



The State of Our Future



2020-21 WINTER NEWSLETTER

THE PEST DISPATCH

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Matt Lang, Guardian Pest Solutions • mlang@guardian-online.com

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Using Disinfectant and Sanitizer
for Your Home or Business

Tiny, Jumping, Flying, Biting... Psyllids

Budget Your Way to Success
By Understanding Your
Revenue and Expenses

PG. 7



Choosing the right formula
for tough ant infestation



With the season winding down, I hope this issue finds you and your family healthy and looking forward.

Due to the pandemic, Pest World 2020 was conducted virtually. NPMA did a great job putting together a three-day conference filled with the latest pest control education, motivational speakers, and vendors showcasing the industry products. Their platform was very user friendly and easy to navigate between sessions, vendor chat rooms, and for a brain break in the pest game room. Even though Pest World live was cancelled, they were still able to provide some of that Nashville entertainment. Like many others, I'm looking forward to attending Pest World 2021 in Las Vegas!

Tech has forever changed the way we conduct business. Companies are using Zoom or Webex to interview potential employees. Have you tried that yet? Tools like Slack or the many alternatives help with team collaboration. Digital calendar programs keep you and your customers on the same page. Not to mention the many benefits of proposal, billing, and customer management software.

The COVID-19 crisis has brought about years of change in the way companies do business. According to a recent McKinsey Global Survey of executives, their companies

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PRESIDENT, CONT.

have accelerated the digitization of their customer and supply-chain interactions and of their internal operations by three to four years in just the past six months! What's more, respondents expect most of the changes to be long lasting and are already making the kinds of investments that all but ensure they will stick. Not surprisingly, consumers have moved dramatically toward online channels also.

With all of that in mind, your WPCA Board of Directors has made the decision to present our annual Spring Training Conference virtually. The event will be one day only, on Tuesday, February 9, 2021, and will include:

- **Keynote speaker Chris Kolenda** – Retired Army Colonel, Senior Advisor on Afghanistan and Pakistan, and author of *Leadership: The Warrior's Art*, which has sold over 50,000 copies.
- **Seven one-hour sessions**, presented by industry experts like Dr. Dini Miller and Brian Sundnas, designed to increase your pest control knowledge and improve skills for business owners and technicians. Up to 6 IL CEUs will be available.
- **Lunch discussions** where sponsors will provide updates on their new products and systems.
- **A networking reception** with prize drawings.
- **A free gift box** by mail to the first 100 members to register.

There's no question we'd rather meet in person, and we know you would too. But there's an exciting future ahead, and we have the technology available to stay safer this time 'round. We hope you'll join us for our Spring Training from your "home base." Use the enclosed brochure to register or visit our website at www.wisconsinpest.com.

Here's to the end of 2020 and a brighter 2021!

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USING DISINFECTANT AND SANITIZER FOR YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS

Mike Murray, Pesticide Program Manager, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection • michael.murray@wisconsin.gov

In this issue, Mike shares information from WI DATCP to help understand which products may help fight the spread of COVID-19. Specific product names should not be taken as an endorsement.

How are disinfectants and sanitizers different from cleaning products?

Products that claim to disinfect or sanitize are pesticides, however products that claim to clean are not. These terms are defined as the following:

- **Disinfecting:** Kills germs on surfaces or objects. Example: Lysol Disinfecting Spray (EPA Reg. No. 777-99)
- **Sanitizing:** Lowers the number of germs on surfaces or objects to a determined safe level either by killing or removing them. Example: Purell Food Service Sanitizer (EPA Reg. No. 84368-1-84150)
- **Cleaning:** Removes grime, dirt, dust, and other impurities from surfaces. Example: Pledge multi-surface cleaner

What is a pesticide?

A product that claims, states, or implies that it prevents, destroys, repels or mitigates a pest, is considered a pesticide under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).

All products intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest must be registered as a pesticide with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and will contain an EPA registration number on the label.

The term pest means any insect, rodent, nematodes, fungus, weed; or any other form of terrestrial or aquatic plant or animal life or virus, bacteria, or other microorganism (except viruses, bacteria, or other microorganisms on or in humans or animals). Depending where you intend to control your pest will determine whether the product you use is a pesticide.

Products for use on or in people or animals are not considered pesticides. If a sanitizing product is to be used on or in people or animals (such as

hand sanitizer), it is regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The FDA regulates hand sanitizers as over-the-counter drug products. Hand sanitizers are considered drug products because they are used to prevent disease on people.

Who regulates pesticides in Wisconsin?

In addition to federal regulation, pesticides used and distributed in Wisconsin are regulated and registered with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). To search for products registered for use in Wisconsin, visit the pesticide database at www.kellysolutions.com/wi/searchbyproductname.asp.

Where can I find products to use against the virus that causes COVID-19?

