

Commercial Pest Control Expert Uses Air Curtains to Eliminate Houseflies in Facilities

Air curtains proactively stop flying insects before they enter and supplement reactionary methods of insect light traps and glue boards.



Most exterminators use insect light traps (ILT), glue boards and electrocuting devices to successfully rid flies from restaurants, food processing plants, warehouses and other commercial facilities with perpetual shipping or pedestrian door cycling. However, few exterminators use air curtains, which is a chemical-free insect protection/control strategy, according to Clark, president of FlyTech Supply, a 29-year-old, Moreno Valley, Calif.-based pest control wholesale/retail company that has sold more than 150 air curtains to its customers.

Berner International Corp.

FlyTech Supply, Moreno Valley, Calif.

Anyone questioning the efficacy of air curtains in the foodservice industry's continual battle with flying insect infiltration to indoor spaces needs to ask Dan Clark, a renowned housefly pest control expert.

Clark claims ILT's and glue boards are fine, but they're reactionary devices after flies have already gained access. A more proactive approach is using air curtains, which are mounted above a door opening to discharge a high velocity, invisible air-stream barrier that stops flying insects before they gain entry. Clark likes to combine ILT's from Gardner Mfg., Horicon, Wis., and air curtains from Berner International, New Castle, Pa., for the ultimate in fly prevention and extermination.

Case in point is one warehouse that was infested with thousands of flies. Fecal matter littered interior table and floor surfaces. Forty ILT's and an arsenal of electrocuters were killing flies, but were overwhelmed by the steady supply from unobstructed pedestrian doors. Clark sold three Berner air curtains--one 42-inch K-Zone that protected a doorway to an outdoor dining area and two 36-inch K-Zones that protected the warehouse's double glass door employee entry. The air curtains, which are tested and certified by the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF), reduced fly infiltration to less than .01-percent and allowed Clark to reduce the ILT's from 40 to four for any stragglers.

Clark, whose customer base is 60 percent wholesale and 40 percent retail has a long list of notable clients using air curtains to enhance sanitation and prevent fly infiltration including, Fresh Start Bakeries, dog food manufacturer, Kal Kan, World Bank, Washington, D.C., other clients.

The California Health and Safety Code mandates air curtains on backdoors and receiving doors of all food service establishments, but Clark takes it a step further by recommending air curtains on front entrances and drive-thru windows, the latter which now constitutes over 50 percent of the quick-serve restaurant business, according to the National Restaurant Association (NRA).

Clark recalls a taco restaurant located near an animal stockyards area where flies literally swarmed outside the restaurant and gained indoor access through the drive-through window. A Drive-Thru Unit (DTU) designed specifically for drive-thru windows by Berner, helped eliminate fly ingress and reduce conditioned air from escaping out the window.

While most of Clark's customers appreciate the housefly prevention performance, many don't realize they also save significant energy with air curtains. In fact, many air curtains pay for themselves in less than two years just by preventing up to 75 percent of the facility's air conditioning or heating from escaping when doors open.

Selling air curtains is an easy process for clients with fly problems, but as a preventative, some customers are resistant. "I hear excuses, such as it blows a person's hair as they walk through the doorway, but if the air curtain is properly sized and maintained, that's minimal," said Clark, who has 25 years pest control industry experience, and before opening FlyTech, had worked previously for Terminix, Memphis, Tenn., and Western Exterminator Co., Anaheim, Calif. "What's more important is that an air curtain can prevent a foodservice establishment from getting closed down due to sanitation violations related to flies."

So why do few exterminators promote and provide air curtains to their customers? "It's a technical product that has to be sold, you can't rely on the average pest control employee to present air curtain benefits, especially when management doesn't understand fly prevention, like we do," said Clark, who manufactures his own drain microbes to curb fruit flies. "It also takes some time to learn about air curtains, but many companies don't want to bother. They should though, it's a very profitable niche while also being the best proactive deterrent to flies a pest control company can have in its arsenal."



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