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Rell

Effects of EPA risk mitigation

Bell CEO discusses RMD, new products to help customers maintain rodent control.

teve Levy, president and CEO of Bell Laboratories, a Madison Wis.-based manufacturer of rodent control solutions, answered questions for *Pest Management Professional (pmp)* about the effect of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Risk Mitigation Decision on pest management professionals (PMPs).

pmp: How has the EPA's Risk Mitigation Decision (RMD) affected Bell and the rodent control industry? What was the result of the decision/transition?

SL: The EPA sought to accomplish two primary objectives with its RMD: to minimize children's exposures to rodenticides, and to reduce wildlife exposure and ecological risks. As you can imagine, much of the EPA's intent with the RMD was directed at products used by homeowners. These products have undergone sweeping changes that will create a clear difference between consumer and commercial products.

For the most part, the impact of the RMD on professional pest controllers has been relatively minor — with a couple of important exceptions. First, it has placed size restrictions on all commercial rodenticides. Acutes and first-generation anticoagulants can be sold only in sizes that are 4 lbs. or larger, while second-generation anticoagulants must be sold in 16-lb. or larger sizes.

Second, and probably more importantly, the EPA has mandated that rodenticides used outdoors must be done within 50 ft. of a structure. Those familiar with the industry know this restriction greatly affects a PMP's ability to bait fence lines and other areas outside of the 50-ft. range, which are considered vital to maintaining control. Bell, along with the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) and other industry representatives, are working with the EPA to address this concern.

pmp: How has the current economic condition affected the rodent control industry?

SL: The ongoing economic downturn affects all of us. Unfortunately, it's during these times many of our customers consider cutting back on professional services, which is a big

How RMD change impacts PMPs

The RMD segments rodenticides into four categories: ■ Consumer size products (products containing ≤ 1 lb. of bait) ■ First-generation anticoagulant and non-anticoagulant products for professional users (agricultural and PMP)

Second-generation anticoagulant products for use around agricultural buildings

Second-generation anticoagulant products for professional applicators Each category has a unique set of restrictions. For complete details, visit EPA.gov/pesticides/reregistration/rodenticides/finalriskdecision .htm#summary.



QRA with Steve Levy

mistake and one that's usually selfcorrecting. Services are cut back and rodent populations begin to increase until there's an explosion that requires substantial resources and costs to regain control.

We can empathize with the temptation to make these decisions because cutting costs can be vital to a company's survival. With this in mind Bell is introducing its new Protecta EVO EXPRESS bait station. The EXPRESS can substantially reduce the time it takes a PMP to set up an account and service the stations. It combines a locking mechanism, an internal integrated concrete weight and a removable tray with stay-put rods — all in a sleek, professional design to create the fastest tamper-resistant bait station available.

pmp: Bell introduced a new product, Contrac with Lumitrack. How do you think the development of Lumitrack will affect the way rodent control is operated?
SL: Contrac with Lumitrack will revolutionize the way pest control professionals think about rodent control. Lumitrack is a special additive that makes rodent droppings glow bright green under UV light. This provides several benefits. It:
enables PMPs to identify and track rodent activity faster and more accurately;

 provides a marketing vehicle that enhances the value-added benefits of the service offering;

provides a tool to evaluate nontarget ingestions; and

■ reinforces the professionalism of the PMP who adopts this new innovation.

O 12 STATE OF THE INDUSTRY REPORT

PMPs: Not Slowing Down

Economy stalls in neutral, but industry confident traveling the road ahead.

ptimism reigns in the pest management industry heading into next year, but it's tempered with the reality that a full economic recovery for the nation won't be accomplished anytime soon.

How the economy affects business is top of mind for many pest management professionals (PMPs) surveyed in this year's State of the Industry by *pmp*. Seventy percent of those who responded to the survey say their biggest concern is a prolonged recession, and almost half (47 percent) say it's their biggest concern.

"With businesses so burdened by government regulations and taxes, it's becoming more difficult to stay afloat," says Randall Eshom, vice president of Upstate Pest Management in Redding, Calif. "I see this coming year as a rough one, but maybe there's light at the end of the tunnel."

Even though a prolonged recession, higher taxes and fuel costs are keeping PMPs up at night, only 9 percent say the state of the pest management service market in their region has slightly or significantly declined. Those who have an optimistic business outlook heading into the coming year increased 6 percent. Some are making sure their business outlook is rosy by employing triedand-true business strategies.

