



The Most Common Pests in the Dairy Industry

In the dairy industry, there is no room for error. Your customers expect high-quality, wholesome products. And you know that auditors will dock points from your company's audit score for infractions from the standard, which causes concerns. However, even if you run a smooth operation while adhering to all food safety guidelines, there's always one possible threat – pests.

This threat can come in many forms, with each pest having its own unique set of challenges. The first step in preventing pests is understanding what to look for and how they can put your business at risk. Let's take a look at some of the common pests found in dairy facilities and the unique risks they pose.

COCKROACHES



All cockroaches need food, water, shelter, and warmth – and they can find all of these in your facility. Many are found in warm, humid areas and find harborage behind, in and under equipment. Cockroaches also are commonly found around pipes and chase ways, in and around drain areas and often in secluded dark areas. They also can be brought in on boxes and pallets. Once they are in your facility, cockroaches can be stubborn and difficult to eliminate in some cases. They're able to hide easily and reproduce quickly, potentially tainting your products as they move about your facility.

SMALL FLIES



There are 3 main types of small flies that can pose concerns in dairy facilities, these are drain flies, phorid flies, and possibly fruit flies. The drains in your facility are very appealing to them as they provide food and harborage. Also, they contain biofilms which are attractive to them and give them a place to lay their eggs. These areas can be difficult to clean and may even be hidden or obscured by equipment. Aside from drains, other areas of concern are standing water, moisture leaks, cracks in floors and moist organic matter buildup where they find conducive habitat.



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STORED PRODUCT PESTS



While often overlooked, store product pests can have an aggressive appetite for dry dairy products. They make their way in aboard food products or from openings to the outdoors. For example, the warehouse and larger cabinet beetles feed on stored products and proteins, and powdered milk is especially susceptible. While the adults have a short-lived life, they can cause some serious damage to your products, not to mention the potential health risks associated with their larval cast skins.

How to Inspect for these Pests and What to Do:

While the solutions for each individual type of pest will differ, there are a few basic steps you can take to minimize downtime and reduce the chances of compromised products:

Harborage Identification

Make sure you pay attention to potential pest harborage sites and look for any activity, debris, or dead pests. You can also strategically place traps or glue boards to help identify where the pests are coming from. Location of the traps will help identify the direction of harborage, and with cockroaches for example, the direction and clues of their travel.

Insect Light Traps (ILT)

ILT's have many benefits. They are great for capturing outdoor flies and can catch small flies, warehouse beetles, night flyers, and other occasional invaders too. The important thing with ILT's is to make sure that you properly identify the pests captured and don't forget to replace the bulbs annually for optimum performance.

Exclusion and Pest Prevention

You need to ensure that there are no opportunities for pest to gain entry around doors, windows, screens, pipes, cracks, or through any structural deficiencies. If there are any cracks or gaps, make sure you seal them with a proper sealant to reduce potential entry and harborage points. These cracks and crevices may not seem like a big deal, but it can be the opportunity pests need to get inside of your facility. Also, great sanitation is important to prevent the attracting food sources inside and outside of your facility that pests are seeking.

For 85 years, IFC has specifically dedicated time, resources, and training to find solutions that prevent pests from becoming costly problems in the food industry. Our highly trained experts use prevention, targeted strategies, and tactics to help ensure that facilities are pest-free. With our nationwide coverage and a service team focused solely on the food industry, our service specialists have the flexibility and time needed to ensure that your dairy facility is running strong year-round.