

Stored product pest management 101

Stored product pests are one of the most economically important pests for the food processing and storage facilities – including grain silos, bakeries, breweries, and retail food stores – which store or use large amounts of unprocessed and cereal-based grain products.

Confused flour beetles, Indianmeal moths, sawtoothed grain beetles, weevils, and other stored product pests can infest and spoil grain, flour, rice, and finished goods, rendering these products inedible.

This causes downtime in production, damages the brand name, and creates numerous headaches – in time, operational disruptions, and financial resources – for the facility’s management. Also, if a third-party auditor notices the presence or conditions conducive for stored product pests, it can result in a facility receiving a reduced score or even a failure of their audit.

The case for stored product pest management

As mentioned above, the economic impact that stored product pests have, if left untreated or undetected in a food processing or storage facility, is considerable. That’s why it’s vital for these facilities to partner with a highly trained pest management professional to design and implement a comprehensive prevention or treatment program.

Protect product quality: Stored product pests, such as beetles, moths, weevils, and mites, can infest and contaminate food products, leading to quality issues. They can cause physical damage, consume or spoil the food, and leave behind eggs, larvae, or excrement. Effective pest management helps prevent such infestations and ensures the quality and integrity of the

stored products.

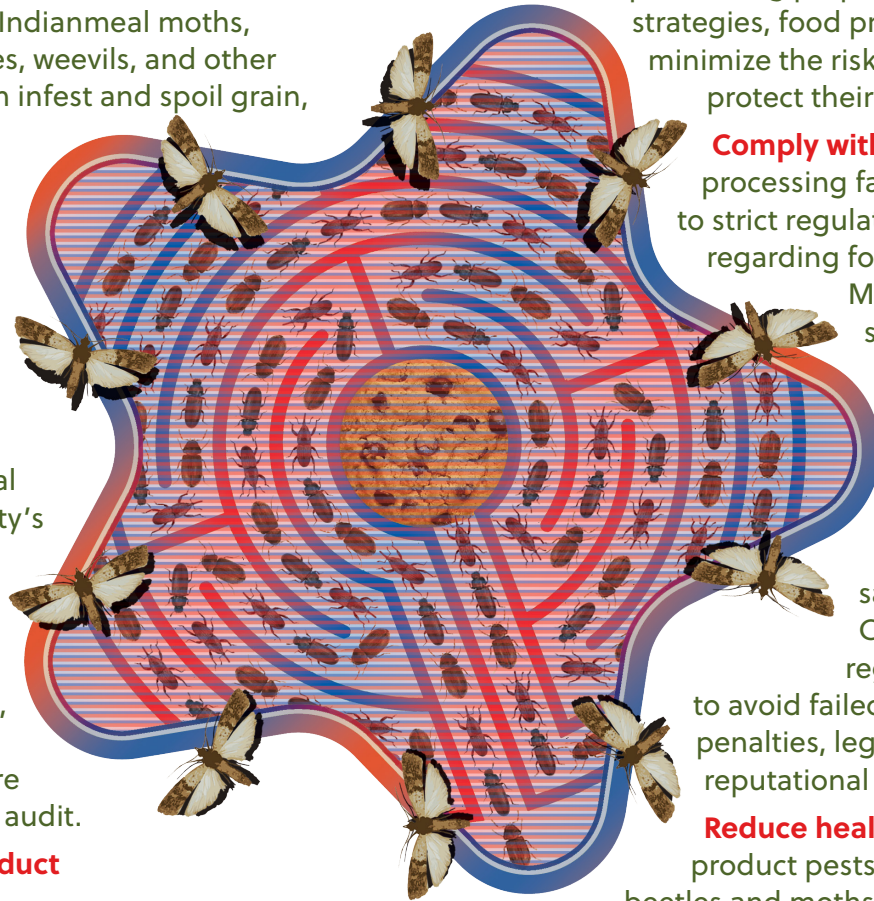
Prevent product loss: Infestations by stored product pests can result in significant product loss. Pests can consume or damage massive quantities of food, leading to financial losses for the facility. By implementing proper pest management strategies, food processing facilities can minimize the risk of product loss and protect their investments.

Comply with regulations: Food processing facilities are subject to strict regulations and standards regarding food safety and hygiene. Many regulatory bodies, such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States, require facilities to implement pest control measures as part of their food safety programs. Compliance with these regulations is essential to avoid failed third-party audits, penalties, legal issues, and reputational damage.

Reduce health risks: Some stored product pests, such as certain types of beetles and moths, can produce allergens and toxins that pose health risks to consumers.

If contaminated products reach the market, they can cause allergic reactions or other health issues. By effectively managing stored product pests, food processing facilities can minimize the risk of such health hazards and ensure the safety of their products.

Preserve brand reputation: Any incident of pest infestation or contaminated products can harm the reputation of a food processing facility. Consumers have high expectations regarding the quality and safety of the food they purchase. News of pests or contaminants found in products can quickly spread through social media and negatively affect the facility’s reputation. By implementing rigorous stored product



pest management practices, facilities can demonstrate their commitment to quality and food safety, enhancing their reputation in the industry.

Control options

A common method for controlling stored product pests that threaten food processing and storage facilities is mating disruption. This is the process of introducing artificial sex attractant pheromones into a facility with the intention of distracting male stored product pests – Indianmeal and flour moths, mainly – as they try to make a love connection with their female counterparts during mating season.

These artificial pheromones create false trails that make it harder for male moths to find their sex partners. When that happens, mating does not occur, eggs are not laid, and the populations of these destructive pests drops.

Female Indianmeal moths communicate with males through pheromone plumes, which direct male moths to their location. By using the mating disruption pheromone, the males chase a false trail, exhaust their energy reserves, and die before successfully finding and mating with a female. These disruptions have a significant impact on the moths' ability to mate and reproduce.

Even though pheromone products are naturally occurring, this application method makes them a registered pesticide. However, they are certified for use in organic food processing facilities, and there is no danger of food products absorbing pheromones unless they come into direct contact with the dispenser.

Pheromone mating disruption dispensers are typically

installed and replaced twice a year to ensure coverage through the entire moth mating season. The dispensers are placed within facilities and can treat an entire warehouse, but they have also proven successful in treating specific sections or even aisles in a facility.

A thorough pest monitoring program is also a key part of the process. By deploying standard pheromone traps and light traps, technicians can track pest population levels, and when fewer male moths are caught, it's more likely that the program is working. 🐛



If you are looking for a pest management partner that understands your business and can help your company create an effective year-round pest management program, call Clark Pest Control at (800) 936-3339.



clarkpest.com

(800) 936.3339

clarkcares@clarkpest.com