"I haven't put my head in the sand, but I've ramped up our advertising, increased our presence on the Web, networked more, participated in home-and-garden shows, stressed the importance of keeping customers happy and worked hard to keep employees happy," says Doug Foster, owner of Burt's Termite & Pest Control in Columbus, Ind. "If there ever was a time for owners or managers to step up and be leaders, this is it."

So while the recession-proof industry is feeling the effects of a lingering economic downturn, the future is looking brighter this year compared to last — and that's a trend all on its own. **pmp**

> — Kelli Milligan Stammen, SOI Supplement Editor

WHO RESPONDED?

Average Make-up of Respondents to State of the Industry Survey

73% — Respondents with 1-10 employees

69% — PMPs who have a "very" or "somewhat" optimistic 2012 business outlook

14% — Increase in Operating Costs from 2009-2010

16% — Increase in Operating Costs from 2010-2011

24 — Average number of years in business

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Leaders of the pack

Bedbugs continue to be the revenue leader, but termites, ants and rodents also are helping the bottom line.

eading into 2012, pest management professionals (PMPs) are more optimistic than they were heading into 2011, according to results from the 2012 State of the Industry survey. The recession hasn't receded much, but business has picked up, which is good news.

"As a business owner, you always should be optimistic," says Michael Broder of New Yorkbased BHB Pest Elimination. "But fortunately, all indications show 2012 will continue the ongoing increases we've seen during the past few years."

One revenue generator that shows little sign of slowing down is the bedbug segment. From 2009 to 2010, PMPs reported an increase of 33 percent on bedbug jobs. That jumped slightly to 35 percent from 2010 to 2011. Media coverage of the outbreak declined a little in 2011, but the pests were still top of mind for many customers this year.

"We continue to see an increase of bedbugs," says Eric Scherzinger, branch manager of Scherzinger Termite and Pest Control in Dayton, Ohio, who uses heat and chemical methods



"All indications show 2012 will continue the ongoing increases we've seen during the past few years."

Michael Broder, of BHB Pest Elimination in New York City

to treat. "It's somewhat to do with the media hype. Every time it's in the media, it creates more panic although some of it is good for education purposes."

Additionally, termites made a significant comeback this year. A moderate increase of home inspections and improvement projects might have contributed to the increase, as well as a wet spring.

"It's a mix of things like the amount of rain we had, which loosens the soil for them to swarm, and getting really hot *continued on page 58*

BUSINESS FOCUS

Percentage of respondents who said General Pest Control was the focus of their business. Termite Control remained at 6% while Wildlife was at 3%. Other, including "All of the Above," was 12%.

REVENUE CHANGE BY PEST

Average gross revenue change, by pest, from 2009 to 2010

	INCREAS	DECREASE
Ants	11%	1%
Bedbugs	35%	2%
Nuisance Birds	3%	2%
Cockroaches	6.5%	1%
Fleas & Ticks	9%	1%
Flies	3%	0%
Rodents	11%	2%
Spiders	6%	0%
Stinging Insects >	5%	1%
Stored Product Pests	2%	1%
Termites	5%	5.5%
Wildlife	3%	1%

Expected gross revenue change, by pest, from 2010 to 2011

	INCREASE	DECREASE
Ants	14%	0%
Bedbugs	36%	1%
Nuisance Birds	3%	1.5%
Cockroaches	11%	1%
Fleas & Ticks	6%	1%
Flies	4%	0%
Rodents	9%	3%
Spiders	7%	0%
Stinging Insects	5%	1%
Stored Product Pests	2.5%	1%
Termites	10%	1.5%
Wildlife	4%	0%

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continued from S5

without having a deep freeze after the warm weather hits," Scherzinger says.

No matter the cause, termites returned, and many PMPs who treat them are seeing a considerable uptick in business this year. Survey results show termite business was

declined 3 percent from 2009-2010 to 2010-2011. PMPs experienced an increase of 9 percent two years ago, which declined to 6 percent this year. Nonetheless, rodents continue to be a nuisance, especially in New York City.

"Rodents are a huge concern

"It's a mix of things like the amount of rain we had, which loosens the soil for [termites] to swarm, and getting really hot without having a deep freeze after the warm weather hits."

Eric Scherzinger, branch manager of Scherzinger Termite and Pest Control in Dayton, Ohio

flat relatively from 2009 to 2010. There was an overall decrease of 0.5 percent during that period. But what a difference a year makes: From 2010 to 2011, PMPs reported an overall increase of 8.5 percent.

