

Pest Management News

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What You Should Know Before Hiring a Pest Control Company

John D. Hopkins

What did you find.....ants, termites, cockroaches, spiders, bed bugs, fleas, flies, gnats, bees, wasps, ticks, clothes moths, carpet beetles, wood-destroying beetles, stored product pests, or something else??? Most pests encountered are merely a nuisance, while some are capable of causing serious damage to property. Others may, bite, sting or transmit disease-causing agents. After the initial shock of finding some type of insect or other pest in their home, many people suffer additional anxiety when trying to decide which pest control company to hire. This article is intended to help the average person with the information needed to make that decision.

Pest Management Professionals (PMPs) who are licensed in the state of Arkansas must take and pass an examination administered by the Arkansas State Plant Board (501-225-1598) and must attend training on a continual basis to maintain their license. When hiring a pest control company, always carefully read and understand the contract you sign. Ask the salesperson to clarify anything you do not understand or with which you do not feel comfortable. Check with the Better Business Bureau or a present customer of the company to satisfy yourself that the company you select has a good record. Pest control services can be separated into two different categories: general household pest control (also called "pest control" in the industry) and termite control.

General Household Pest Control Service is the type of service provided for all pests with the exception of termites, wood destroying insects, and bed bugs (usually requires a separate contract). When requiring general household pest control service, you should base your selection decision on two things: 1) an evaluation of the effectiveness of a company's pest management methods and 2) the company's customer service record.

1) Evaluating Pest Management Methods: Ask for specific steps that the PMP will, use in their pest management program. The University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture recommends the use of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Strategy when developing a pest control program. IPM is a decision making process that anticipates & prevents pest activity & infestation by combining several control tactics to achieve long term solutions. The pest control company should be responsible for providing the five basic steps in an "IPM Program". These include; inspection, target pest identification, establishing an action threshold (joint decision with the customer), employment of two or more control measures that are environmentally compatible & economically feasible, and a follow-

up evaluation of effectiveness. With the IPM approach, there are also certain steps that the homeowner/customer is responsible for, that being sanitation and pest exclusion.

Customer Responsibilities for Sanitation:

- Keep the kitchen area clean.
- Wipe down countertops, stove, and cabinets with warm, soapy water.
- Keep food in sealed containers, including pet food that may be stored outside.
- Keep garbage cans covered.
- Take out the trash at least once a week.
- Do not leave water standing in the sink. Water is the most important factor for pest survival.
- Clean out cabinets. Beetles or moths found in the kitchen area may have come from food that is infested. Check foods such as cereals, rice, and grains to see if they are infested. Discard infested food. Vacuum cabinets thoroughly and wipe surfaces clean before the pest control operator arrives. Leave the cabinets empty so the PMP has a clear treatment area. Chemical treatment should be confined to the cracks and crevices of the cabinet because that is where the insect pests will hide. Do not replace cabinet items until the treatment is dry.
- Clean out closets. Beetles or moths found in the bedroom, hall, or closet areas may be coming from clothing or carpeting. Check woolen sweaters and rugs for moth cases or beetle larvae as well as the adult forms. Dry cleaning clothes before storing them will make clothes less attractive to these destructive insects. Dry cleaning after an infestation is discovered will also kill these destructive insects. Thoroughly brushing clothing or rugs outside will also help eliminate these insects. After inspecting and cleaning clothes or rugs, clean out closets and thoroughly vacuum the inside before the PMP arrives.
- Fix leaky pipes that can cause moisture problems. Moisture problems cause mold and fungi to grow. Mold and fungi are used as food by some beetles and other small nuisance insects such as psocids. Chemicals alone cannot effectively control these types of insects unless the moisture problem is solved.

Customer Responsibilities for Exclusion:

- Repair window screens and doors to keep flying insects such as gnats, mosquitoes, and flies from entering.
- Repair door sweeps to exclude crawling pests such as cockroaches, millipedes, spiders or pillbugs.

