

Baits Offer Many Advantages in Pre-Treat Market

Atlanta-based Skyline Pest solutions uses the Advance® Termite Bait System (ATBS) for pre-treats.

There was a time when pre-treating for termites in the construction industry consisted of one option – liquid treatments that had to be done quickly and on a tight timeframe simply to satisfy requirements. Today, the popularity of baits among both builders and home buyers has changed the pre-treat landscape and created many business-building opportunities for pest management professionals.

Liquids and borates are still options in pre-treats, and many pest control operators offer multiple treatment options. But an increasing number of PMPs are experiencing the benefits of offering baits.

David King, co-owner of Atlanta-based Skyline Pest Solutions, began using baits in 2004. Now, 75 percent of the company's pre-treats are baits, done exclusively with the Advance Termite Bait System



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from Whitmire Micro-Gen. King estimates that Skyline has installed nearly 2500 homes with the Advance Termite Bait System, and he anticipates treating more than 1000 new homes in the Atlanta area in 2008.

“Bait technology has improved significantly and the product works very well – that’s the most important aspect,” King says. “But with baits, we are able to do twice as many installs. We average eight installs per day compared to three or four with liquids or borates. You can see how advantageous that is as a business owner.”

Convenience, Flexibility Appeal to Builders

Most mortgage companies in Skyline's home state of Georgia require builders to provide evidence that new homes have been treated for termites. There is typically a small window of time to perform a chemical treatment in most construction projects, and the timing must be tightly coordinated with other contractors. Since contractors' project schedules are notoriously hard to predict, a chemical termite treatment can be hard to schedule. With baits, installation timing is flexible.

Pest Management In Action

“Once the landscaping is done, we just have to have the bait system installed before the closing date – which gives us much more time and flexibility,” King says. “It’s a big selling point to remove even one scheduling headache for builders.”

Many builders are also interested in how residents will be serviced after the sale. Quarterly bait monitoring offers builders the peace-of-mind that their buyers will receive ongoing protection and service.

Homeowners Love Baits

An increasing number of homeowners are looking to avoid chemical treatments in and around their homes, yet they still want long-term protection from termites. The active ingredient in ATBS is 0.25% diflubenzuron, which is inserted into bait stations only after termite activity is detected. There is no

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chemical applied inside the home or applied outside the home where kids and pets play.

King reports that homeowners respond well to ATBS not only because it is less intrusive, but also because the stations are tangible – their design is intuitive and homeowners can easily understand how they work. The stations are buried inconspicuously at soil level with child/pet tamper resistant caps, and the quarterly monitoring schedule offers homeowners the peace-of-mind that termites will not go undetected and damage their homes.

Baits Boost Renewals, Cross Selling

King says his initial sales contact is with the builder,

and some builders pass on ATBS informational materials to buyers. In order to ensure direct contact with those homeowners, King says Skyline seeks contact with them on their quarterly follow-up service and through telephone calls and mail contact such as invoices.

“The quarterly inspection is an ideal time to communicate with homeowner and cross sell other pest management services. Liquids and borates don’t present that opportunity,” he says. “We have four times as many opportunities to renew with customers because we have four times the contact.”

King adds that Whitmire Micro-Gen strongly supports PMPs who use ATBS in pre-treats, or who are considering doing so. “Whitmire Micro-Gen has provided outstanding product training, marketing support and consultation on how to market ATBS to builders and developers. That has been invaluable to us,” he says.



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