

California Markets

Challenging Markets are Ideal for Bait Systems.

No market in the U.S. is exactly the same when it comes to termite control. Different species thrive in different regions, swarm levels vary, and operators in each state must adhere to different regulations. Perhaps no state has more termite control challenges than California. Not only does it face the notoriously finicky and destructive western subterranean termite, but the state is a spot treatment only market where full treatments that are common in other parts of the country are rarely performed.

With all these variations in play, it is important for PMPs to have an effective, reliable bait system that controls termites regardless of the combination of tough conditions. That's why more and more PMPs in California are turning to the Advance® Termite Bait System (ATBS) from Whitmire Micro-Gen.



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One in Five Homes Affected

Western subterranean termites are common along the West Coast, and they are one of the most destructive species, causing millions of dollars of damage every year in the region. An estimated one in five homes in high-risk areas will be attacked.

These termites rapidly devour wood, and they thrive in moist areas like those near oceans and water sources. Most of the major cities along the California coastline face the scourge of the Western subterranean species.

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William Houtchens, President of Team Too in Corona, California, began using ATBS in 2007. He converted all of his accounts from another bait system to ATBS. In addition, he says more and more of his customers are asking about baiting, and now more than 25 percent of his termite business is ATBS.

“We had hits on the ATBS stations within 30 days, and our customers who might have been

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unsure about us changing their bait system were certainly appreciative when they saw the results,” Houtchens says. He adds that as the customer results came rolling in, a buzz grew quickly among his field staff and inspectors. “For the first time in a while, my office staff had something exciting to tell our customers, because they saw it with their own eyes.”

Gail Getty, an entomologist at the University of California – Berkeley, adds, “the Advance Termite Bait System allows PMPs to identify the presence of termites and to control them, and is a recognized treatment solution for homeowners.”

Why Baits are a Great Choice

California is an ideal market for baits systems for two reasons. First, full liquid treatments are rare – spot or partial treatments are far more common. With a bait system installed, the PMP and the customer do not have to wonder if spot treatments took place in the right areas to treat the problem. Any further termite activity on the site will be detected by the baits through ongoing monitoring.

The second reason baits work well in California – and other markets as well – is that during slow termite years, the quarterly monitoring of baits gives PMPs a route structure and ongoing source of revenue. This helps reduce the ups and downs of cyclical termite markets. In California, the last several swarm seasons have been comparatively slow. PMPs who may not be seeing as many new termite customers can maintain relationships and income streams with customers who want ongoing monitoring to ensure that termites do not invade their homes.

Jeff Hinton, General Manager of AAI Pest Control in northern California, says that as the real estate market has cooled in his area, he is approaching homeowners and existing pest control customers about installing ATBS.

“Customers seem to like the fact that we come out quarterly to check the stations instead of once a year with an annual inspection. We started doing ATBS mailers, and customers are really starting to ask about ATBS and baiting,” he says.