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Copesan is an alliance of regional pest management companies that are united as a single entity for the sole purpose of providing quality pest solutions to businesses with locations throughout North America.

## Quality Assurance Means Zero Deficiencies

“A company is only as good as its least effective employee on his or her worst day.” That’s a fact that points to the need for quality assurance in the pest management industry, according to Jim Shkiele. As the Director of Quality Assurance for Copesan, Shkiele ought to know. “Our industry must ensure that we always employ good, competent people and always provide them with all the tools and training necessary to perform quality service,” he said. “That’s done through quality control and quality assurance.”

How does he define quality? “It involves satisfying our customers’ needs by meeting their expectations, whether that’s done by completing a service or providing a product as part of our service that creates a pest-free environment,” he said. “But,” he cautioned, “what’s perceived as quality today could change tomorrow. Customer needs and expectations could change at a moments notice due to a variety of factors.”

Shkiele believes that good communication is a key to quality. “I constantly observe people who aren’t very communicative—but in pest management, communication is so important. Customers ask pest management professionals to solve their problems and let them know when it’s solved. In that process, we have to communicate with them to tell them

we can do the job. But we also must emphasize that we need their help and cooperation. That’s a key factor in IPM.”

According to Shkiele, Copesan’s Signature Care™ program specifies that a technician must check in with the customer’s quality assurance people or a designated contact when on-site. After completing the service call, the technician must check out with that person by reviewing what was found, what service was performed, and what the client needs to do maintain a pest free environment.

“Can we always communicate? Possibly not. There may be times when customers are too busy to be on hand. But the goal for us is to always strive for that communication. The customer also has an obligation to communicate, to provide feedback. We’ve run into situations where a service tech had written up an issue time after time and received no response from the customer. But the customer later claimed that he had never been informed about the problem. That left the IPM Service Specialist with egg on his face. Two-way communication is vital.”

Shkiele pointed out that providing service correctly and professionally is another important ingredient in quality. “That involves doing what you say you’re going to do. Not just talking

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the talk, but actually performing. Treating the customer in the same manner that you would want to be treated--the golden rule of pest management.”

Shkiele explained the difference between quality control and quality assurance.

“Quality control at the service level involves making sure the IPM Service Specialists are getting the job done correctly, using all the necessary tools. Quality assurance efforts are made to confirm that performance is being ac-

**“That involves doing what you say you’re going to do. Not just talking the talk, but actually performing.”**

complished free from deficiencies. This is done through the monitoring of measurements and standards, and means following up and checking procedures and policies to

make sure that everything is progressing properly.”



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## City Mouse or Country Mouse? That’s the Question

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**R**emember the story about the little city mouse and his cousin, the country mouse? Cute story, right? But the fact remains that mice and rats aren’t cute at all. They are among the most destructive pests in the world and contaminate millions of dollars worth of food, damage property and cause electrical fires with their constant gnawing. Most importantly, they carry several diseases.

Richard Berman, Technical Manager for Waltham Services, a Copesan Partner

headquartered in Waltham, Massachusetts, says that rodents are pretty successful in adapting to their surroundings.

“Some of our managers and service specialists believe that mice in downtown urban areas, like Boston, behave differently than mice in suburban areas. “For example, we have more difficulty in controlling mice in office towers. We believe urban mice, as opposed to their country cousins, learn behaviors that help them avoid the baits, snap traps and the multi-catch

traps that we set for them.”

Berman said contemporary rodenticides and traps in the marketplace are highly effective, quality products. The difference is in being creative in how you manipulate them and where you place them. “For example, if you’re setting traps, you’ll want the triggers facing the wall because you’re trying to place them in the rodents’ runways. But we know of occasions where they’ll jump over these traps, so you’ve got to think ‘out of the box’ and keep in mind that the

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rodents don't read the books that explain how they behave. If conventional ways aren't working, try non-conventional ways."

Berman said that rodenticides are just part of the mix used in IPM. "In IPM we need to use all of the tools available to us."

According to him, the current U.S. FDA model food code prohibits the use of one of those tools--tracking powders. "That's unfortunate because they're very effective in solving some city rodent problems."

Pest management professionals doing rodent control should focus not only on rodent control

materials and equipment; but Berman said they must also inspect thoroughly to determine the sources of a rodent problem.

Signs of a problem include seeing and hearing the live animals, finding dead rodents or their droppings, discovering nesting materials, smelling an animal odor if there's a large infestation, and seeing tooth marks on soft wood that's been gnawed, and grease marks in the runways. "Another sign is damaged food or damaged food packaging. You can tell by the spacing of the chewed grooves whether a rat or a mouse has

been feeding there."

If he had his choice of which rodent to control, Berman said he'd select rats. They can be easier to control, although they can be difficult from time to time. Mice are more difficult because they have a smaller home range and may not be exposed to poorly placed control materials.

"While rats and mice breed year-round, increased breeding occurs in the spring and fall. As the weather gets colder outside, rodents look for shelter."

As a concluding comment, Berman states, "Whether it's a rat or mouse, it's important to look for long-term solutions in every aspect in order to eliminate any potential contamination or destruction these rodents cause."



## Methyl Bromide Fumigations in 2005?

2004 ended with some uncertainty about methyl bromide's availability if needed to fumigate infested food materials and food industry sites, said Jim Sargent, Copesan's Director of Technical Support and Regulatory Compliance.

Methyl bromide has a long history of economical and effective use. However, government regulations will not allow its production or importation in 2005, except for four exemptions.

