

# Mortein®

## THE MARKET

Everyone agrees that Australia is one of the best places on earth to live.

Insects think so too. Flies, cockroaches and mosquitoes in particular are part of a way of life for most Australians. The vast numbers of flies were noted by the earliest Europeans to set foot on Australian soil, 150 years before Captain Cook.

Today, insects invade every home in Australia. In the open air they can make life a misery, especially in summer. Biting and bloodsucking insects pose a direct health risk. Others contaminate food and spread germs and disease. Rodents too are a problem, usually in the cooler months when they tend to move into houses in search of shelter and food.

Mortein has been dealing with these problems in Australia for more than a century and competes in all three segments of the market. The retail pest control market in Australia has been estimated at around \$130 million per annum. That includes rodenticides (9%), insecticides (76%) and repellents (15%).

## ACHIEVEMENTS

Mortein, as a brand, is an all Australian phenomenon, even though as a company it has been owned by British giant Reckitt & Colman since the late 1960s. In 2000 the company merged with Benckiser to form Reckitt Benckiser.

As a result of the strength of the Australian operation, all of the research and development work on Reckitt Benckiser pest control and related products worldwide is undertaken in Australia. Mortein itself is an internationally known brand and is marketed in several Asian countries, in the South Pacific and in New Zealand as well as in Australia.

Even where the name Mortein is unknown, the Australian technology is recognised as among the world's best. The pesticide technology is applied to manufacturing in other countries, but in several



cases the product is both developed and manufactured in Australia. Neocid, for example, is made in Australia and exported to the French market. Similarly, Rodosol cockroach baits are manufactured in Australia and

(the traditional 'flit gun') which allowed the insecticide to be sprayed into the air or onto the pests themselves.

Hagemann's product was distributed wholesale by Samuel Taylor. Taylor ran his own business until his death in 1895. Soon after that, the business went broke, and in 1909 it came into the hands of

F. S. Steer and Thomas Jackson. They were to revive Taylor's business and ultimately set it up as a proprietary company in 1937 as



exported to South America.

Today, Mortein remains the best known and most widely used household insecticide in Australia. The company now holds 45% of the Australian market. To maintain this position, Mortein uses the very latest technology to develop products which are highly effective, and which match the highest world standards of safety and environmental acceptability.

## HISTORY

Mortein was first manufactured as an insecticidal powder in the 1870s by J. Hagemann, a German immigrant to Australia. It is said that Hagemann himself came up with the name Mortein, with a little help from his French wife: the famous name is a combination of the French word 'mort' (dead) and the German 'ein' (one).

Hagemann used crushed chrysanthemum flowers to produce a pyrethrum extract. The powder was originally sprinkled about, and in the 1920s a squeeze puffer was developed. Hagemann introduced a liquid version in 1928. He combined this with kerosene and had a pump pack designed

Samuel Taylor Pty Ltd. This company was to play a critical role in Mortein's development, mainly through the activities of its larger-than-life managing director from the 1940s to the 1960s, Bill Graham.

By 1953, Mortein was already a household name when the Samuel Taylor company pioneered the aerosol industry in Australia by introducing the Pressure Pak. When TV arrived in Australia in 1956, a lengthy 'infomercial' by Mortein was one of the first TV ads produced and shown.

Graham believed in aggressive marketing and advertising, and saw the potential of TV as soon as it appeared. He developed new brand after new brand, including several which are household names today, such as Preen, Fabulon, Aerogard and Mr Sheen. Mortein was, perhaps, his favourite. He was a passionate believer in the safety and efficacy of his product, and once (rumour has it) drank down a glass of Mortein in front of a shocked government inquiry to demonstrate how safe it was.

In 1969 the Samuel Taylor company was bought by the British company Reckitt & Colman. Over the past few decades, the firm introduced and promoted to the Australian market several of the country's most familiar household names. Among these consumer icons, Mortein stands out as the most widely recognised of all.

