An Integrated Approach towards the Provision of Pest Management Services (IPM)

The CEPA Position

The Confederation of European Pest Management Associations and its members, by subscribing to an integrated approach in providing Pest Management services (IPM), wish to ensure that the industry is recognized for responsibly protecting European Citizens and the environment in which they live against public health risks.

This initiative is intended to further support CEPA's engagement, together with the European Standards Agency (CEN), in the development of a European Standard for the Pest Management industry of which IPM will be an integral part.

CEPA and its members believe that promoting professional standards are essential to ensure the degree of professionalism, skill and knowledge required to maximize the impact on public health whilst controlling subsidiary risks for citizens and the environment.

What is IPM?

Integrated pest management (IPM) is an approach to pest control that is designed to reduce the ecological impact of protecting citizens from harmful nuisances that pose public health risks (health, homes as well as commercial and community environments).

What does it consist of?

IPM is performed in three stages: *prevention*, *observation* and *intervention*. It is an ecological approach with a main goal of managing pest populations at an acceptable level, resorting to the use of chemicals only when there is no other alternative.

What are its guiding principles?

The following principles, also promoted by the US Environmental Protection Agency, are useful benchmarks in observing an IPM approach to pest management.

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1. **Acceptable pest levels**: The emphasis is on control, not eradication. IPM holds that wiping out an entire pest population is often impossible, and the attempt can be more costly, environmentally unsafe, and frequently unachievable.

2. **Monitoring**: Regular observation is the cornerstone of IPM. Observation is broken into two steps, first; inspection and second; identification.[2] Monitoring tools are used to monitor pest levels. Accurate pest identification is critical to a successful IPM program. Record-keeping is essential, as is a thorough knowledge of the behavior and reproductive cycles of target pests.

3. **Mechanical controls**: Should a pest reach an unacceptable level, mechanical methods are the first options to consider. They include erecting barriers and using traps.

4. **Biological controls**: Natural biological processes and materials can provide control, with minimal environmental impact, and often at low cost. The main focus here is on promoting beneficial predators that eat target pests. Biological insecticides, derived from naturally occurring microorganisms also fit in this category.

5. **Chemical controls**: Synthetic pesticides are generally only used as required.

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