Another ongoing revenue generator is rodent jobs, which have been increasing for two years, even though the overall increase

because so many accounts are joined on all sides by sewers, subways, residential and commercial areas that you have no control over," Broder says. "Exclusion has always been our most important aspect."

One of the biggest revenue increases from 2009-2010 to 2010-2011 was in ant jobs, which increased 10 percent in 2009-2010 and 14 percent last year. They're consisting of a larger portion of business, and have been for years.

Lonnie Alonso, president and general manager of Columbus Pest Control in Ohio credits some of the increase to eliminating the use of more effective pesticides, because what's being used in their place doesn't last long enough in the environment to get rid of them. The different species of ants is another problem.

"We're dealing with species today that I never dealt with when I started in this business," says Alonso, who attributes some of the increase in ant population to landscape materials being shipped all throughout the country.

The need for pest control services isn't slowing down, and PMPs are ready for a successful 2012.

"I'm optimistic because I believe in America, and people will always need my services," says Charles Parker of Parker Wildlife Control in New Orleans. **pmp**

GROWTH **OPPORTUNITIES**

In which ONE customer segment do you see the best opportunities for growth for your company in 2011?



HOW'S BUSINESS?

Describe the state of the pest management service market in your region.



2 0 1 2 STATE OF THE INDUSTRY REPORT

"Bedbugs are our biggest pest. We see activity in every type of structure we treat."

Mike Halter, owner of Action Pest Control in Gahanna, Ohio



BEDBUGS STILL REIGN

Average expected increase in gross revenue for 2011 related to bedbug jobs. The next highest-rated pest was the ant at 14%.

GET EQUIPPED





BUYING POWER

What Your Industry Is Purchasing

EQUIPMENT TYPE	% PURCHASED IN 2011	% WILL PURCHASE IN 2012
Spray Guns	47	30
Hose Reels	23	18
Spray Pumps	37	27
Spray Nozzles	43	26
Spray Hoses	38	27
Backpack Sprayers	48	34
Dusters	57	32
Spray Rigs	21	25
Granule Sprayers	33	19
Trucks	48	51
Trailers	18	13
Alternative Fuel Vehicles	2	6
Foam Machines	14	13
Bird/Animal Repellers	16	15
Traps	61	55
Foggers	28	30
Monitors	58	56
Aerosol Applicators	39	42
Bait Guns & Applicators	48	42
Compressed Air Sprayers	33	34
Bait Stations	76	68
Soil & Tree Injectors	11	9
Termite Bait Installation	20	20
Vehicle Accessories	52	45
Insecticides	90	80
Green Products	40	43
Safety Equipment	77	69
Uniforms	71	67
Computers	57	35
Handheld Devices	35	31
Business Software	40	30
GPS Systems/Software	35	23
Consultants	11	14
Subcontracted Services	24	18

Full speed ahead

PMPs have some concerns, but are looking forward to a successful 2012.

n the whole, it's been a good year for pest management professionals (PMPs) throughout the country. Optimism is in the air as the calendar progresses toward 2012. But that doesn't mean owners and general managers don't have a care in the world. A prolonged recession, higher taxes and fuel prices, and the uncertainty of heading into an election year have several PMPs ... well, bugged.

"The thing that hurts and is a concern is the gas prices," says Eric Scherzinger, branch manager of Scherzinger Termite and Pest Control in Dayton, Ohio. "With

having so many vehicles on the road, that really hits our bottom line. Another thing is, although the unemployment is so high, finding the right talent is always a struggle."

Mike Halter, owner of Action Pest Control in Gahanna, Ohio, isn't counting on politicians to help PMPs much.

"2012 is a presidential election year, which usually means national and state candidates will start paying attention to small business owners and, for the short term, act and respond accordingly to get our support," he says. "But the following year, 2013, it will be back to ignoring the middle class and small business."

CUSTOMERS

How are your customers responding to your services this year?





Customer Retention Rate for 2011

of respondents sav they've been able to keep between 76% and 100% of their current customers, up from 76% in 2010.

O 1 2 STATE OF THE INDUSTRY REPORT

Taxes on small business are always a concern.

"As an entrepreneur, my business is taxed to the point of preventing any growth," says Charles Parker of Parker Wildlife in New Orleans.

