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## **CRRU-approved certifications for purchase and use of ‘professional’ rodenticide products**

The CRRU Training and Certification Work Group (T&C WG) has recently published a list of the approved certifications for proof of competence for purchase and use of professional packs of rodenticides ([www.thinkwildlife.org.uk](http://www.thinkwildlife.org.uk)). So now is a good time to explain CRRU policy on this very important aspect of the UK Rodenticide Stewardship Regime, writes CRRU chairman Dr Alan Buckle.

To start the process, the T&C WG identified a set of ‘subject areas’ that all courses leading to CRRU-approved certification must cover adequately. These were deemed essential to the stewardship regime and were adopted following exhaustive discussions with HSE and other stakeholder organisations, including the pest control professional trade associations, BPCA and NPTA.

The agreed, required subject areas for approved courses are:

- a. *Reasons for rodent pest management.*
- b. *Importance of the product label and the information it provides. Regulation and legislation relevant to rodent pest management.*
- c. *Biology and behaviour of rodent pest species.*
- d. *Aspects of the ecology and behaviour of non-target species relevant to rodent management activities.*
- e. *The ‘Risk Hierarchy’. Concept of ‘severity’ of rodent management interventions. Implementation of rodent management strategies which involve the use of interventions that are ‘least severe - but effective’.*
- f. *Potential risks to human and animal health and of environmental contamination from the use of rodenticides. Routes of exposure and appropriate measures to reduce risks. Current extent of wildlife contamination with rodenticides. Training should include instruction about the conduct of an Environmental Assessment and other relevant risk assessment procedures.*
- g. *Consideration of appropriate treatment outcomes for different use scenarios. For example circumstances in which complete rodent eradication may be required and where it is not.*
- h. *Elements that may comprise a safe and effective Integrated Rodent Management programme that is proportionate and relevant to the user group receiving the training. These may include rodent survey, physical control techniques, chemical control techniques, environmental management and monitoring.*
- i. *Use of rodenticides in practice, including: effective and safe methods of bait application in use scenarios appropriate to the participants (such as sewers, in and around buildings, open areas and waste dumps), the requirement to search for and safely dispose of rodent carcasses, what to do in the case of accidental exposure or consumption of baits by human and animal non-targets.*
- j. *Anticoagulant resistance; where it is found and what its practical effects are. Techniques to adopt to avoid the development of resistance and to overcome resistant infestations.*
- k. *Aspects for consideration at the closure of a rodenticide application including measures necessary to prevent re-infestation, such as housekeeping, habitat modification and proofing of vulnerable structures.*
- l. *The importance and benefits of record-keeping.*
- m. *Safe storage of rodenticide products and safe disposal of spent bait.*

Of course, all new courses that are intended to provide CRRU-approved certification must cover these subject areas too. Another important step was to decide which existing courses and certifications cover these subjects in sufficient depth to provide 'grandfathered' certification for those already holding them. This was done in discussion with the organisations, such as Royal Society of Public Health, City & Guilds, LANTRA and BASIS (Registration Ltd) who provide these certifications, and by looking at the appropriate course syllabuses.

In some cases it was found that courses and certifications had previously existed but syllabuses could not be obtained. Therefore, it could not be determined whether the necessary subject areas had been properly covered. These certifications are now considered to be 'time expired' and holders will need to update their qualification in order to meet current requirements for proof of professional competence for purchase and use. This updating can be done either by taking one of the current approved courses, or by taking the new, purposely-designed CRRU Wildlife Aware course with CRRU/BASIS accreditation.

Attention has also been given to Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The T&C WG hoped that those holding 'time-expired' certifications might comply with requirements if they had, in the meantime, participated in CPD activities covering the subject areas set out above. However, current CPD recording systems did not permit the Work Group to find out who had done appropriate and sufficient rodent-specific learning. CPD is, however, a critical part of ongoing proof of professional competence to the extent that BPCA and NPTA have both made a commitment to HSE, through the CRRU Stewardship Regime proposals, that their members will participate in approved and recorded CPD frameworks.

It is important to note that exactly the same certification requirements and subject areas being used in the professional pest control and local authority user sectors are to be applied to other user groups, such as farmers and gamekeepers.

Hopefully, this explanation will go some way towards showing how decisions were made by the CRRU T&C WG and the reasons for them. We can never keep 'everybody happy all of the time'! But the intention has been for existing training and certification systems in professional pest management to be employed to demonstrate the competence and responsibility of the vast majority of experienced technicians.

Two more important objectives are to provide relevant, affordable and accessible training opportunities for the minority who find themselves without approved certification and to make the situation clear to everyone in plenty of time before the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016 dead-line. This, of course, is when proof of professional competence will be needed at point-of-sale to purchase professional-pack rodenticides, and for users to be able legally to apply them.

Alan Buckle, CRRU Chairman