2) Evaluating a Company's Customer Service Record: Customer satisfaction is mostly a matter of personal preference.

Ask neighbors/friends to recommend a pest control company they were satisfied with:

- Why did they select that company?
- Have they had bad experiences with other companies?

Ask the prospective company:

- To provide you with a list of references.
- Other things to observe about the company:

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- Does the PMP appear neat and professional?
- Is your PMP on time?
- o Is the PMP able to answer your questions satisfactorily?

Things that you should be sure of:

- What is your chemical tolerance? Are you sensitive? Are you indifferent?
- Do the proposed techniques fit your lifestyle? If your PMP asked you to carry out all the suggestions for sanitation and pest exclusion listed above, would you be willing to do them? Some pest control companies will do minor repairs such as fixing leaky pipes, repairing window screens, and caulking cracks for an additional fee. Do you need to look for a pest control company that can offer you these additional services?
- Do you prefer monthly, quarterly, or yearly pest control? Some contracts will allow you to call the company only when you have a pest problem. Products have changed over the years so that monthly applications to non-harborage areas are not necessary. Even though most PMPs service monthly, homeowners can investigate other options. The trend is toward more extensive service with fewer trips. One advantage to monthly pest control is that someone is looking at your house regularly to identify pest problems or things that may lead to a future problem. One disadvantage of monthly pest control is that homeowners sometimes insist that PMPs apply a chemical treatment monthly whether there is a pest problem or not. Monthly chemical treatments may not be necessary and may cause undue exposure to the occupants. Would you be willing to have someone monitor your house monthly and apply a chemical treatment as needed? Sometimes it is not even necessary for the PMP to enter the home to take care of pest problems. Most insect pests originate outside the home. Servicing from the outside does not require you to be home when the servicing is done, which is convenient if you have a busy schedule. Outside treatments also reduce inside exposure to occupants. Ask about perimeter treatments?
- If you chose quarterly or yearly pest control, will you be charged if you call the PMP for a
 problem between scheduled visits? As a rule, materials that are registered for General
 Household Pest Control will not last for a whole year. However, you are buying the
 expertise of the PMP and that includes inspections of inaccessible voids where insects
 may occur, such as attics, soffits, eaves, wall voids, built-in furniture, and the like.
- Are the prospective company's prices and service comparable to that offered by competitors? Remember, the lowest price does not always mean the best deal when shopping for pest control service.
- Are you and the pest control company clear on the terms of your contract? Be sure the contract includes the name of the company, the length of service for the contract, what services are covered, and the price.
- Make sure to look for possible exclusion clauses in the contract. Exclusion clauses specify the things that can cause the contract to be canceled.
- Can either you or the pest control company cancel? Will there be penalties assessed if you cancel the contract?
- Is there an arbitration clause or other method to settle possible disputes?
- Ask to see a certificate of insurance. Does the company carry complete insurance coverage with adequate coverage including an "errors and omissions" clause? An "errors and

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omissions" clause covers things like inadvertent staining on carpets or accidental breakage of items.

- Be sure that the company is licensed by the Arkansas State Plant Board (501-225-1598).
- The contract should be signed by both parties.

Subterranean Termite Control Service. If you have a termite infestation in your home, it is recommended that you **DO NOT** attempt to do your own treatment. Contract the services of a pest management professional (PMP) that is licensed by the Arkansas State Plant Board for "Termite and Other Structural Pest Control." PMPs have training, specialized equipment that is not feasible for a homeowner to purchase, and control products not available to the homeowner. PMPs are trained in special application procedures to ensure the best protection for your home. These procedures include trench applications, drilling, rodding, and application to voids that are beyond most homeowner's expertise. To be performed correctly, these procedures should be done by a skilled professional.