Despite ongoing challenges, however, PMPs still are looking ahead with a positive attitude and business outlook.

"The economy is slowly getting better, and the real-estate market is beginning to improve," says Rafael Rico, general manager of Hometown Pest Control in Delray Beach, Fla. "That helps business a lot, and we've had growth through the entire recession regardless of all the economic problems." **pmp**

REVENUE



Total revenue for 2010

23% — Less than \$100,000
29% — \$100,000 to \$249,999
12% — \$250,000 to \$499,999
9% — \$500,000 to \$749,999
5% — \$750,000 to \$999,999
10% — \$1 million to \$2.49 million
5% — \$2.5 million to \$4.9 million
7% — \$5 million or more

Top 3 Issues with the Highest Level of Concern in 2011

- 1. Prolonged recession
- 2. High taxes
- Lack of time to chase new business opportunities

Top 3 Issues with the Lowest Level of Concern in 2011

- Making payroll
- 2. Accounts payable

TIE: Accounts receivable & properly and competitively pricing my services

Top 3 Factors PMPs Believe will have the Highest Impact on their Business Growth

- 1. Rising health care costs
- 2. Rising taxes
- 3. Rising fuel prices

Top 3 Highest Business Priorities for PMPs over the Next Six Months

- **1.** Growing the business
- 2. Maintaining current business/sources of revenue
- 3. Innovation (finding new ways to do business)

BUSINESS OUTLOOK

	2011 BUSINESS	2012 BUSINESS		
Very Optimistic	27%	33%		
Somewhat Optimistic	46%	36%		
Uncertain	22%	27%		
Somewhat Pessimistic	5%	4%		
Very Pessimistic	1%	1%		

Rodents

Rodents continue their steady increase as PMPs compare baiting, trapping and exclusion.

o catch or bait a rat that's the question. More pest management professionals (PMPs) are trying to answer that as rodent-related jobs continue to increase. In the latest State of the Industry survey, respondents saw a 9 percent increase of rodent job revenue between 2009 and 2010. That boost was projected to decline slightly to 6 percent from 2010 to 2011, but still heading in a positive direction.

"Rats have been on the rise for about four years, although they've slowed somewhat of late — at least around our area," says Randall Eshom, vice president of Upstate Pest Management in Redding, Calif. Trapping seems to be the preferred and most useful method.

"The most effective method is trapping, proofing and a follow-up of preventive poisoning [bait stations]," says Charles Parker, owner of Parker Wildlife Control in New Orleans. "I remember one job where the entire roof needed a drip edge installed to prevent future rodent problems."

Jesse Messick, owner of Messick Pest Control in Mayo, Fla., says he believes baiting is the quickest method, but not always the best.

"The baits available to our industry prove to be the most thorough and expedient method



of rodent eradication," he says. "However, as all PMPs are aware, the odor of rodent carcasses in inaccessible areas is the downside to this method. Because of this factor alone, trapping is the only real alternative available in many cases."

In many cases, trapping can yield fascinating results.

"We had so many rats running the fence lines in one neighborhood, we'd anchor rat traps on the top stringers of the fence," Eshom says. "In one trap, we caught 23 rats in two weeks." **pmp**



SPOTLIGHT: Bedbugs Still lapping the revenue competition, these little pests show no signs of putting on the brakes.

edbugs still are appearing in media stories throughout the country. With all the publicity and infestation that continue to plague customers, pest management professionals (PMPs) continue to see revenue related to the pesky pest increase.

There was a 36 percent increase in bedbugs from 2010 to 2011, according to the *pmp* State of the Industry survey. Bedbugs left hotels and headed off into society at large, which has put PMPs in demand.

"Bedbugs are our biggest pest," says Mike Halter, owner of Action Pest Control in Gahanna, Ohio. "We see activity in every type of structure we treat. We began using steam treatments in the past year with some success. Diligence, persistence, residual treatments and insect growth regulator (IGR) applications still are our preferred treatment techniques."

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Randall Eshom, vice president of Upstate Pest Management in Redding, Calif., agrees that tenacity and application are the most important factors when battling bedbugs.

"We're old school when it comes to our treatments," Eshom says. "Yes, we use the latest materials labeled for bedbugs, but there's no substitute for being thorough with your application methods."

While bedbugs were virtually wiped out a half century ago, the roaring comeback in the past few years has drawn considerable attention. Search Google for bedbugs, and more than 20 million results appear. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has hosted bed-





"We're old school when it comes to our treatments. Yes, we use the latest materials labeled for bedbugs, but there's no substitute for being thorough with your application methods."

