

Pest control - in warehousing

Managing the risk of pests during storage of goods

The UNs Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that 40% of global crops are destroyed by pests. As they enter the supply chain, agricultural and food products in particular are prone to further risk of contamination by pests, spreading disease and harming delicately balanced eco-systems. When pests infiltrate the supply chain, there can be serious consequences for producers, shippers, vendors and consumers.

Non-consumable products are also susceptible to infestation and can harbour pests and their eggs, transporting them from country to country along with the cargo. In some instances, the cargo will need to be cleaned, fumigated or destroyed, depending on the cargo and extent of infestation.

This document considers the main risks and preventative measures that can be taken to mitigate the risk of damage caused by invasive pests whilst goods are held in storage, whether pre- or post-transport, or for longer term storage.

What are the risks?



PEST TRANSFER



SPREAD OF DISEASE



ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE



REPUTATIONAL DAMAGE



FOOD WASTAGE



INCREASED INSURANCE COSTS



CARGO LOSS

How can you mitigate these risks?

Below are various measures that can help in identifying pest contamination of goods received into storage and preventing further contamination or the transfer of pests when the goods are released from storage, either for distribution or international transport. It is important that all your workforce are aware of the risks and how to contact the relevant national authority as appropriate.

Consider the following steps to mitigate the risk:

ESTABLISH A PEST CONTROL PROGRAMME

- Seal any cracks and gaps in your warehouse walls, ceilings and close all doors when not in use
- Maintain robust sanitation procedures and clean any debris straightaway
- Dispose of food waste in secure industrial bins designed to prevent infestation
- Maintain records of inspections and corrective actions, aiding future prevention
- Avoid storing products with damaged packaging indoors where practicable
- Watch for signs of infestation such as droppings or nesting materials and encourage prompt reporting
- Provide regular workforce training
- Promote the importance of hygiene and handwashing



PACKING

- Ensure goods are protected from moisture, light, pests and physical damage
- Avoid loading outside at night under bright lights
- Consider using heat treated or chemically treated wooden pallets. Be aware that this is a requirement for some international cargo



STORAGE GOOD PRACTICE

- Undertake regular visual inspections
- Ensure inventory management is in place with regard to batch numbers and best by dates
- Carefully manage inventory with regard to batch numbers, any expiry dates and where expected dwell time is exceeded
- Don't accept old or expired stock for storage
- Avoid storing old or expired stock/products
- Where possible, store food products in sealed containers, off the floor and away from walls
- Reduce the risk of food spoiling by ensuring that storage humidity or temperatures are appropriate
- Use traps to detect and monitor pest activity



PREPARING FOR TRANSPORT

- Ensure that the cargo transport unit (CTU), including dunnage, is clean both inside and out before loading the goods - mud and vegetation harbour invasive pests <https://www.ttclub.com/news-and-resources/video-library/invasive-pests-unit-and-cargo-cleanliness/>
- If pests are discovered, take action, where appropriate report to the relevant national authority
- Consider placing netting over vents to prevent pests entering
- Before unpacking goods, check for signs of pests to prevent bringing them into your storage area



WATCH OUT FOR RED FLAGS

- Don't underestimate the potential damage that can be caused through pest contamination. Ensure that any traces of pest presence are notified and escalated as appropriate