If you need termite control service, consider the following, in addition to the evaluation criteria listed under General Household Pest Control:

- Ask if the company has experience in dealing with subterranean termites. If they do, ask for the number of years they have worked in termite control, and ask for the number of jobs completed.
- Ask for references to previous subterranean termite work that has been completed.
- Do not feel pressured by a company to buy a treatment on the spot. Take a few days to thoroughly research treatment options and different pest control companies. Termites work slowly, and will do little additional damage in the time you take to select a reputable termite control company.
- Compare prices with contract coverage from different pest control companies and get their recommendations concerning the most effective method of treatment for you.
- Make sure that the pest control company makes a complete inspection of the entire building from crawl space to attic.
- Make sure your crawl space or attic is accessible and does not contain so much clutter that the PMP cannot do a proper inspection. It is your responsibility to remove any clutter that would impede a thorough inspection. In order to do the inspection, the PMP should carry protective clothing for crawl space inspections, plus a flashlight, a probe, a moisture meter, and a clipboard to draw a graph of the inspection areas. The inspection should determine the point of termite entry into a structure and the extent of the infestation. The PMP cannot recommend the proper treatment for your structure without a thorough inspection.
- Be sure to get a written report that tells you the location(s) of the infestation(s) and the probable point(s) of entry into the structure. The report should include a graph indicating areas of termite activity. Understand that this is a visual inspection only. Additional damage may be found in concealed or hidden areas. The graph cannot guarantee that all damage is represented. Further inspection by a building expert or structural engineer may be required where extensive damage has occurred. It stands to reason that the older the home, the greater the probability of damage or concealed areas (areas that have been covered or repaired).

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Contracts for Termite Control Service:

- Be aware that there are many different types of contracts for termite control. Contract
 wording will vary from company to company. Contracts also will vary with the type of
 construction that is being treated. Note that contracts for bait treatments will differ from
 contracts for soil termiticide treatments. In all cases, read the contract and know what you
 are getting.
- Termite contracts generally have two sides. Read both sides thoroughly.
- Some companies will offer a contract with a "retreatment only" clause. "Retreatment only" generally means that the company will come out and retreat your house if termites infest the structure after they have treated it. The company will not assume liability for damage done by the termites. There may be a number of exclusion clauses, so be sure to read and understand the contract you sign.
- Some contracts contain a "damage replacement" clause. "Damage replacement" clauses
 usually mean that the company will replace and pay for any damages incurred by the
 termites while you have been under contract with the company. There may be a number
 of exclusion clauses associated with this type of contract also, so be sure to read and
 understand the contract you sign.
- If your house is constructed with any Exterior Insulating Finishing System (EIFS), synthetic stucco, rigid foam board insulation, or any other decorative facade that is installed below the soil line (below grade), many pest control companies will not issue either a "retreatment only" or "damage replacement" type contract unless contact with the soil is cut off, leaving an inspection space of 6 to 8 inches. The inspection space is now a requirement in the Southern Building Code.
- Any type of construction that will create "conducive conditions," or conditions that are favorable to termite infestation and survival, will disqualify many homeowners from receiving contracts with "retreatment only" or "damage replacement" clauses. Some conducive conditions are leaking roofs, landscape plants that are too close to the house, water sprinklers directed toward the house, and wood-to-ground contact. There are many more.
- Be aware that the contract for treatment of an existing subterranean termite infestation may not be the same as the contract for an annual inspection.
- Make sure you have a contract before any work begins.
- Contracts should contain the name and address of the pest control firm.
- Make sure you know the length of time for which the contract is good.
- Know which parties can cancel the contract and at what anniversary date.
- Look on the back for disclaimers. Look for "small print."
- Look for an arbitration clause or other methods to settle disputes.
- Ask if the contract makes any distinction between the Formosan subterranean termite and native subterranean termite. Any company whose contract makes a distinction probably realizes the need for this separation. Research indicates that the Formosan subterranean termite is more aggressive and may cause significant damage in a shorter period of time compared to native subterranean termites. **BE AWARE THAT FORMOSAN SUBTERRANEAN TERMITES HAVE NOT BEEN FOUND IN ARKANSAS TO DATE.**

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• Remember that the wording of the contract is only as strong as the parties involved. Make sure the company with which you contract has adequate coverage and the financial stability to perform all contractual obligations.

