



PestEx 2011 – a great success with international delegates

Organised by the British Pest Control Association (BPCA), PestEx 2011 was held on 6 and 7 April in the ExCeL exhibition centre, in the heart of the old docklands area of London – in a venue which is to play host to several of the Olympic sporting events in 2012.

Like the Olympics, both exhibitors and visitors came from around the globe. PestEx confirmed its status as the key European trade show.

With every stand sold in advance of the event opening, there were more than 70 exhibitors packing the hall. Over a third of the exhibitors came from overseas – from as far away as China and Australia, with several from the US along with companies from all across Europe and the UK. What is good news is that 20% of all exhibitors were present for the very first time – an excellent indication of the state of health and innovation within the international pest control industry.

There was also a noticeable number of visitors from abroad – and most of these were from the pest control trade. Manufacturers meeting distributors, or distributors there to research new products to add to their ranges. Also present in large numbers were European pest controllers eager to find out the latest trends, products and legislation.

But the practical UK pest controllers were by no means overlooked, as the total attendance figures record. The official figures provided by the BPCA show a dramatic increase in total numbers of over 50% –from 1,011 in 2009 to 1,632 in 2011. The 2011 figure includes 418 people who came for both days. In addition, there were 279 registered exhibitor personnel. Meaning, in total over 2,000 people were involved with the event in one way or another.

Shift away from bedbug emphasis

Unlike the most recent PestWorld event in the USA, products and techniques for bedbug management were not as strikingly obvious. Indicative, surely, as to the way the industry will finally go, were an increasing number of exhibitors promoting digital management recording systems for use by pest technicians. Also noticeable were manufacturers who were responding to the recessionary financial cutbacks within the UK, by introducing new ranges of retail Do-it-Yourself pest control products.

New magazine launched

During the event, the new BPCA chief executive, Simon Forrester took the opportunity to update BPCA members on association activities and to launch a new magazine designed to

be read by pest controller's customers who place the contracts. Called *a/exo*, which, very appropriately, is Greek for '*I protect*' it will be mailed out to at least 5,000 contacts, twice a year starting with issue one in June 2011.

"It's an important part of BPCA's strategic plan to deliver benefits and improve professionalism – *a/exo* will make clients much more aware of the importance of our industry and of the need to use professionals for pest control," said Simon.

As well as the exhibition there were topical seminar sessions. The most popular covered the Biocidal Products Directive and the potential impact within the UK of the forthcoming Sustainable Use Directive. Also very popular was the session covering pest control and the law.

This was the first PestEx event organised by BPCA chief executive Simon Forrester, who summed-up his feelings by saying: "I've organised many events across different sectors but PestEx is right up there with the best. I was very impressed by the quality and breadth of exhibitors, and the range of UK and international visitors, from technicians keen to improve their knowledge to senior management networking with their peers and suppliers. One delegate I spoke to said they always attend PestEx because of the quality of people to meet – almost everyone who's anyone is there.

"The business and practical seminars went down very well with delegates, and the panel discussions often got a good debate going. It's clear that proposed amendments to EU Directives which are likely to affect the way practical technicians go about their work was uppermost on their minds."

Summing-up the feelings of the European exhibitors, Alberto Sabatini of machinery manufacturer, IGEBA from Germany said; "This was a good show with high quality visitors." Picking-up on the economic mood across Europe Ana Francisco, from Plastdiversity in Portugal said: "Against a backdrop of economic crisis this event was a success beyond all expectations. PestEx is becoming a worldwide meeting point for the pest control industry having year after year more international visitors."

The next PestEx exhibition will be in two years time. Once again it will be held at ExCeL on 11 & 12 April 2013. Consult www.pestex.org for details as they evolve.

2 May 2011

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