



BOOK NOW

**FIELD PEST BIOLOGIST NQF
LEVEL 5**
20 OCTOBER 2014 PRETORIA

WEED CONTROL
21-23 OCTOBER 2014 PRETORIA

**TERMITES & WOOD
DESTROYING ORGANISMS**
27-29 OCTOBER 2014 PRETORIA

Registration Now Open

GENERAL PEST CONTROL PROGRAM
10-12 NOVEMBER 2014 PRETORIA

Upcoming Courses

ALL COURSES ON NQF LEVEL 4 NOT NQF LEVEL 2

GENERAL PEST CONTROL PROGRAM
13-15 OCTOBER 2014 PRETORIA
10-12 NOVEMBER 2014 PRETORIA
8-10 DECEMBER 2014 PRETORIA

WEED CONTROL
21-23 OCTOBER 2014 PRETORIA
17-19 NOVEMBER 2014 PRETORIA

**TERMITES & WOOD DESTROYING
ORGANISMS**
27-29 OCTOBER 2014 PRETORIA
25-27 NOVEMBER 2014 PRETORIA

FUMIGATION
1-3 DECEMBER 2014 PRETORIA

PLANT PEST & DISEASES
21-23 OCTOBER 2014 PRETORIA
17-19 NOVEMBER 2014 PRETORIA

**WOOD PRESERVATION OF UTILITY
POLES**
27-29 OCTOBER 2014 PRETORIA
25-27 NOVEMBER 2014 PRETORIA

WAGING WAR ON RATS

Johannesburg - Peter Manganye calls it rat utopia. Here, at the filthy and neglected Madala Hostel, the creatures drink like buffaloes from streams of putrid water and feast on the mountains of festering waste at the entrance to the crumbling building.

"In an environment like this, they grow fast," says Manganye, the director of environmental health at the City of Joburg. "It's the perfect world for them to live in - a beautiful hideout. They don't lack food, water or shelter."



This is one of the dirtiest places in Alexandra and a veritable rat hotspot, but it's nowhere near the worst the densely packed township has to offer. "You ain't seen nothing yet," says Manganye. "This is like the Sandton of Alex. he laughs.

"Come inside the shacks, and you will appreciate the difficulties we're faced with daily. The filth. The houses, the way people have built in their yards/ everywhere. The dirty water running from one end to the other end. As you can see," he says, pointing to the mountains of waste, "there is food for rats all over the show."

Skinny goats drink from cloudy streams where residents wash their clothes and empty their leftovers. Rat burrows run into their broken homes, held together by scraps of cloth.

"There is absolutely no way you can't have a problem here. People just throw their waste out into the open. So you can imagine, when it's dark and quiet, those rats will come in their numbers. Look at this water, it's like an ocean for them.. They will be like buffaloes drinking here" But for the humans, there are victories. Rat carcasses lie bloated in the sun; others are shrivelled husks of claws and teeth. And Manganye and his team have just fumigated more burrows, smothering the fat survivors inside a heavy black plastic bag. "These are just the few that escape... you can imagine if you had to open these burrows, you would see

infested her shack too. "At night, you can see them running all over my roof. Sometimes they bite my 4-year-old child. It's horrible to live like this. But there is nowhere to go."

"The people who live here are feeding these rats. There will be an improvement in this case because people are now aware of what can happen."

But already since the clean-up, pieces of mouldy bread and pap are strewn through the dingy alleyway that serves as the entrance to the huddle of wooden shacks. Rat droppings are everywhere.

"We often hear stories of rats as big as cats biting children to death," says Manganye. "When these cases are followed up, it's the parents who are negligent. You find that before the rodent bit them, the child was dead for days, in some cases.

"You know why they bite small children? After feeding them, their parents don't wash their hands or their faces. The child is just put to sleep that way. Sometimes the parents don't have access to water to clean their children properly.

"When the rodent comes and smells food



in the shack, it doesn't think it's biting a human being - it thinks it's food. "For it to eat off your lips, it must have happened over a long period of time, because it gnaws. "But we cannot be judgmental about these cases. We have to give people the benefit of the doubt."

His small team of environmental health practitioners and pest control operators are "making a huge impact" in the 180 informal settlements mushrooming across Joburg, he believes, where rodents scavenge.

"It's about managing the risks. The measurement of the success of our programmes is actually not in the number of rats we have killed only, but the fact that we don't have rat-related diseases in the city. That must say something about the role we play to keep

OUR COURSES ARE AGRISETA ACCREDITED AND ACCEPTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES FOR REGISTRATION AS A PEST CONTROL OPERATOR

**AGRISETA & SAQA
REGISTRATION NO: AGRI/c
prov/0207/08
FET REGISTRATION NO: 2012/
FE07/001**

Struggling to complete your pest control correspondence NQF level 4 course? Even if you have only completed 1 or 2 modules, why not contact us?

