

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING GMP IN FOOD PROCESSING

7. Pest Prevention

7.1 *Special Reporting type service*

7.1.1 The company must either contract the services of an approved pest control organisation, or must have trained on site personnel, for the regular inspection and treatment of premises to deter and destroy infestation by insects, birds or animals. An outside contractor must always be accompanied on his visit by a member of staff.

7.1.2 It is recommended that pest control companies should provide a minimum of six visits per year at regular intervals, with personnel on 24 hour call out. Where problems are evident, daily revisiting must be specified until the area is clear.

7.1.3 Safe and hygienic disposal of pests is required after capture or fumigation. Documented procedures are therefore needed from the contractor or for the business.

7.2 *Pest control records including bait plans, labels and dating*

7.2.1 Detailed records of the pest control inspections must be kept in correct date order in the on site Report Book.

7.2.2 A member of the management team - (normally the QA manager) must be made responsible for ensuring that all recommendations made in the report are actioned within an agreed time scale.

7.2.3 The internal bait stations should be sited by the pest control officer. An accurate site map showing where stations are located should be compiled and held in the Report Book.

7.2.4 Each bait station should be adequately labelled and the bait boxes clearly date marked at each site inspection.

7.3 *Baiting and proofing standards including monitoring systems*

7.3.1 Whilst it is not possible to bait food production areas where open food is handled, all ancillary areas must be covered.

7.3.2 Wherever practicable, baits should be based on fatty or waxy substrates or back break traps. Those based on grains are not acceptable due to the increased contamination risk to any food stuffs being manufactured or stored in the vicinity. The internal rodent bait should be safe e.g. held in a tamper resistant box.

7.3.3 External bait stations should be tamper resistant and situated around the external area of the factory site. They should be clearly marked.

7.3.4 Where stored product insects (spi) are considered a risk, the appropriate spi treatment must be included in the control programme, and fumigation applied as required. Pheromone traps should be used wherever there is a risk of insect infestation.

7.3.5 External doors, windows and sky lights should be close fitting and have no gaps. Bristle strips should be fitted where necessary.

7.3.6 Where doors are open during normal production hours, suitable barriers should be fitted to prevent pest ingress. This includes fly screens where necessary, which must be kept clean.

7.3.7 Opening windows should either be sealed or fitted with non-removable insect screens.

7.3.8 Open drains must be fitted with a grill or mesh covering. They must be in a good state of repair and functional.

7.3.9 Airbricks should be fitted with a suitably fine mesh cover.

7.3.10 The external fabrication of food premises should be constructed and maintained so that there are no entry points for pests.

7.3.11 Birds must be excluded from all production and storage areas. To facilitate this, all apertures in the eaves of the roof or the roof itself, or the walls must be identified and either closed off or suitably screened. Additionally canopies must be proofed to prevent birds roosting.

7.3.12 Where birds are already present on the site they and their nests must be removed in concert with wildlife statutes.

7.3.13 Domestic animals e.g. cats and dogs must also be excluded from the factory environment. Staff should never feed or encourage stray animals to come on site, and all factory doors and other entrances must remain closed. Domestic animals must not be used for pest control purposes.

7.4 ***Fly killers position and condition***

7.4.1 All production and ambient storage areas should be protected by electrical insect “knock down” devices. For maximum effect, these should be sited in areas of minimum light intensity, but must not be sited directly above open food handling areas.

7.4.2 Each unit should be fitted with a suitable catch tray which should be regularly inspected and emptied when necessary. Flying insect “counts” can be particularly useful in identifying problems with one particular insect type.

7.4.3 The units must be constantly switched on even after production has finished and the premises vacated. The ultra violet tubes on these units should be replaced at twelve month intervals or more frequently if necessary.

7.5 ***Good perimeter control***

7.5.1 There should be a clear perimeter zone, free from accumulations of rubbish, packaging materials, raw materials, pallets and redundant equipment, which could provide harbourage for pests. Ideally the perimeter zone should be fenced for security.

Efficient and effective pest control begins with good perimeter control.

7.5.2 The exterior finish of factory buildings should be maintained in good condition. In general vegetation must not be allowed to grow around the immediate perimeter or on or near walls and roofs. All gutters and exterior drains must be kept clean and functional. Pallets, plastic trays or other materials must not be stored against the factory walls, to prevent pest harbourage.

7.5.3 There should be adequate facilities for the disposal of rubbish and general factory debris located a significant distance from production areas. Rubbish bins, skips or other containers must be totally enclosed and regularly emptied to prevent over spill. Good housekeeping here is essential as spillage will encourage the presence of birds, insects, rodents and other scavengers.

7.6 Storage and housekeeping standards (including stock rotation)

7.6.1 The most effective, common sense approach towards infestation control is in maintaining good housekeeping standards i.e. controlling accumulation of food and packaging debris, keeping passages clear and uncluttered, removing redundant equipment and materials from the manufacturing area and ensuring good stock rotation.

7.6.2 Goods and equipment should not be sited against walls. A minimum gap of 50cm must be left to allow for adequate cleaning and inspection purposes. Walls/floor junctions must be kept free of debris.

7.6.3 Every employee on site must be made aware of the need to exercise good housekeeping practices to reduce the risk of pest infestation. This must be implemented by induction for new employees or briefing sessions for existing ones.

7.7 Access incoming check systems for ingredients

7.7.1 All incoming raw materials whether they be food ingredients, packaging or equipment, must be thoroughly checked on arrival at the site for pest infestation. If the materials show evidence of damage to the outer packaging, product seal, pallet wrapping or to the pallet itself, then they should be Quality Assurance quarantined and further investigation carried out. If rejected by the Quality Assurance department the raw material should be clearly labelled 'reject' for return to the supplier stating why.

7.7.2 In the event that pest infestation is found on incoming materials, they should be labelled 'reject', isolated from the factory, the pest control contractor called immediately and the infestation treated before it spreads.

7.8 Segregation of damaged or returned goods

7.8.1 There must be complete physical segregation of infestation damaged or returned goods to guarantee that they will not be used in production. Designated reject areas within the goods in the warehouse facility will help in emphasising 'rejected' stock and isolate the problem.

7.9 Safety and technical documentation, approved baits and pesticides

7.9.1 Pest control documentation must be clear, concise and legible. It must be kept up to date and regularly reviewed by the technical department.

7.9.2 Documentation relating to the safety and application of approved baits and pesticides must be available, usually in the form of a data sheet. Information relating to the Control of Hazardous Substances to Health must be readily accessible in either the pest control Record Book or a separate named document.

7.9.3 All documentation/records detailing the safe use and application of these pesticides requires the signature or identification of the checker, to ensure accountability.

7.10 Freedom from pests

7.10.1 If a logical Code of Practice for pest control is adhered to, then freedom from pests should be evident on site. This should be further clarified in the Pest Prevention Record Book.

7.10.2 If evidence of pest infestation is available then the action taken to free the site from the problem should be thoroughly documented and dated, until the infestation is removed.