

Global summit of pest management services

The AEPMA and the Australian pest management industry were recently represented at a 'coming together of the minds', in the form of the Global Summit of Pest Management Services for Public Health and Food Safety sectors.

This inaugural event was jointly organised by the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) from the US and Confederation of European Pest Management Associations (CEPA). Considering these two associations have not always seen eye to eye, the event was something of a watershed for both.

It was acknowledged in the opening introduction, delivered by **Bob Rosenberg**, NPMA chief executive officer and **Roland Higgins**, director general of CEPA, that relations between the two associations have sometimes been distinctly frosty, with each regarding the other with some suspicion.

However, they did both acknowledge that the globalisation of the food industry necessitated a global approach to pest management in servicing a sector that is economically crucial to pest managers. This conference marked the first formal collaborative event organised by these two associations in their 40 years of existence.

Summing up the feelings of the CEPA hosts, Mr Higgins said, "We are delighted that our call for speakers produced such an impressive array of industry experts and other stakeholders. Together with the Global Summit's 200 participants from 35 countries, they explored the organisation of pest management services in the changing environment of EU and USA regulation, customer requirements and third party certification in food businesses."

The fact that Australia 'got a guernsey' to attend and a speaker invite was also bit of a coup. AEPMA has been lobbying the US and European Pest Industry associations for a formal invite to either one of the respective conferences for a number of years. AEPMA were extremely pleased to finally receive an invite to the first combined event and the speaker spot was indeed, an additional privilege.



Gary Stephenson

Gary Stephenson (Pacific region technical manager, Flick Anticimex) represented AEPMA and the Australian pest management industry at the conference and was given the opportunity to present in the session 'Challenges and Solutions for Pest Management in Food Production Facilities'.

Mr Stephenson highlighted two key challenges:



"To be able to provide a pest free environment and comply with the various food safety standards, while using safer but effective pest management methods, with reduced reliance on pesticides.

"Align our two industries (food and pest control) through harmonisation, communication and knowledge sharing (practices, procedures, expectations and outcomes)."

Mr Stephenson highlighted the development of AEPMA codes of practice and standards as tangible examples of the Australian efforts to nurture and promote a unified approach to deliver on these challenges.

After two intensive days of presentations, there was much debate and exchange of views about practices and requirements across Europe, the USA and elsewhere around the world.

CEPA chairman, **Bertrand Montmoreau** was pleased with the open and frank discussions from all participants and commented, "The most positive sign was the outstanding participation of representatives from the food industries, honestly detailing their expectations of the pest management industry."

Summing up from the USA point of view, Mr Rosenberg focused on the need for global industry co-operation. "Oversight of the pest management industry is quickly becoming more global, demanding greater industry cooperation. The Global Summit was an exceptional first step towards global harmonisation of industry's response to these emerging challenges."

As to the future, the plan is that this will be a bi-annual event, alternating between the USA and Europe.

