



## **Pest Management Industry Fact Sheet**

### **Why the urban environmental pest management industry is important:**

Pests destroy homes and buildings and their contents; termites alone cause over \$5 billion in damage annually.

Pests can transmit disease-causing organisms including West Nile Virus, Lyme Disease, malaria, plague, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, hantavirus, and encephalitis.

Insect stings force half-a-million people to the emergency room every year.

Rodents consume or contaminate about 20 percent of the world's food supply. They carry fleas and ticks that potentially carry diseases. Rodents have also been implicated in fires across the country by chewing wires and spilling flammables.

Bed bugs have made a resurgence in the United States. While no one is sure of the exact reason, experts suggest it may be due to more targeted treatment practices and increased international travel.

**Most people tend to think of pest management in terms of residential problems (ants, rodents, cockroaches, termites, fleas, etc.). The importance of the industry to the nation as a whole is much broader including food and health protection.**

Public health officials attribute the quality of life we have today to three things: better pharmaceuticals and vaccines, better sanitation and better pest control.

Rats bite more than 45,000 people each year. Rats can cause fires by chewing wires and transmit disease organisms such as rat bite fever, salmonella, trichinosis, murine typhus, the plague, and leptospirosis.

According to the American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology, more than two million Americans are allergic to stinging insects, more than 500,000 enter hospital emergency rooms every year suffering from insect stings, and between 40-150 people a year die as a result of these stings.

Without pest management practices, pests could destroy more than 50 percent of our food crops. Only 11 percent of the average U.S. disposable income is spent on food compared to 19.9 percent in Japan and 52.6 percent in China.

In a recent consumer survey, 93 percent of people expressed concern over finding insects within their home. According to a survey cited by the Army Community Service, insects and bugs rank as the public's third most common fear, behind public speaking and heights.



## **Pest Management Industry Fact Sheet continued**

Seven to eight percent of the general population is allergic to cockroaches. Studies of inner city children in Atlanta with chronic wheezing and runny noses revealed that 44 percent of them were allergic to cockroaches. Recent surveys have determined that cockroach allergens are the number three contributors to children's asthma.

Cockroach suppression and eradication *is* vital to health care facilities, homes, and sites where food is prepared or served. Cockroaches contaminate food and *spread filth by walking through contaminated areas*. They commonly carry staphylococci, streptococcus, coli-form, molds, *salmonella*, yeasts, and clostridia.

Innovations in pest management parallel an increase in life expectancy. A child born in 1900 had a life expectancy of just 49 years while a child born in 2010 had a life expectancy of 78 years.

In a consumer survey, renters and homeowners were asked about the problems they've had with their homes or apartments. The number one problem they cited was insects. In fact, nearly half (45 percent) of the complaints dealt with insects or rodents in the home.

It would be difficult to find any segment of the food industry that could comply with federal sanitation and health regulations without an adequate pest management program.