#### THE PRODUCT

Mortein has moved a long way from the simple pyrethrum powder and early kerosene-based flit gun fly spray. Products now range from Odourless Fly Spray, Lure 'n' Kill Surface Spray, Nest Kill Cockroach Baits, Nest Stop Ant Baits, Mosquito Coils, Mozzie Zappers, Barrier Outdoor Surface Spray and even Rat and Mouse Killer - no pest is safe from the Mortein range of pest control products.

#### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In 1998 Mortein introduced Mortein Nest Stop Ant Baits. Unlike other products on the market which are only effective in controlling sugar feeding ants, the Mortein bait station contains bait tempting to both brown and black ants. Mortein Nest Stop Ant Baits kill ants where they live, in the nest. Ants take the concentrated, delayed-action bait back to the nest, killing the queen and the entire colony.

More recently Mortein has launched two other new products. Mortein Ant Sand has been specifically designed to control ants outside before they get into the house. The treated sand granules are biodegradable, odourless and inconspicuous in use, making it ideal for use around outdoor entertaining areas, paths and in between pavers.

Mortein Spider Control Outdoor Surface Spray has been



specifically formulated to kill spiders and control cobwebs for up to 3 months. Most spiders live outside, but many enter homes, particularly after heavy rain. Mortein Spider Control has a residual action so that spiders that come into contact with the sprayed areas are killed on contact, before they have a chance to build annoying cobwebs.

#### PROMOTION

Louie the Fly, initiated by Bill Graham, has proved to be one of the most enduring and endearing of Australian advertising creations. His occasional appearances since the first advertisement in 1957 seem hardly sufficient to explain his huge success and popularity. But huge it is. Well over 90% of Australians recognise Louie and know the 'Louie the Fly' jingle, and - which is more important - associate both the character and the jingle with Mortein.

Louie's longevity has been a major plus for the brand, because the insecticide business is highly seasonal. Each year 75% of sales are generated between October and March. As a result, insecticide advertising appears in bursts during the Australian spring and summer. Louie's great strength is that he generates instant recall of the Mortein brand name even after the long seasonal lay-off, while other brands must to some extent rebuild their image each year.

It is some measure of the character's success that he spawned a cartoon series of his own, in Sydney's Sunday Telegraph newspaper.

By using animation, Louie's creators avoided showing real flies crawling over food and babies' bedclothes, which would certainly disgust audiences. Louie's behaviour conveys the same point without giving the same offence. Further, Louie is an engaging, roguish personality. He is doomed to get his comeuppance, but he always manages to reappear in the next ad. This might explain some of his continued success: in a sense, the consumer is not involved in killing, and yet at the same time can see that Mortein is effective in removing the 'mighty unclean' Louie.

Louie has been revived in slightly different forms by a series of advertising agencies, with and without the famous jingle. In 2000, Louie was transformed from a cartoon animation into a three

dimensional character. These days, Mortein's advertisements depict Louie with a number of mates - cockroaches and other insects - whom he unsuccessfully warns about the power of Mortein. This overcomes Louie's one obvious drawback - the suggestion that Mortein is designed only for flies or flying insects.

It is an indication of Mortein's marketing success that when asked to name a product 'which kills insects' over 90% of respondents answered 'Mortein'.

From the earliest days, Mortein has sought to stress that it is not only effective but extremely safe. This is one reason why many advertisements featured babies and children.

Recent advertisements emphasise this by using the catchphrase 'More smart, more safe, Mortein'.

#### BRAND VALUES

Mortein's goal is to provide the ultimate in responsible pest control solutions. While other branded products may kill insect pests successfully, few if any command the level of confidence and trust inspired by the Mortein name.



#### THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT MORTEIN

- Mortein Pressure Pak was the first commercially produced aerosol in Australia, back in the 1950s.
- Mortein was a pioneer in advertising, producing one of the first television advertisements in Australia.
- That loveable rogue Louie the Fly, synonymous with the name Mortein, has been around on television since 1957.
- The name 'Mortein' is said to derive from the French 'mort' (dead) plus the German 'ein' (one) and was concocted by Mortein's German inventor and his French wife in the 1870s.
- Mortein, developed and made in Australia, has been the leading brand of household insecticide in Australian homes for more than a century.