



PestEx 2011 – a great success

Organised by the British Pest Control Association (BPCA), PestEx 2011 was held on 6 and 7 April in the ExCeL exhibition centre, in the heart of the old docklands area of London – in a venue which is to play host to several of the Olympic sporting events in 2012.

Like the Olympics, both exhibitors and visitors came from up and down the UK and also from around the globe. PestEx confirmed its status as the key European trade show.

With every stand sold in advance of the event opening, there were more than 70 exhibitors packing the hall. Over a third of the exhibitors came from overseas – from as far away as China and Australia, with several from the US along with companies from all across Europe as well as a large turn-out from the UK. What is good news is that 20% of all exhibitors were present for the very first time – an excellent indication of the state of health and innovation within the pest control industry.

Although there was a large international contingent, practical UK pest controllers were by no means overlooked, as the total attendance figures record. The official figures provided by the BPCA show a dramatic increase in total numbers of over 50% –from 1,011 in 2009 to 1,632 in 2011. The 2011 figure includes 418 people who came for both days. In addition, there were 279 registered exhibitor personnel. Meaning, in total over 2,000 people were involved with the event in one way or another.

Shift away from bedbug emphasis

Unlike some of the other international events products and techniques for bedbug management were not as strikingly obvious. Indicative, surely, as to the way the industry will finally go, were an increasing number of exhibitors promoting digital management recording systems for use by pest technicians. Also noticeable were manufacturers who were responding to the recessionary financial cutbacks within the UK, by introducing new ranges of retail Do-it-Yourself pest control products.

New magazine launched

During the event, the new BPCA chief executive, Simon Forrester took the opportunity to update BPCA members on association activities and to launch a new magazine designed to

be read by pest controller's customers who place the contracts. Called *a/exo*, which, very appropriately, is Greek for '*I protect*' it will be mailed out to at least 5,000 contacts, twice a year starting with issue one in June 2011.

"It's an important part of BPCA's strategic plan to deliver benefits and improve professionalism – *a/exo* will make clients much more aware of the importance of our industry and of the need to use professionals for pest control," said Simon.

As well as the exhibition there were topical seminar sessions. The most popular covered the Biocidal Products Directive and the potential impact within the UK of the forthcoming Sustainable Use Directive. Also very popular was the session covering pest control and the law.

This was the first PestEx event organised by BPCA chief executive Simon Forrester, who summed-up his feelings by saying: "I've organised many events across different sectors but PestEx is right up there with the best. I was very impressed by the quality and breadth of exhibitors, and the range of UK and international visitors, from technicians keen to improve their knowledge to senior management networking with their peers and suppliers. One delegate I spoke to said they always attend PestEx because of the quality of people to meet – almost everyone who's anyone is there.

"The business and practical seminars went down very well with delegates, and the panel discussions often got a good debate going. It's clear that proposed amendments to EU Directives which are likely to affect the way practical technicians go about their work was uppermost on their minds."

Summing-up the feelings of the UK exhibitors, Chris Parmiter, sales manager from Barretttine Environmental Health said: "In terms of the show, London and the venue itself looked fantastic and having all the facilities & the City on your doorstep is a real plus. From a distributor's point of view, we are happy to travel wherever we need to. One of the most important factors must be ease of access for the majority of those attending."

For Killgerm Chemicals, their marketing director Sabra Fearon said: "PestEx was a magical exhibition for Killgerm in more ways than one. Apart from the many conversations with UK customers, we were delighted with the number of international visitors who visited our stand. We believe that PestEx can rightfully claim to be the main international pest control show in Europe. We were also very pleased with the PWIPM meeting."

First time exhibitor, Dave Oldbury, Secretary to NPAP, said: "Manning the NPAP stand for the first time, I was very pleased at the number of visitors who took copies of the guidance documents that we had on display. PestEx also gave us the opportunity to launch the new

pest control procedures manual on bedbugs which was very well received both by UK and international visitors.”

The next PestEx exhibition will be in two years time. Once again it will be held at ExCeL on 11 & 12 April 2013. Consult www.pestex.org for details as they evolve.

2 May 2011

Frances McKim