Randall Eshom, vice president of Upstate Pest Management in Redding, Calif.

bug summits. Small wonder, then, that the issue is front and center on the mind of customers.

"Our bedbug calls seem to come in waves," Eshom says. "We'll receive two, three, four calls, and then nothing for a while. All the hype has brought awareness to the problem; however, sometimes every moving thing becomes a bedbug because of all the coverage." **pmp**

Termites

What a difference a year makes! Revenue from these wood-eaters has speed.

he termite is making a comeback, a la the bedbug. An increase of revenue is the expected termite trajectory, according to the pest management professionals (PMPs) who took the State of the Industry survey this year. From 2009 to 2010, termite revenue was relatively flat, if not slightly down. Revenues increased 5 percent or declined 5.5 percent — depending on who answered the question.

That all changed from 2010 to 2011, as an increase of 8.5 percent was noted by PMPs surveyed throughout the country.

"During the past several years, we had nothing at all with termites," says Michael Broder of BHB Pest Elimination in New York. "This year, we made the difficult decision to phase out of the market. The upkeep and storage of equipment was difficult to maintain with how little work we got out of it. Of



TERMITE REVENUE

Expected Increase in Revenue Directly Related to 2011 Termite Jobs

\$108.35 Average Price of a Termite Inspection in 2010 of PMPs who have purchased and plan to purchase bait station installation tools in 2010 and 2011

\$118.26 Average Price of a Termite Inspection in 2011



course, this was the year the phone started ringing again."

Soggy weather in the Midwest might have contributed to an uptick in termite activity as well.

"In our area, we had a wet spring, so that may have been the reason for slight increase of termite activity," says Mike Halter, owner of Action Pest Control in Gahanna, Ohio.

While PMPs know the nature of pest control can be cyclical, those who have a revenue stream dependent on termites foresee a busy 2012.

"This year, we made the difficult decision to phase out of the [termite] market. Of course, this was the year the phone started ringing again."

Michael Broder, of BHB Pest Elimination in New York City

"Termites are making a comeback," says Doug Foster, owner of Burt's Termite & Pest Control in Columbus, Ind. "Our termite work returned to 2005 levels. Swarms were up this spring. With new home building down, remodeling is up, and people are uncovering termites in the process. Real-estate inspections are up slightly — and with that, an increase in termite control." **pmp**

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Green

Green products are here to stay, but profits from a dedicated green program are hard to come by.

reen pest management may be here to stay, but safer products aren't translating into more revenue — and some pest management professionals (PMPs) are seeing customers back off from the more pricey green products they do provide.

Moreover, more than 50 percent of PMPs project no revenue from their green pest management program.

"We offer a green program, and

we find it effective, but the demand has reduced greatly during the past year," reports Rafael Rico, general manager of Hometown Pest Control in Delray Beach, Fla. "We employ integrated pest management (IPM) to our overall strategies. The problem has been customers aren't willing to pay more for the green service, so most opt for a traditional program. But this will change as the economy rebounds."

GREEEN METHOD REVENUE 400% Pest management companies that currently report having a green pest management program. 510% PMPs who in 2010 and 2011 reported \$0 projected revenue from green pest management programs. 340% PMPs who estimate between 1% and 10% of their company's revenue is derived from their green pest management program. MPS who anticipate purchasing green products in 2012. PMPs who anticipate purchasing green products in 2012. Percentage of respondents who plan to purchase alternative fuel vehicles in 2012.

Only 40 percent of respondents to the annual State of the Industry survey have a dedicated green pest management program; however, that doesn't mean PMPs aren't making a concerted effort to offer their customers environmentally friendly pest control alternatives.

"I prefer using green products, provided they're effective," says Jesse Messick, owner of Messick Pest Control in Mayo, Fla. "Each situation we encounter must be dealt with using methods that prove effective with the least impact on our environment and exposure to the customer."

Safety and effectiveness are trumping green product use with some PMPs, unless the costumer asks for it specifically.

"Our customers want results, and trust us to apply materials in a safe and consistent manner, which provides them with the comfort of knowing their pest control problems are solved," says Mike Halter, owner of Action Pest Control in Gahanna, Ohio. "If that means they want us to use a certain green product, we will. Communication and trust are what has kept our customers satisfied for almost 20 years." **pmp**

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