

Interview

Heat treatment to tackle bugs

Andrew Crawford, Head of Border and Biosecurity FTA speaks to Tricia Loutas, Burlwoods Heat Treatment

1. ANDREW CRAWFORD - How long have you been in the heat treatment industry?

Burlwoods Heat Treatment has been in operation for over two decades, originally established to service the quarantine needs of a private timber importer of BURL WOOD from Canada.

In the mid 80's the business flourished with a growing demand for quarantine approved heat treatment across many sectors.

I acquired the business in early 2000 and the business has continued to grow servicing an ever-increasing market.

To help with the expansion Mark Goldman joined BHT in 2012. Mark's background in warehousing and logistics has helped BHT to continue to offer customers a reliable fast and efficient service. We both pride ourselves in offering personalised service and advice to all of our customers from the first-time importers to the more experienced international forwarding market.

2. ANDREW CRAWFORD - What is heat treatment and who benefits from the treatment?

Heat treatment is an environmentally friendly non-toxic application for the sterilisation or devitalisation of goods imported into Australia.

Our purpose-built heat chamber functions either for Dry Heat Treatment, essentially to kill pests on a wide range of products from specialised medical equipment, through to automotive parts and garden tools, or Moist Heat Treatment.

As the name implies, Moist Heat Treatment combines moisture, delivered in the form of controlled relative humidity, and heat to devitalise among other things, seeds and grains.

Of particular benefit of heat treatment are the importers of organic products. Heat treatment uses no chemicals just heated recirculated air and in the case of moist heat treatment, town water in the form of steam. Similarly, any importer who has concerns about chemical residue from other methods of treatment can rest assured that with heat treatment the only thing that will come in contact with their product is hot humid air.

3. ANDREW CRAWFORD - Talking about exotic pests and diseases, has Brown marmorated stick bug measures impacted your business at all and what innovation have you made to be able to treat imports at a container level?

Yes, it has impacted our business.

The 2017-18 BMSB season took a lot of industry participants, us included, by surprise with a sharp increase in enquiries and treatments. The 2018-19 BMSB season saw a change to the regulations regarding the deconsolidation of containers and left importers, freight forwarders and customs brokers scrambling for options.

The new regulations gave us the impetus to develop and invest in new technology to address the changes and to help meet the growing need for treatment of FCL, LCL and FAK goods from high risk BMSB countries.

In collaboration with various partners, all well regarded in their fields, we were successful in developing a method for heat treating goods at container level and in early 2019 had this method audited and approved by the Department of Agriculture for use for the treatment of BMSB containers.



Foremost in the design brief for this heat treatment apparatus was the notion that it should be portable and to that end we stand ready for the departments introduction of a new class (expected this season) to allow mobile treatment of BMSB containers.

As the 2019-20 season approaches with the expansion of high risk BMSB countries from 9 to 33 we have been receiving an increase in enquiries and bookings for treatment. Notwithstanding the anticipated and unavoidable impact that the new season will have on inspection times, we typically offer 48-hour turnaround for BMSB containers (subject to demand and inspections) together with a seamless, hassle free, product and environmentally friendly, cost effective treatment option.

We are well placed to help meet the needs of importers, freight forwarders and customs brokers now and into the future.

