



## Introduction to Pest Control Programs

**An effective pest control program ensures that dairy food is protected from pests. This includes a written procedure that describes how pests are controlled and monitored, together with records to show details of the monitoring that is being done. Pest control programs must not pose a risk to food safety.**

### Types of pests

Examples of the common pests that need to be covered by the pest control program include: rodents (e.g. mice and rats), ants, flying insects, spiders, cockroaches and birds.

For information on specific pests, refer to a pest control company for professional advice. The references provided at the end of this note may also be useful but do not constitute professional advice.

### Creating and maintaining an effective pest management program

Effective pest management involves 4 main steps:

1. Understanding what a site needs.
2. Designing a program that meets the needs of the site without the risk of contaminating food.
3. Maintaining the program to ensure that it is effective and safe.
4. Investigating any observable pest activity, taking action to address problems and reporting back to management staff.

Companies often decide to contract a pest management company to carry out the work in steps 1 to 4. For example; (1) the pest control company can assess the customer's site to identify what pests need to be managed (2) design a program that includes what methods will be used, where pest control measures would be best placed, and how often the measures will be applied (3) visit regularly to monitor pest activity and carry out any further treatments that may be necessary, and (4) at the end of each visit provide written reports about what work has been done and what levels of pest activity have been found. They will also highlight any problems that need to be addressed so that a pest problem can be prevented.

This contract service assists in reducing the amount of time it takes to manage a pest control program, however, it is important to remember that the manufacturer is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the pest control program is safe and effective.

Therefore, a company representative must always have overall responsibility for the pest management program. This includes reviewing the reports at the end of each service visit and discussing any outcomes with the contractor. This is an opportunity for the company to understand if there are any problems, to hear any recommendations and to decide what action to take.

An effective pest control program starts with the standards of housekeeping and maintenance at the site. Good house-keeping practices and maintenance help prevent pest issues and minimise the need for pest control treatments.

### Pest management methods

Effective programs combine different treatment methods to get the best overall result. There are two categories available: preventative methods versus control methods.

Preventative methods work by minimising access to food and shelter (e.g. warmth, dryness, darkness, hiding places, perches and crevices). An example of a preventative method is using fly screens on any windows that can be opened. Other examples are:

- removing clutter such as stacks of pallets.
- making sure that food is tightly sealed.
- making buildings pest-proof.

Control methods work by repelling or killing the pests. A simple example of a control method is removing spiders and their webs as soon as they are found. Other examples include:

- fly traps and electronic fly killers.
- non-poisonous traps for mice/rats or poisonous baits for mice/rats.

The manufacturer must ensure that the selected methods will not create food safety hazards. For example, use lockable bait stations if applying poisoned baits and use 'wax block' poison baits to avoid accidental spread of bait granules.

Records in relation to these pest management activities should be kept. For example, records indicating that the company has removed or completely sealed all foods against contamination during fumigation or fogging treatments, or cleaned all equipment and surfaces after fumigation.

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### Documenting the pest control program

After the site needs have been assessed and the pest control program has been designed, the manufacturer must document the program in writing.

This will consist of the procedure/s that describe the program, as well as the records which show how the program is being complied with.

In addition, the manufacturer will need to keep any documents which are necessary to support the program or records. For example, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS's) should be kept to show that the chemicals in the program are appropriate for their application. A site plan should be kept to help demonstrate the location of all bait stations. A preventative maintenance schedule should also be kept to show when important parts need to be changed.

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### Summary

Overall the components of a pest control program should include:

- Written procedures describing the program (how pests are monitored and controlled, and how frequently monitoring is carried out).
- Records demonstrating compliance with the program (date of the check, what was checked, person carrying out the check, when it was checked and the results of the check, e.g. inspection reports and sighting reports).
- Records of any recommendations received and corrective actions taken.
- Support documents (eg. site plan, MSDS's, contractor licences and insurance certificates, contract agreement, recommended frequencies for maintenance work such as changes of UV lights & glue boards).
- The name of person responsible for overseeing the pest control program.
- A review of the program to ensure it is still effective and meets the needs of the site, e.g. annually.

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### References

1. Codex Alimentarius Commission, (2003), 'Recommended International Code of Practice General Principles of Food Hygiene, CAC/RCP 1-1969, Rev.4 -2003.'  
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2. Food Standards Agency - United Kingdom (November 2005) 'A guide to the food hygiene and other regulations for the meat industry - working draft.'  
[www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/mhg9jan06.pdf](http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/mhg9jan06.pdf)
3. Food Standards Agency - United Kingdom, (May 2006), 'Pest Control.'  
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### Further information

Other Dairy Food Safety Notes are available at [www.dairysafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.dairysafe.vic.gov.au)

Or contact:

Dairy Food Safety Victoria

[info@dairysafe.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@dairysafe.vic.gov.au)

tel (03) 9810 5900

PO Box 840

Hawthorn VIC 3122

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