To find products that kill coronavirus, visit www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-coronavirus-covid-19. This product list is not intended to be an endorsement and all products must be used according to label directions. EPA expects the products on this list to kill the coronavirus that causes COVID-19, because they demonstrate the following:

- Effectiveness against the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19);
- Effectiveness against a pathogen that is harder to kill than SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19); or
- Effectiveness against a different human coronavirus similar to SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19).

If using a disinfectant product against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19), review EPA's six steps for safe and effective disinfectant use available at www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-04/documents/disinfectants-onepage.pdf.

Where do I find information to safely use a pesticide?

Read the pesticide label before using the product. The pesticide product label contains information for

(Continued on next page)



DISINFECTANT & SANITIZER, CONT.

how to use the product correctly and legally as well as contains information on potential hazards from using the product. It also includes directions for what to do in the event of a spill or poisoning. The National Pesticide Information Center has more information about how to read pesticide labels at <http://npic.orst.edu/health/readlabel.html>.

Not only is it important to read the pesticide product label, but it is important to ensure you are using the product in a safe manner. Pesticide safety depends on selecting the appropriate product for your need, wearing correct protective clothing, and using the product according to the label directions. Visit the National Pesticide Information Center for more information about safe use practices at <http://npic.orst.edu/health/safeuse.html>.

Is it safe to use a recipe found online to make my own “natural” pesticide?

DATCP strongly urges you to reconsider this. Although home remedies may look appealing, they can cause potential harm to humans, pets and plants, may not be effective, do not come with use

instructions, and could violate federal law. Know the risks of pesticide home remedies, explained in detail by the National Pesticide Information Center at <http://npic.orst.edu/pest/home-remedies.html>.

What if I hire someone to clean my property?

If you are considering hiring someone to clean, sanitize, or disinfect your property, applicators are required to comply with federal pesticide regulations. Mostly, this is accomplished by following pesticide product label directions for use. Wisconsin pesticide regulations exempts individuals and businesses using germicides, sanitizers, and disinfectants from the commercial pesticide applicator certification and licensure requirements. However, when using a restricted use pesticide these requirements do apply.

You should consider the following when reviewing an individual or business for hire:

- If an individual or business is claiming to control microscopic organisms or viruses on surfaces with a product, that product must be registered as a pesticide with the EPA. To know if a product is registered you can request an EPA registration number for the product and verify registration using DATCP's pesticide database at <https://www.kellysolutions.com/wi/searchbyproductname.asp>. If the individual or business is making false pesticide claims about an unregistered product, it is a violation of federal law.
- Individuals and businesses must use the EPA registered product according to the label directions.
- If an individual or business is making claims to treat against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19), ensure the product they intend to use is listed on EPA's list at <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-coronavirus-covid-19>.
- Individuals or businesses claiming to only provide cleaning services are not required to use EPA registered sanitizers and disinfectants.

Where can I find more information?

- Visit https://datcp.wi.gov/pages/programs_services/pesticidesproducts.aspx for more resources and a copy of this information in a flyer suitable for distribution to your clients.
- Call (608) 224-4548
- Email datcppesticideinfo@wi.gov

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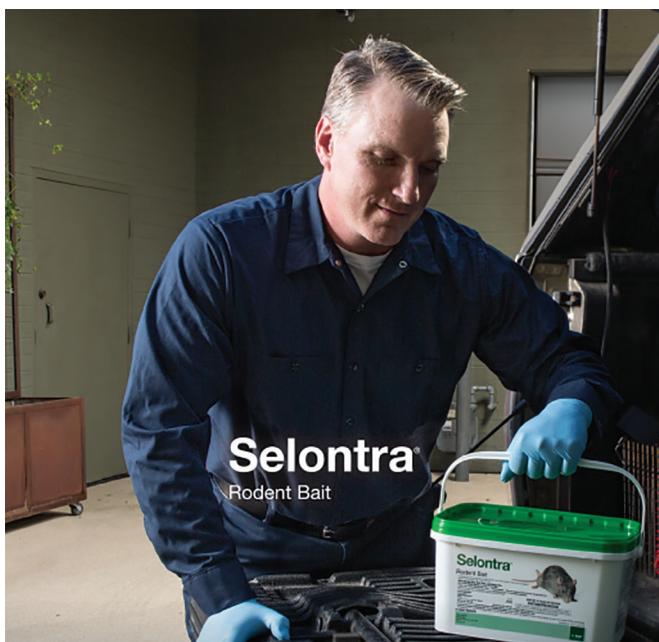


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2 Prescott, C.V., El-Amin, Vusa, and Smith, R.H. "Calciferols and Bait Shyness in the Laboratory Rat". Proceedings of the Fifteenth Vertebrate Pest Conference 1992. Paper 64. Whisson, Desley, "Rodenticides for Control of Norway Rats, Roof Rats, and House Mice". University of California Cooperative Extension, Poultry Fact Sheet No. 23, 1996.
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HOW TO PICK THE RIGHT FORMULATION FOR YOUR TOUGH ANT INFESTATION

Eric Paysen, Ph.D., Technical Services Manager
Syngenta Professional Pest Management

Tough ant infestations can cause even the most seasoned pest management professionals (PMPs) to scratch their heads. Ants are incredibly diverse and have adapted to virtually every surface on Earth. This diversity means a treatment strategy effective on one species is often completely useless on a different species—even on the same account.

