

PelGar International is a leading manufacturer of rodenticide and insecticide products for the control of public health and agricultural (non-crop) pests. **Simon King** met **Nic Blaszkowicz**, the company's UK & Ireland business manager

Simon King: Please can you give me a background to PelGar, its history and product line-up

Nic Blaszkowicz: PelGar International was founded in 1995 by entomologists Dr Gareth Capel-Williams and Dr Jonathan Wade with the aim of developing innovative and novel rodenticides for the public health pesticide market. The company invested in three main active ingredients and a programme of research and development to improve existing and create new formulations to meet the needs of varying species and environmental factors.

Twenty years later PelGar purchased manufacturer Agropharm, with which it had been working for some

years to secure a sister portfolio of insecticides. The company is now the leading public health pesticide manufacturer in the UK and sells in more than 60 countries globally, with over 500 product registrations. All products are developed, trialled and manufactured in the UK.

SK: Can you explain the new regulations that classify rodenticides, and what stores need to do to ensure they comply?

NB: To sell any professional rodenticides all stores now need to be registered with BASIS for annual inspection. They then need to check certificates of competence or membership of an approved farm assurance scheme prior to supplying customers. Full details can be found on the CRRU (Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use) website, www.thinkwildlife.org. Users who don't fall into this professional category are now limited to baits with a 25ppm strength and maximum pack size of 300g, but there is no limit on the number of packs they can buy. We don't advise stockpiling but do encourage people to buy enough bait to get on top of their infestations, under-baiting is a false

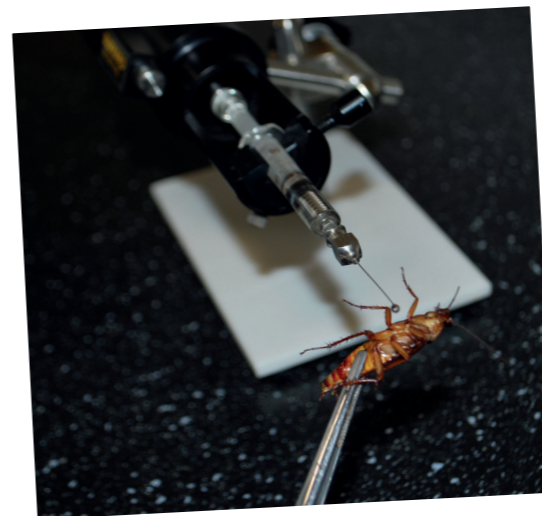
economy and the biggest reason for control failure.

SK: What are the key pests at this time of year?

NB: Autumnal pests are definitely our commensal rodents, namely the brown rat and house mouse (*Rattus norvegicus* and *Mus musculus*). Come autumn, the last grains in the fields and fruit in the hedgerows are quickly devoured and rodents go in search of a sustainable food source. This is often found on the farmyard, where there will always be accessible food, or in the gardens of smallholders and rural home owners who may be feeding livestock or birds through the winter. In more urban environments rodents can be a year-round problem as they do not have the same ability to migrate back to the fields and hedgerows in the spring to find food.

SK: Can you detail PelGar's R&D programme?

NB: The active ingredients we are working with today in rodent and insect control are, in some cases, based on 50-year-old technology. To combat resistance, especially with insects, PelGar is constantly looking at ways to combine different



for the control of flying insects, although it can be less effective against crawling insects; whereas a water-based spray will give better residual control when dealing with tougher pest problems. Price and regulatory control also play a big part – our broad-

spectrum multi-active ingredient product Cimetro Super would be arguably the most effective product available in the UK today, especially for flea and bedbug control, but it is only available to professional certified users. Available to all users, a ready-for-use spray is good for carpets and can be supported with the use of an insecticidal smoke generator and an insecticidal dust to use where liquids are not ideal for use, i.e. in and around electrical outlets. The best thing is to identify the issue and ask professional companies, such as PelGar, for help and advice.

active ingredients to create novel and effective formulations suited to a wide range of applications. We are one of the few manufacturers to combine multiple actives with different modes of action in our insecticides to further improve their efficacy. Biocidal products are going through much tougher regulatory reviews and most of the investment companies like PelGar are having to make is in new studies and renewal of current products, reducing the time and money available to research new active ingredients.

SK: What are the 'star' products from the PelGar range?

NB: In the rodenticide and insecticide markets, active ingredients are relatively common. PelGar is one of the only companies to produce a 'cast' wax block rodenticide, making the product truly weatherproof and ideal for use in damp and humid situations. In the agricultural sector, our top insecticide is a pyrethrum concentrate for crop treatment. Made from chrysanthemum extracts, this product can be applied with just a 24-hour withdrawal, removing pests like aphids or beneficial pests just before harvest. Our range of ready-for-use insecticidal smoke generators, in a range of sizes, can clear anything from a small room to a vast warehouse of flying or crawling insects.

SK: What advice do you have for people that believe there is a 'universal' insecticide?

NB: While a universal insecticide sounds like a great idea, it simply doesn't work in practice and that is why we produce a range of products to suit various situations. For example, an aerosol is ideal

SK: How important are country stores to the sale of your products?

NB: Country stores are a cornerstone of PelGar's UK business and allow us to promote good value, British products to the farming community with the support of local retailers. Many of our distributors still have feet on the ground, visiting farms and passing on their help and valuable product knowledge.

SK: What advice do you have on selling the products?

NB: Ask questions, understand the problems customers are facing, the extent of the infestation they are dealing with and then advise the most appropriate products for the customer to use. As a rough guide, if you're seeing rodents during the day then it is likely to be a larger infestation, as they are generally nocturnal animals. If baiting is the preferred method of control, and alternatives should be considered, rodents already feeding on stored grain should be baited with a grain-based product. If bait security is critical then block baits can be anchored inside bait stations, or if

there are multiple foods available, then paste baits, which are high in calories, may help to tempt rodents away from other food sources.

SK: How do you support retail customers?

NB: Our biggest area of support is through our four regional account managers. They are all certified professional users of rodenticides and spend a considerable amount of time in store training staff on our products, on the behaviour and biology of rodents and top tips in rodent control, so that they can pass on this advice to the end users on a day-to-day basis. Some retailers like to have dedicated product specialists, while our regional account managers like to give a level of education to all shop floor staff.

The regional account manager can also support our customers by being on hand for open days and events, giving us the opportunity to speak directly with the end users.

Having recently expanded our marketing team, we are redeveloping our website, which is a key resource hub for product information, labels and safety data sheets.

Following on from this will be our more consumer-based sites, which give help and advice at grass-roots level. While all of this is in development, we have our YouTube channel, which has the popular *Six Steps to Successful Rodent Control* video and guides users through the best process on which to base their rodent control campaigns. ■

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“ We encourage people to buy enough bait to get on top of their infestations ”



Controlling the nation's pests

Image courtesy of: Dewpoint Marketing

