

# ALWAYS AUDIT-READY: What Pet Food Processors Need to Know

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As a pet food processing manager, you're well acquainted with the daily challenges of ensuring efficient operations, meeting production goals and maintaining cleanliness. But in the midst of all the day-to-day tasks, it can be easy to overlook pest management. Unfortunately, pests are always looking for food, which your facility offers in abundance.

Letting pest management slip through the cracks can cost you points on your next audit, and a low score could negatively affect your reputation. That's why it pays to be prepared for an audit at all times—but where should you start?

For pet food processors, achieving high audit scores consists of having an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program and detailed documentation.



## WHAT DOES AN IPM PROGRAM INCLUDE?

IPM is the ongoing practice of preventing pest activity before it happens, focusing on sanitation and facility maintenance to help keep dependency on chemical products to a minimum. Every IPM program includes documentation that shows pest activity trends over time, keeps track of the results of any corrective actions taken against pests and building deficiencies, and presents a holistic overview of a facility's food safety plan. This kind of pest management documentation is important during audits and can account for up to 20 percent of your score. Working with an IPM provider makes creating this necessary documentation far simpler, as the provider will give you detailed service reports with each visit.





## HOW TO TRACK AND MANAGE YOUR DOCUMENTATION

While your IPM provider will assist with all pest management documentation, you'll want to ensure that it's stored safely and is easily accessible at all times. You should also make sure that all of the key documents are included in the information you provide during your audit. Missing documents can cause point deductions, even when you know you've followed all other procedures correctly.

Here are a few commonly overlooked documentation materials you should always keep at the ready:



**A record of any actions taken as a result of your pest management provider's assessments.** Since your auditor will most likely require an annual facility assessment, make sure your records can prove what corrective actions were recommended and how you carried them out.



**Proof of training for pest management professionals.** When working with a reputable IPM provider, it should be a given that technicians are properly trained, but your auditor will likely need to see proof. This may include a copy of the certification or registration document for each person who performs pest management services in the facility (if required by local regulations), verification of Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) training and/or written evidence of training in the proper and safe use of pest management materials.



**Detailed pest sighting log with list of actions taken.** Every pet food processing manager should keep a log that includes all pest activity observed within the facility, including date and time, pest type and any corrective actions that were taken to prevent recurrences.



**Documentation of changes to service or materials since your IPM contract was signed.** Though it's easily forgotten, sanitation managers should always have a record that shows why the current service or materials have changed since what was stated in the original signed contract. It's also advisable to have a written list that clearly indicates the individual responsibilities of both facility staff and your pest management provider.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

When it comes to audit readiness, you can never be too prepared. A low score could reflect poorly on your pet food processing company, but following the tips outlined above will help you have all the right cards in place when the time arrives. Talk to your IPM provider to learn more about the documentation process and ensure you're aligned on exactly what you need for your next audit.