WE NOW HAVE CREDIT CARD FACILITIES AVAILABLE IF YOU WANT TO PAY FOR YOUR TRAINING ON EXTENDED CREDIT OVER 6/12/24 MONTHS

To download a printable version of this newsletter—click [here](#).

thousands of rats that we kill every single day of our lives.

"We won't be able to tell you how many were gassed underneath, because we can't count them, but we get a lot of them this way. When we do inspections we look for evidence of activity like the rat burrows and the rat droppings, and you can see these everywhere.

He can't afford to be hopeless. "You think about what a massive task it is, you get frustrated. You think about the disaster you will have on your hands if you don't do the work. Somebody's got to do it.

"But the density of Alex, it's something you've never seen before. There's a place I saw in Kenya, Kibera – the worst slum in the world. Alex isn't far off from that."

For its thriving community of rodents, the unhygienic conditions, scrapyards and illegal waste dumps are the perfect habitat. But residents have learnt to turn a blind eye to the pests that gnaw through their property – and bite their children.

Last week, a one-month-old baby girl was hospitalised after rats ate three of her fingers and bit off part of her nose in nearby Marlboro. Hers is a case that haunts the soft-spoken Page.

"I haven't slept for the past few nights because I'm thinking of this month-old baby without three fingers," he says troubled. "You know I'm a father of two. This child must go through life like this. It touches me."

Here in Marlboro, his team's carbon monoxide machine whirrs as it pumps the lethal gas inside the warren of shacks alongside an abandoned factory, where the injured baby lives with her immigrant parents. "The gas puts them to sleep," he says. "That's how they die." There are murmurs here that the baby's mother left her alone, although she has claims she was doing laundry when she responded to the horrifying wails of her daughter. The baby is still too small for reconstructive surgery, but remains in a stable condition at Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital.

Rosa* is afraid to say too much, only that she rushed to her neighbour's shack, thinking it was on fire. "The baby was screaming, I thought she was burning. When I saw the child, there was blood all over her face and arms from the bites," she says. "It was terrible." Rats have

them in check."

Together with its fumigation campaign, the council has rolled out hundreds of rat cages to residents in Alex and daily these are returned, sometimes crammed with as many as 18 rodents. And together with EcoSolutions, owl boxes have been set up in three of the township's schools, taking the fight against rodents to the skies. These are proving successful, he says.

But the biggest battle is yet to be won – convincing residents to dispose of waste correctly.

Danny Mauwane, an environmental health practitioner, spends his days imploring communities to use plastic and dustbins, instead of the pavement.

"The problem is what the community is doing. Instead of throwing their rubbish and leftover food on the streets, we tell them to put it in plastic and throw it in the bin. If there is no food, the rats will die. The more they feed, the more they breed.

"As a city we're doing as much as we can. You find some areas have improved; in others people are still ignorant."

In this fight, every dead rat is a victory. "We've eradicated 28 000 rats in Alex since 2012," he says. "Yes, there are millions. But if you think they can have a litter three times a year – that's 16 babies at a time, 48 rats a year. Multiply that by 28 000. You're looking at close to a billion rats we've prevented from breeding inside Alex."

Manganye admires the hardy rodents. "They are intelligent. These are the mammals we test medicines on. If you were to cut this hostel open, and see their underground burrows, you would marvel at them. Each burrow is like a house with a bedroom, kitchen and spare room, a breeding room and a feeding room. They organise their burrows into chambers to deter predators. It's like a maze."

Managing environmental health is about education, says Manganye. "I don't think we'll ever wake up to a rodent-free world. But what we don't want to see is the explosion beyond our ability to control them."

His gaze settles on a one-year-old baby, wearing a sagging nappy, being carried on her sister's back as she navigates the filth of the hostel. "It's for children like her that we keep coming back. We have to protect the community." (Report from IOL News)

29 Hazelwood Rd Hazelwood | Pretoria, Gauteng Phone: 0861999900 | Fax: 0123467453

PEST CONTROL TRAINING ACADEMY / SCHOOL

Professional Services Offered:
training of pest control operators | practical assessments of pest control operators | mentoring of pest control operators | supervision of trainee pest control operators | pest control helpline | pest identification service | food safety / HACCP training and auditing | food safety / PRP registers | ISPM 15 training and certification | green pest management / control | pest management operations manuals

This email was sent to you by Pest Management Academy. To ensure delivery to your inbox (not bulk or junk folders), please add ipmc@mweb.co.za to your address