You can always call the Arkansas State Plant Board (501-225-1598 or <u>Arkansas-state-plant-board</u>) and ask if the company with whom you may contract has any outstanding complaints. If they do, ask for the nature of those complaints. The state law dealing with pest control in Arkansas is known as Circular 6 - ARKANSAS PEST CONTROL LAW- ACT 488 of 1975 as Amended, ACA Section 17-37-101 through 17-37-221 and the most recent revision (revised December, 2013) can be viewed online at <u>Circular 6 Arkansas Pest Control Law</u>.

If you have other questions or if you want to verify the identity of an insect infesting your home, you may contact your local Cooperative Extension office (contact information is available at http://www.uaex.edu/findus/county_offices.htm).

By being familiar with the things discussed above, you can be confident in your choice of a pest management professional. Pay attention to the value and the service you expect for the price you pay. Also, remember that good pest control cannot be achieved without your cooperation and attention to things you are responsible for doing.

Cattle Lice and Grubs

Kelly M. Loftin

Lice are potential wintertime pests of several livestock species, especially stressed animals. Producers should be aware of potential louse infestations on their cattle this upcoming winter. In some cases, severe direct economic losses in cattle production caused by biting or sucking lice may occur. Heavy louse infestations add to the stress of cold weather, shipping, poor nutrition and internal parasite load. Lice are generally most abundant on animals during the period of greatest winter stress and continue through early spring.

Lice are winter pests because, generally, they do not survive



Cattle biting louse (left) and long-nosed cattle louse (right). Source: Lancaster, J.L. and M.V. Meisch. (1986) *Arthropods in Livestock and Poultry Production*. Published by Ellis Horwood Limited. West Sussex, England.

well in the summer because hot temperatures are lethal. However, one or two percent of animals may serve as chronically infested "reservoir" animals. A few lice on the reservoir animals survive on cooler

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areas of the body such as the ear tips. As temperatures cool, lice may move onto uninfested animals. Crowed conditions that often occur at winter feed troughs exasperate this spread.

Lice are small (1/10 to 1/8 inch), wingless, species-specific external parasites of livestock and poultry. In cattle, one species of biting lice, the cattle biting louse (*Bovicola bovis*) and three species of sucking lice; the shortnosed cattle louse (*Haematopinus eurysternus*), the long-nosed cattle louse (*Linognathus vitula*), cattle tail louse (*Haematopinus quadriptusus*) and the little blue cattle louse (*Solenoptes capillatus*) occur. Sucking lice pierce the skin and suck blood while the biting lice move about on the animal chewing hairs, skin and secretions. Both types of lice are problems during the winter and early spring but as mentioned earlier reproduce year-round at least on some animals. Lice are spread from animal to animal by direct contact such as shipping or feeding. Animals infested with lice will have an unkempt coat, scaly skin and possibly raw areas on the skin. Infested animals will scratch and rub to relieve the itching caused by lice. Often in heavy infestations, clumps of hair will fall off. Weight loss or reduced weight gain can occur with heavy louse infestations.

Lice can produce multiple generations per year, thus allowing numbers to become high if uncontrolled. All louse stages (egg, nymph and adult) are found on the animal. Adult female lice glue eggs (called nits) to hairs, eggs hatch into nymphs in about 10 to 15 days, and after three molts, nymphs become adults. It requires about 1 month for an egg to develop into an adult. In cattle, light louse infestations are easily overlooked. Heavier infestations are easier to recognize by animals' rubbing and loss of hair. A louse population on cattle can be estimated by examining five one inch square areas on the face, face, dewlap, neck, back and base of the tail. Lice populations on cattle are usually categorized as very slight (less than 5 per square inch), slight (5-10 per square inch), moderate (10-20 per square inch), severe (20-50 per square inch) and very severe (over 50 per square inch).

