

# MEAT & POULTRY®



## Beefing up pest control

Audits can serve to improve overall operations

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**T**he prospect of an upcoming audit is the source of concern and angst for many processors. Most times, this stress can be avoided. Regardless of how well a previous audit went, one small infraction – like the presence of pests – can drastically change the overall score. Because pest control accounts for up to 20 percent of a plant's total audit score, it's important to develop a foolproof pest-management system.

“Because pest control accounts for up to 20 percent of a plant's total audit score, it's important to consider how to develop a foolproof pest-management system.”

Audit preparation is less daunting if it becomes part of a plant's daily routine. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs couple pest prevention with regular sanitation, facility maintenance and detailed documentation. Educating employees about their role in the IPM process improves the opportunity to identify a pest problem early – before the external auditor does. Reputable pest-management

Top: Keeping up-to-date records is important because many auditors review this documentation as evidence of an effective pest-management program. Below: Examine the placement of traps and bait stations around the exterior and interior facilities. (Photos courtesy of Orkin Commercial Services)

companies will train workers to be on the lookout for pest signs and conditions that are conducive to infestations. Knowledgeable employees are valuable assets in helping keep pests out of facilities and in preventing problems that could result in audit deductions. The following guidelines can help identifying problems:

- While walking through the facility, look for signs of pest activity, including droppings, chew marks and live or dead pests.
- Be on the lookout for any needed sanitation or maintenance repairs. Catching these early can prevent pest problems before they start.
- Conduct a “gap analysis” of facilities. Cockroaches only need a 1/16 inch gap to enter, while mice only need an opening the size of dime to access buildings. Seal openings around utility connections, as well as cracks or gaps around windows and doors with weather-resistant sealant.
- Keep it clean – not only will impeccable sanitation prevent the spread of pathogens, it also will help prevent pests.

## Review IPM programs

Additionally, it's important to meet quarterly with the plant's pest management professional to discuss and review IPM programs. Use this opportunity to discuss any facility updates, including additions or schedule changes that may affect the current pest-control methods. Take extra time the week before scheduled audits to thoroughly review pest-control programs and explore areas for improvement. Some common deductions during audits include:

- Missing Documentation: Keep up-to-date and accurate records, as many auditors review this documentation as evidence of an effective pest-management program. Store all docu-



mentation in a logbook to allow the auditor to easily access documents, such as service reports, corrective actions, pest-activity reports, trend data, pesticide-usage logs, pesticide labels, material safety data sheets (MSDS) and floor plans.

- Outdated Trap Maps: Examine the placement of traps and bait stations around the exterior and interior of your facility. Make sure they correspond with the site diagram kept in your documentation books – auditors will deduct points for discrepancies. Replace chewed bait inside traps and make sure they are free of pests.

Finally, review the facility's recent audit scores and correct any problems that resulted in past deductions to avoid making the same mistake twice.

With preparation and planning, audits can be a source of improving operations rather than another worry for plant operators. **M&P**

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