Technical Bulletin

Setting the Standard for Food Safety and Pest Management Solutions

October 2019 Volume 9, Issue 10

Sesame Allergen

Photo courtesy of: www.indiamart.com

The Food and Drug Administration has always recognized the "Big 8" allergens when it comes to food law, that may change.
More than 160 foods have been identified to cause food allergies in sensitive individuals. However, the eight major food allergens identified by the Food Allergen Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA) account for over 90 percent of all documented food allergies in the U.S. and represent the foods most likely to result in severe or life-threatening reactions. The Big 8 are: Eggs, Wheat, Milk, Shellfish, Fish, Peanut, Tree Nut and Soy.
Sesame is now considered the 9th most common food allergy, while the FDA has not officially included it in the law, it could be a matter of time. The FDA issued a request for information in 2018 on the prevalence and severity of sesame allergies in the United States to inform possible regulatory action that would require sesame to be labeled as an allergen on packaged foods. Currently, sesame is not required to be disclosed as an allergen, and in some circumstances, sesame may be exempt from being listed by name in the ingredient statement on food packages.
Sesame allergy can cause severe allergic reactions with multiple organ system involvement (also known as anaphylaxis). As sesame is not listed as a major food allergen, consumers may be vulnerable to accidental exposure to this allergen. Sesame is present in a wide, and growing, variety of food products in the form of seeds, oils and pastes (i.e. tahini). Some cosmetics, medications, supplements and pet food also contain sesame. This change would impact all food manufacturers in the U.S. Currently, Canada and the European Union already recognize the severity of a sesame allergen and have included it into their food law.

For More information visit: The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology.

Submitted by: Rich Gibson, ACE, CHA

The Odorous House Ant

Photo courtesy of: www.agrilife.org/

Class: Insecta **Order:** Hymenoptera **Family:** Formicidae.

Tapinoma sessile, also known as the Odourous House Ant, is a small ant that is sometimes referred to as the stink ant, and/or coconut ant, due to the pungent odor of coconut that the ant produces when crushed.

They vary in color from brown to black and range in length from 1/16 to 1/8 inches (1.5–3.2 mm). Their antennae have 12 segments. This ant is very tough, and injured workers have been observed to continue living and working with little hindrance. They also appear highly tolerant to heat and cold. These ants can be difficult to remove from a structure.

Control: Identifying the location of the nest(s) is crucial and can often be accomplished by following the trail of foraging workers back from the food source. Treatment of cracks, crevices, and voids using an approved residual insecticide is effective as is bait. When using bait select a "sweet bait" as this species prefers sweets to other food sources. Exclusion is essential; caulk or otherwise seal cracks, crevices and voids that may allow for entry or nesting.

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Mice in Pallets

A large drugstore distribution center was seeing live mice run through the product pick lanes at all hours of the day. This 24-hour operation had hundreds of employees picking products and placing on a conveyor to be transported to a truck for loading and delivery. Employees reported seeing mice on all shifts running in and out of the crowded pick lanes. Pallets of product were packed tightly in the rack slots making inspection difficult and operations could not be stopped to work on the rodent infestation. The RK Environmental Services team had their work cut out for them. Even though operations could not be stopped for the work to be completed, it did slow down between the hours of 7 pm and 11 pm so that's when we got to work.

During the inspection phase around the pallets in the pick slots, hundreds of mouse droppings were found. Through further inspection shredded cardboard was discovered along with a dead "pinky" (baby mouse) on the slat of a pallet holding boxes of candy bars. The pallet was broken down and an active mouse nest was found containing a half dozen pinkies. These were removed manually and no other nests or evidence of nests were found.

To reduce the population of adult mice, 288 individual mouse snap traps were placed throughout the pick belt area. Each trap was numbered for accountability and baited using a hypoallergenic mouse attractant. As devices were placed in various areas around the pick belt snap traps could already be heard snapping and catching mice; this was the level of infestation the immediate area had.

The snap traps were left in place and once every 24 hours they were inspected and accounted for. If a mouse was caught on the trap it was removed and recorded. Traps were monitored for a week. The client reported seeing less mice and no additional nesting was discovered. An emphasis was placed on stock rotation and incoming goods inspections. It took several weeks before we could call the distribution center rodent free. While the count of mice was less than 50 caught the amount of damage caused by the pest was in the thousands.

Take Away Tips:

- Mice running during the day in open areas means infestation
- Snap traps are a powerful tool of the trade
- Rotate stock, maintain inspection rows
- Keep count of monitoring devices

Submitted by: Rich Gibson, ACE, CHA