Unfortunately, there isn't one universal solution for every ant infestation, but there are many great tools for finding success. To deliver reliable results:

1. Recognize the local ant species and know when you're dealing with an atypical infestation
2. Know the treatment strategy that works best for the species you're managing
3. Be versatile and ready to try something different if your first attempt doesn't get results
4. Understand how various formulations work and how they impact ant populations

To control many diverse ant species, a variety of insecticide formulations have been developed. Below is an overview of each formulation type and how they can be used successfully against difficult ant populations.

Liquid Residuals

These cover many active ingredients and specific formulations and can be broken into two broad categories:

Pyrethroid insecticides, with fast knockdown and potentially repellent effects, are best for treating nesting and potential nesting sites and providing a barrier around structure entries. Microencapsulated formulations are especially effective because they feature unique microcapsules that:

- Protect the active ingredient from environmental exposures
- Stick to the insect's exoskeleton
- Can prevent repellent effects

Slower-acting active ingredients are unlikely to stimulate repellent behavior, provide delayed mortality and are easily passed to nestmates through horizontal transfer. This category includes products which are designed for tough ant infestations and best used:

- When pressure from super-colony ants is high
- As a perimeter treatment
- For following leading edges and existing ant trails
- In conjunction with baits

Baits

Baits give PMPs high levels of control with low doses of active ingredients. They combine food materials with slow-acting active ingredients, which are eaten by worker ants, carried back to the colony and consumed by larvae and other ants through trophallaxis. Control generally begins within 24 hours.

Ant baits fall into two categories:

1. **Gel baits** are palatable to sweet-loving ants, including many super-colony ants
2. **Solid granular baits** incorporate oils and proteins in their formulations

Ants can be picky and change their tastes. Apply a test spot to see if they readily consume the bait. If they don't accept it, try other baits, as one will usually do the trick.

(Continued on next page)

ANT INFESTATION, CONT.

Granular Insecticides

An often-overlooked formulation, granular insecticides, provide a long-lasting residual and quick contact mortality. Applications settle through surface obstacles to reach ants in the soil. A thorough application can prevent ants and eliminate potential breeding grounds.

©2020 Syngenta. Syngenta offers a full line of ant management products and the know-how to help you tackle your toughest infestations. If you have ant questions or need ideas, reach out to your Syngenta territory manager or connect at SyngentaPMP.com, and on Facebook or Twitter.

Always read and follow label instructions. Some products may not be registered for sale or use in all states or counties and/or may have state-specific use requirements. Please check with your local extension service to ensure registration and proper use.

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TINY, JUMPING, FLYING, BITING... PSYLLIDS

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In the pest control industry, we've all bumped into cases of delusory parasitosis from time to time. If a client calls complaining of tiny, jumping, flying, biting insects, we might start suspecting delusory parasitosis as there simply aren't many insects that fit the profile. For our commonest "biters," bed bugs can't jump or fly and fleas can't fly. Likewise, springtails are tiny and jump, but can't bite or fly. However, under the right conditions in autumn, there's another insect that pops up on occasion which does fit the bill—hackberry psyllids (*Pachypsylla* spp.).



Hackberry psyllids (pronounced "sill-ids") resemble miniature cicadas and are about 1/10th inch long. They have mottled grayish bodies and are sometimes called "jumping

plant lice" or "hackberry nipple gall makers". True to their name, these insects are associated with hackberry trees (*Celtis occidentalis*), which are commonly planted in the landscape as both yard and street trees.



In spring, overwintering psyllids lay eggs on emerging hackberry leaves. As the young psyllids emerge, their feeding causes unusual distortion of the leaf tissue, resulting in small "nipple-like" lumps (galls) on the leaves. The young psyllids feed and develop within the protection of their leaf galls. Eventually, they complete their development and the next generation of adult psyllids emerges from the galls.

Similar to boxelder bugs, Asian lady beetles, and cluster flies, hackberry psyllids seek out sheltered overwintering spots in the fall and can easily invade homes and other structures. However, given their tiny size, hackberry psyllids are often overlooked and can easily squeeze through most window screens

to make their way indoors. In a home, these insects face death by desiccation due to the dry conditions, but can be a nuisance. Occasionally, they invade in fall and activity resumes during warm spells over the course of a winter.



