



# Sustainable Development: Driving Business

Features - INDUSTRY RESEARCH

It's not just a buzzword. Sustainability is here to stay. And products with reduced levels of active ingredient top the "wish list" of pest management professionals who feel that tightening regulations will reduce their ability to operate their businesses over the next five years.

April 20, 2017

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By Jeff Fenner

*Editor's note: The research cited in this article was conducted by Global Prairie, a full-service digital marketing and advertising agency, on behalf of the Professional Pest Management business of Bayer, within the company's Environmental Science unit. An online survey of pest control operators in the United States, India, Brazil and Italy was conducted April 23-June 1, 2015. The U.S. survey results are reflected in this coverage. The goal of the research was to assess the awareness and attitudes of pest control operators toward emerging issues and trends, in an effort to capture key challenges and opportunities in the professional pest management industry. This article is the third in a four-part series of PCT reporting on this data.*

Buzzwords have a tendency to come and go in the world of business. We all have included such words as like "outside the box" and "synergy" or today's "wantrepreneur" and "return on relationship" in presentations, proposals and conversations.

Today, the buzzword for pest management professionals is "sustainable development" and it is one that is likely to be part of the business vernacular for protectors of property and public health for some time.

The Bayer PCO Global Survey found 71 percent of PMPs surveyed believe labeling and certifying a product as meeting a certain environmental standard (i.e., reduced-risk, etc.) is the most important aspect of sustainable development to their business.

Products with reduced levels of active ingredient top the "wish list" of pest management professionals who feel that tightening regulations will reduce their ability to operate their businesses over the next five years.

"The industry is excited about the prospects of new products coming down the pipe that include less active ingredient but that do not sacrifice efficacy," says Rick Bell, vice president of Arrow Exterminators in Atlanta.

Bell referenced the ongoing pollinator health issue as having made PMPs and industry suppliers more sensitive to the environmental-impact issue and work closer with regulatory agencies at the national and state levels to find common ground.

Pest professionals responding to the Bayer Global Survey indicated that regulations will be the second biggest challenge they face in the next half decade and Bell says he feels the industry is meeting those challenges head-on through collaboration and education.



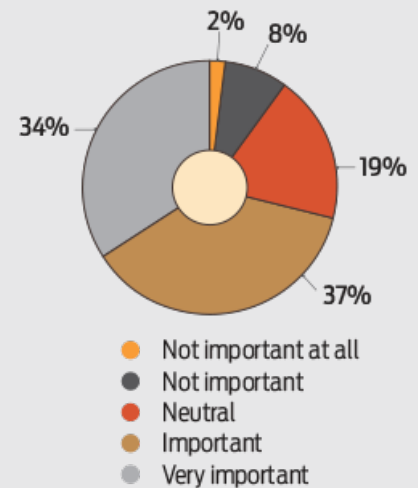
Bell says the National Pest Management Association and Association of Structural Pest Control Regulatory Officials (ASPCRO) have worked closely with the U.S. EPA and other regulatory agencies to have open and honest discussions about the important role the industry plays in protecting property and public health.

### Sustainable Development Is Driver

**71 percent** of pest management professionals say that labeling and certifying a product as meeting certain environmental standards is important to their business.

**As part of sustainable development to your business, how important is labeling and certifying a product as meeting certain environmental standards?**

*Source: Professional Pest Management – Global Survey by Bayer, Findings for the United States. Global Prairie research, Kansas City: 2015*



Through a series of hands-on workshops, regulators were able to see exactly how treatments are performed and how overly restrictive label language negatively impacted a PMP's ability to deliver what consumers needed.

"Insects don't read the same label PMPs or regulators do so it was important to show them why the industry was asking for specific language on labels in order to safely and effectively get the job done," says Bell. "It has opened their eyes some, created dialogue and that is a good thing for everyone."

How is new product technology changing the way pest management professionals go about their daily tasks of eliminating ants, termites, cockroaches and other pests?

Today's new technology affords the industry the opportunity to ramp up training and education efforts for its technicians and reinforce the importance of deploying Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles in treatment protocols.

"Through training and education we are creating a better, smarter pest management professional," says Bell. "Today's PMP has to process a lot more information and work with more informed customers than a decade ago, and enhanced training and the ability to offer lower impact products is valuable."

Bell says the industry is also doing more to identify what type of services and products customers want in and around their home or business, and to educate customers on the options available to them that deliver the intended results with less of an environmental impact.

The industry veteran also says the pest management industry doesn't take enough credit for the steps it has taken to support sustainable development and the environment.

"The industry is using smaller, more fuel-efficient service vehicles and deploying smaller truck-mounted spray rigs that use less water and product," says Bell. "We also are deploying more baiting and monitoring practices, and making a concerted effort to leave a smaller environmental footprint with our services."

*The author is a frequent editorial contributor.*



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