Good nutrition usually reduces the negative effects of lice infestations on livestock and is the foundation of a louse control program. Sufficient nutrition will allow the animal to better deal with blood loss and irritation. Another very important component of lice prevention is to assume that all purchased or "new" animals are infested. With this said, new animals should be isolated from the rest of the herd until a full course of louse treatment is completed.

Before treating louse infested cattle, one very important question must be asked and answered. Were your cattle treated for cattle grubs between Aug. 1 and Oct. 15? The answer dictates which products should be used to control lice in the winter and late spring. If cattle were treated at the appropriate time (between Aug. 1 and Oct. 15) with systemic insecticides (primarily endectocides containing doramectin, ivermectin or moxidectin to control cattle grubs), then systemic insecticides can be used to treat cattle for lice. If not, non-systemic insecticides must be used to control lice in the winter and early spring. Treatment with systemic insecticides after Oct. 15 in cattle that were not treated for cattle grubs can result in toxic reaction to dying grubs. When common cattle grubs die in the esophagus, cattle will have difficulty breathing and may vomit, salivate and die. If northern cattle grubs die in the spinal cord, cattle may exhibit posterior paralysis and weakened back legs but usually recover.

Insecticides used for louse control are divided into two major categories; systemic products and nonsystemic products for winter treatment of lice on cattle, selection of the right insecticide is crucial. If cattle were treated with systemic products (endectocide) containing doramectin, ivermectin or

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moxidectin at the appropriate time for cattle grubs, then endectocides can be used to control lice in the winter. Pour-on endectocides will kill both biting and chewing lice while injectable insecticides kill only sucking lice.

However, if cattle were not treated with a systemic insecticide for cattle grubs at the appropriate time, then non-systemic products should be used. Non-systemic insecticides effective against lice include the pyrethoids such as permethrin, cyfluthrin, zeta-cypermethrin, gamma-cyhalothrin, and lambda-cyhalothrin. Pour-on pyrethroids effective against lice include those containing permethrin, permethrin and diflubenzuron (an insect growth regulator), cyfluthrin, lambda- cyhalothrin and gamma-cyhalothrin. In addition, dust bags containing pyrethroids have shown efficacy against lice. Although organophosphate products containing coumaphos, famphur, fenthion, phosmet and trichlorfon kill lice, they can exhibit systemic activity in treated animals. Remember to follow label directions and that not all insecticides labeled for use on beef cattle are registered for use on dairy cattle. To see a listing of insecticides available for louse control, consult the animal section of *MP144, Insecticide Recommendations for Arkansas*. http://www.uaex.edu/publications/mp-144.aspx

Chronic Wasting Disease: Can Feral Hogs Be Naturally Infected?

Becky McPeake

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was first detected in Arkansas in 2016. By January 2018, CWD has been reported in 369 white-tailed deer and elk in 10 counties (Benton, Boone, Carroll, Madison, Marion, Newton, Pope, Searcy, Sebastian, and Washington). CWD is a neurodegenerative disease found in members of the deer family. Research suggests the CWD prion can be passed from infected deer and elk through contact with feces, urine, or saliva, as well as contact with CWD-infected carcasses or contaminated soil. (For additional information about CWD, refer to "<u>Chronic Wasting Disease in Deer</u> and Elk in Arkansas," FSA9110.) Subsequent investigations reveal an unexpectedly high prevalence (nearly 25%) in Newton County. Large numbers of feral hogs also inhabit this same region.

Experimental CWD inoculation of domestic swine indicate they are susceptible to infection. While the amount of abnormal prion protein found in orally-inoculated pigs was small, the findings raise the possibility of feral hogs



Photo by Becky McPeake

becoming infected with CWD and shedding prions which are picked up by deer or elk.

