, if we decide at some point to hire a lobbying firm, that is quite expensive. For now, though, we're okay; and financial matters were put on the back burner for the time being.

Old Business:

Caroline Kohnert: RISE Advocacy training on August 8: Take-aways for MPMA

Todd, Josh Reynolds and Caroline attended.

Nationwide: RISE has done nationwide and state surveys regarding pesticides; the public is by and large okay with pesticide use in homes.

Statewide: Most Minnesotans use pesticides in their homes, and believe pesticides are safe when used according to label instructions.

The chief purpose of this event was to discuss messaging and how to control messages that we are sending to the public.

Key points:

- Seek common ground.
- Listen.
- Identify the opportunity.
- Deliver a key message.

When delivering a message:

- Don't overcomplicate things.
- Remember that legislators need to hear from us.
- Remember that legislators are people too: seek common ground, listen, let them know that responsible use of pesticides is vital to the protection of health and property.
- Know your audience.
- Speak clearly.
- Use layman's language.
- Keep it uncomplicated.
- Protect your reputation (don't speculate; don't give out proprietary information; don't talk about your opposition).
- Body language is important: purposeful pacing, firm stance, hands in lap or on table; friendly and relaxed facial expression.

Caroline thought this training was worth her time.

Agenda item: Any action on the preemption front? Short answer is No.

MPMA newsletter: We have a new newsletter publisher; the October issue will be the first published by a professional newsletter publisher. It will be interesting to see what Barefoot Marketing can do for us. Of primary importance: readability and attractiveness to our readership; and optimization of vendor advertising (placement, appearance, etc.).

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October Board Meeting Minutes, cont

New business:

Formally nominate Board roster for 2024; vote on nominations, including Allied Board member

We nominated Lane Zimmerman for Board member; the motion carried.

What should be the term period for Allied Board members?

A motion was made to extend the term of office for Allied Board members to two years. This was seconded and voted on, and unanimously approved.

New/returning Active members (Crane, Xtreme, Cloverleaf): Cloverleaf Pest Control has re-joined MPMA: Welcome, Cloverleaf! And thank you! Crane and Xtreme were referred to NPMA's Matt Hemmindinger (membership director) for enrollment in the Joint State Membership program.

Future meeting venues: Shall we hopscotch around member firms' conference rooms, or look for a permanent place? Todd Leyse offered to have Adam's host the April 2024 meeting; Plunkett's will host in January 2024. So, we're okay until July of 2024. Meanwhile, Jay will look into Louie's (Cossetta-owned property in St. Paul; Jerry's grocery store in Woodbury (free conference room, and they will cater); and present ideas to the Board at our next meeting.

Dr. El Damir asked: Why don't we buy or lease our own offices? This was discussed, and it was agreed that Jay should reach out to other Associations and ask them how they handle meeting venues, property ownership, and all the rest -- like insurance, taxes, upkeep, etc.

Kathy Watrin doesn't think our membership is adequate to have our own offices. What else would we do with a building if not quarterly meetings?

Lane Zimmerman moved that we alternate east and west venues to ease some of the travel burden on members. The motion was voted on, and carried.

Next meeting:

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, January 16, 2024, 11:30 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.; the venue will be Plunkett's office in Fridley. Members may also attend via Zoom.

Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn; the motion carried, and Matt Eickman closed the meeting at 12:45 pm.

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Updates and changes to the 2024 Minnesota Structural Pest Management Conference

By Dr. Stephen Kells, BCE, University of Minnesota Extension

The 2024 Minnesota Structural Pest Management conference will take place on March 4 and 5, 2024. There are a couple of key changes that will occur with this conference that you should take note of for this year.

Location Change

The Minneapolis Convention Center is unavailable for us on March 4 and 5, so we have moved the conference back to the Heritage Center in Brooklyn Park. This is the

original Earl Brown Heritage Center. More news to follow.

The in-person Main Session will be on Tuesday March 5, 2024

We have had several requests for the main in-person session to be moved to Tuesday. This change will enable people to travel on Monday if they are coming to the in-person session. The change will also permit companies to address any customer requests from

the weekend that Monday morning before they arrive at the conference. The main session will cover SPCA, Cat S and Cat M, with Category P later that day.

On Monday afternoon (March 4, 2024) we will host the in-person Special Sessions for Category N and L.

In-Person Special Sessions

As requested, we are bringing back the in-person portion of

the Special Sessions and we will re-start the every-other year for the different extra categories. During the EVEN years, Category L (Mosquito and biting flies), and P (Vertebrate Pest Control) will be offered in-person. During the ODD years, starting in 2025, the in-person sessions will be Category E (Turf and Ornamental), Category J (Rights of Way). Of course every year, we will offer Category N (Fumigation) as an in-person session. All Special Sessions will be offered online as well. With new content recorded from the in-person sessions.

New Pro-Pest® Lookout Trap



JF Oakes, LLC has announced a new monitor/trap to their Ready to Use Pro-Pest® line. The Pro-Pest® Lookout monitor/trap has a highly effective, specially formulated, attractant already impregnated into the glue for roaches and common household crawling insects.

The new Pro-Pest® Lookout comes two traps per sheet, allowing flexibility of having two separate traps or one larger trap. Both configurations offer ramps on both ends, even after separating along the perforation.

Pro-Pest® Lookout monitor/traps are manufactured with heavy-duty card board and printed black interior. Easy to follow directions and tracking chart are printed on the bottom of each trap. Pro-Pest Lookout monitor/traps are discreet and easily placed to pinpoint infestations. Private Labeling is available.

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The Online Conference

We are planning for all sessions and categories to be online starting March 18 through April 30, 2024. The same format will be used.

Watch for new announcements and information at: <https://extension.umn.edu/pesticide-safety-and-environmental-education/structural-pesticide-applicators>.