1. Quarantine fumigations of infested materials coming into the United States.
2. Required pre-shipment fumigations of export materials required by other countries.
3. National emergencies.
4. Critical Use Exemptions (CUE) where there are no good alternatives.

"CUEs have a long approval process to prove that there aren't any legal and effective and economical alternatives to methyl bromide," Sargent said. "Two years ago, some flour millers, rice mills, pet food companies, and a few other food companies applied for some post-harvest CUEs. Their applications were approved in 2004 for 2005."

The uncertainty falls into two areas, he said. (1) Can a fumigation be performed for all uses

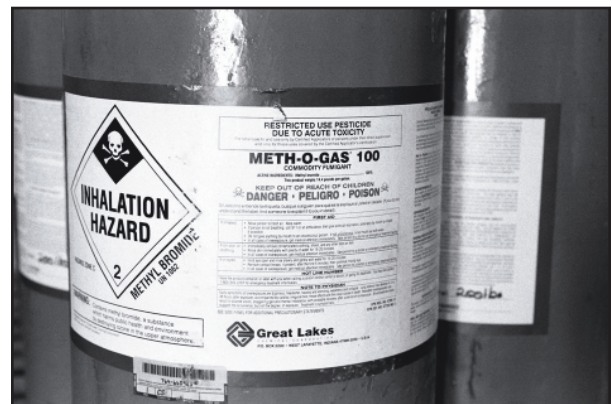
on the label for methyl bromide fumigants produced prior to 2005? (2) If the fumigation is exempted, what must be done to arrange for a fumigation?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency made public their methyl bromide allocation plan for 2005 in the December 23 Federal Register. "It is a challenge to interpret the lengthy document and so the uncertainty continues," Sargent stated.

"It appears that old (2004) fumigant can be used up according to the label. However, the process for arranging a CUE fumigation is very fuzzy as we start 2005. It appears that if a methyl bromide (CUE) fumigation becomes necessary in 2005, it won't be set up quickly, as in the past. There will be some paperwork and qualification verifications before the methyl bromide can be ordered, produced and delivered for the fumigation. The entire process may take several weeks if everything goes smoothly," he said.

"It will be very important for sanitarians to do everything

possible to prevent a serious pest infestation this year," Sargent said, "even if they qualify for a CUE fumigation. A timely fumigation may not be possible. Infested ingredients and finished



product may have to be discarded or destroyed. Considerable expense may be necessary to reduce the pests at an infested facility."

Sargent advised facilities not to accept delivery of any infested material because there may not be an easy way of dealing with an infestation, as in the past.



## Copesan Experts Showcased at Pest Management Summit

The 2004 *Pest Control Technology (PCT)* magazine “Commercial Pest Management Summit” took place December 8 – 10, 2004 in New Orleans. The summit covered current trends in commercial pest management and what issues impact this market segment. Following are a few short excerpts of some of the Copesan representatives’ presentations that may prove informative to you.

Mark “Shep” Sheperdigian, Rose Exterminator Co., the Copesan Partner in the Michigan and Ohio areas,



talked about fly management in commercial facilities. Flies cause tremendous problems for a wide variety of commercial facilities and PCT has dubbed Shep “one of the country’s foremost ‘hands-on’ fly management experts”. Shep divides most fly problems into one of two major categories: Small flies and Filth flies. Shep addressed both groups during

his talk and discussed general principles of management, products and materials, and practical applications. “For each category,” Shep explained, “there are a few underlying principles that should guide your programs and are supported by products

**“They need to be hunted down and eliminated, breeding site by breeding site,” Shep explained.**

and equipment available on the market today.” Shep pointed out that small flies primarily originate from inside the account. “They need to be hunted down and eliminated, breeding site by breeding site,” Shep explained. While many techniques can be employed to find breeding sites, the heavy lifting is done through sanitation and maintenance. Filth flies are long distance animals that enter through unscreened doors and windows. Solving filth fly problems begins with what you do outdoors. By integrating exterior and interior methods, you can design a pretty comprehensive program for even the most fly prone accounts. Integrating fly prevention and fly control into a single program

adds tremendous value to the commercial market.

Ole Dosland, Training Director for Copesan, helped summit attendees gain clarity to understanding the role of the Quality Assurance Manager. Ole defined the role from vari-

ous perspectives and illustrated using case studies. Ole explored the term “assurance” and explained how it differs from “control.” “These terms are often used interchangeably and that is wrong.” Ole said. “Fumigation and fogging are often used interchangeably and that is wrong. These terms may be similar to the novice but there is a big difference. This difference can get you into trouble if you do not understand them.”

Stay tuned to future issues for additional reports from other important pest management events.



## The 2005 Critter Calendars are here!



As you can see by the cover (pictured), the calendar is full of dynamic images taken by Copesan's very own technical experts. This calendar is sure to be a conversation piece to compliment any area in your home, office or place of business. Make sure you reserve your copy today! Quantities are limited. If you would like to receive a FREE copy of Copesan's 2005 Critter Calendar, please send your name, company, mailing address, phone number and number of calendars to [calendar@copesan.com](mailto:calendar@copesan.com). We will ship the calendars to you shortly after receipt. In the case that we run out or need more information, please provide your phone number.

Information in this publication was researched and prepared by highly regarded experts within the pest management industry that are part of the Copesan Partnership. Copesan has more technical expertise located throughout North America than any other pest management firm. The IPM Update is a small sampling of that knowledge and expertise we provide to our clients.

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