

Case Study: Mouse infestation within a food distribution warehouse

The Scenario

A warehouse of approximately 250,000 ft² had a long-standing problem with house mice. Pallets were regularly being shipped with evidence for infestation, including droppings, damaged stock and nests containing adults and live young.

The Challenge

Several clients were on the verge of cancelling their storage contracts, and significant additional costs were being incurred through:

- Direct financial penalties for stock damage
- Penalties, and increased transport costs, for rejected loads
- Human resource costs in checking and breaking down pallets before despatch

The pest control contractor was blaming the infestation on warehouse doors being left open, and was demanding additional payment to carry out an eradication programme.

The Solution

Following a comprehensive inspection from an Acheta consultant it was evident that the main source of infestation was mice living within the building structure. The control programme in place was considered to be inadequate, and the contractor had not identified the root cause of the problem, essentially poor fabrication of the cladded wall panels, and penetration by mice of the expansion joints in the floor. A multi-faceted approach to resolve the problem was adopted:

- A formal review meeting attended by Acheta, site and pest control contractor representatives resulted in a change of service personnel for the site.
- An eradication plan was put in place, using site plans to highlight hot-spots of activity, and a broad range of physical and chemical control products.
- Comprehensive proofing works, using materials appropriate for the task, were carried out to wall and floor areas that mice had penetrated.
- Pest awareness training was provided to warehouse personnel to aid identification of activity.
- An Acheta consultant was engaged to carry out inspections at monthly intervals for a three-month period, extending to six-monthly inspections thereafter, substituting for 2 of the 4 field biologist inspections, all of which had previously been provided by the contractor.

The Benefits

Mouse activity declined rapidly initially, though with a number of localised 'flare-ups' for the first couple of months of the eradication programme. Customer complaints dropped correspondingly, to nil after three months.



Although total expenditure on the pest control programme, including Acheta's two inspections per annum, increased by around 25%, the effective saving on those costs associated with despatch of infested pallets, and human resource in checking for infestation, resulted in an estimated saving of around £20k in the year following our involvement.