In addition to being a nuisance, hackberry psyllids can "bite". These insects feed on sap from hackberry trees but have a habit of "testing" various surfaces they land on to assess if another food source has been found. If they happen to land on exposed skin, the probing from their beak-like mouthparts can feel like a small pinch. Hackberry psyllids don't feed on blood or inject any kind of venom, but the probing with their mouthparts can be unpleasant.

From a pest control perspective, several things are important for technicians to keep in mind:

1. A scenario might sound like delusory parasitosis, but don't pass judgment until you've assessed the situation in person. There are infrequently-encountered insects (such as hackberry psyllids) that occasionally pop up.
2. Collect a sample and get it under magnification. With their small size, hackberry psyllids might be mistaken for springtails given their jumping habits.
3. Checking a home's surroundings can help shed some light on a suspected case of hackberry psyllids. Look for nearby hackberry trees—check leaves for the presence of galls; in fall, this may mean checking fallen leaves on the ground.
4. If hackberry psyllids are confirmed, take an integrated approach similar to other fall invaders. Given their small size, replacing window screen material for a finer mesh size can be an important step—especially if these insects are encountered on an annual basis at a home.



BUDGET YOUR WAY TO SUCCESS BY UNDERSTANDING YOUR REVENUE AND EXPENSES



Daniel S. Gordon, CPA • dan@pcobookkeepers.com

Budgeting is a critical component to your financial and operational game plan. Knowing what you want to accomplish strategically is vital, and measuring against this objective is paramount. A budget is your game plan. Not creating a budget is like driving

down a dark street at night with your headlights off.

Keys to a successful budget:

- Create realistic sales and expense forecasts.
- Make realistic goals based on your current income and expenses.
- Look at it often and adjust to achieve your goals.

Pest control company revenues can be categorized into three main areas: route work, renewals, and new sales. When setting up your budget, it's important to enable your organization to monitor these revenue groups individually. In pest control we sell recurring revenue service contracts, and by making a few calculations, we can predict with great accuracy how much revenue we're going to produce for the year in terms of route work and renewals. New sales are the wild card, but we can even predict them with some accuracy, as well, based on historic factors. Getting your revenue forecast close is extremely important because it helps you set up your cost structure.

Your cost structure begins with direct costs, such as technician labor, service vehicle costs, and materials. How much annual revenue should one of your technicians produce? Each firm is different. Divide total revenue forecast by annual expected technician production number, and you will come up with the number of technicians needed to achieve your revenue goals.

Clearly, each technician will need a vehicle. Armed with this knowledge we should be able to budget for direct labor costs and vehicle costs including lease payments, fuel, repairs and insurance. We also should have a good idea of what our material cost should be as a percentage of revenue, and therefore we should be able to estimate our material costs based on the revenue forecast.

Once you are armed with a revenue forecast and a budget for direct costs, you can calculate your forecasted gross margin (revenue minus direct costs expressed as a decimal). You should shoot for a 50-55% gross margin. Gross margins are the most important key performance indicator (KPI) when growing a pest control company.

Below the gross margin line, you should have your sales and marketing category. I caution against using a straight percentage of revenue to budget for marketing. While many do it this way, I would argue that you should budget for growth. What I mean here is: how many new customers do you want and how much are you willing to pay for each of those new customers? As a reality check, look at that number and ask yourself if you can afford it. If you can't, but you are committed to growing by your projected number, you will need to find some outside financing.

The amount you want to spend on marketing and the methodology you used to calculate that number are very important. I've seen many firms overspend themselves into financial troubles by being too aggressive in their marketing spend and too optimistic in the predicted results. Be careful!

Once you've budgeted for revenues, direct costs, sales and marketing it's time for the last piece of the puzzle: general and administrative (G&A) costs.

(Continued on next page)

BUDGET, CONT.

These are the costs of running the office, including customer service representatives, rent, utilities, copier and computer leases. Look at your prior year profit and loss statement and determine which costs will increase and which will not and list them on the budget. Once G&A is subtracted from gross margin, less selling and marketing, you will be left with projected net income.

Conclusion: Know where you want to go in your business in terms of growth, profitability and timeframe. Make a plan. Reduce the plan to a line by line budget and execute on the plan. If you take these steps in the future you should find that you have better visibility and may avoid costly errors in your business.

Daniel S. Gordon is a CPA in New Jersey and owns an accounting and consulting firm that caters to pest management firms throughout the U.S. For more information, visit pcobookkeepers.com or reach Dan at dan@pcobookkeepers.com.

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THE PEST DISPATCH

Published by the Wisconsin Pest Control Association,
a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the
interest of the pest management industry in Wisconsin.
www.wisconsinpest.com

Production: Barefoot Marketing, Milwaukee, WI
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