The occurrence of CWD-positive deer and elk cohabitating with feral hogs in Arkansas has generated interest in determining the potential for cross-species transmission of CWD in a natural setting. Clint Turnage, a Wildlife Disease Biologist with USDA Veterinary Services, recently coordinated an effort to collect and test a sample of feral hogs removed by agencies including USDA Wildlife Services,

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Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and U.S. Forest Service. Samples have been sent to laboratories for various diagnostic assays. Results are pending.

To reduce the incidence of CWD, experts recommend avoiding practices which unnecessarily congregate deer or elk. In Arkansas it is unlawful to feed wildlife within the 16-county CWD Management Zone. Because CWD management also includes reducing the number of deer and elk, it is legal for bait to be used to hunt deer and elk on private land from September 1 to December 31 in the CWD Management Zone. Baiting for management, research, or nuisance wildlife control (such as feral hogs) is allowable only with approval by the Chief of Wildlife Management at the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

Currently, Extension is conducting a demonstration-study using commercially-available feeders with species recognition technology. These feeders detect an approaching animal and allow access to bait based on the image. Though expensive, such technologies offer the potential to help with feral hog control while keeping deer and elk from congregating in areas where CWD is of concern. Results from this demonstration are pending.

Potato Common Scab

Sherrie E. Smith

Potato Common scab of potato, caused by a bacterium, Streptomyces scabies, is found in most potato production areas of the world. Other common names for this disease are "Russet scab", "Erumpent scab", and "Pitted scab". Symptoms are usually confined to the tubers. Young tubers are infected through lenticels and stomata. Lesions are circular to irregular in shape and often coalesce into large areas on the surface of the tuber. As the tuber matures, the lesions become rough, cracked, and tan to dark brown. Superficial lesions are called Russet scab, slightly raised (Erumpent scab), and sunken (Pitted scab). The type of lesion is dependent on potato cultivar, aggressiveness of the streptomyces strain. and the environment. Control of Common scab is difficult. The most critical control measure is planting only scab free seed tubers. A crop rotation of 3 to 4 vears is helpful. High soil moisture should be maintained for 4 to 6 weeks after swelling of stolon tips. Soil pH is important in scab control. Potatoes are commonly grown in soils with a pH of 5.0 to 5.2 for control of common scab. Avoid alkaline organic fertilizers such as ashes, poultry/fresh farmyard

Potato Common Scab- Streptomyces scabies



Photo by Sherrie E. Smith

manure. Most important, there are cultivars with some resistance. None however are immune. Accent, Anna, Anya, Arran Pilot, Avondale, Balmoral, Banba, Camelot, Cara, Carlingford, Carnaval, Challenger, Chaski, Chopin, Claret, Cosmos, Courlan Druid, Electra, Ellie, Galactica, Golden

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Wonder, Habibi, Inca Bella, Inca dawn, Jester, King Edward, La Strada, Lady Christl, Lanorma, Lulu, Malin, Manhattan, Mayan Gold, Mayan Queen, Mayan Twilight, Melody, Mimi, Morene, Nadine, Orchestra, Paru, Pentland Crown, Picasso, Piccolo Star, Pink Gypsy, Pizazz, Russet Burbank, Saturna, and Savanna have been identified as having resistance.

Name That Weed

This month's weed is usually only seen in drought prone areas of yards, fairways and fields. The best control is to promote dense turf, with proper fertility and moisture to reduce the infestation over time. I

have it in a couple of spots in my yard and chemical control is tough. This grass weed is very common although no one usually knows what it is. Are you a twitter follower? @BobScottWeedDr posted this one back in August. Be the first to email Dr. Bob Scott at bscott@uaex.edu with the correct common name and win a prize!





To The Readers

Please offer any suggestions for Urban or Livestock Integrated Pest Management topics (insect pests, plant diseases, weed problems, wildlife control problems) that you would like to see - OR - feel free to submit an article that you have prepared. Kelly and I will be glad to include it (subject to editing). Send feedback to jhopkins@uaex.edu or kloftin@uaex.edu

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