

HopStop®



Media Release 21/2/2011

AUSTRALIAN BIOSCIENCE COMPANY PESTAT LAUNCHES HOPSTOP® A MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH IN HUMANE CANE TOAD CONTROL

Cane toads secrete a deadly mixture of bufotoxin poisons, which makes them a lethal threat to pets, native fauna and potentially, small children. Now in plague proportions, it's estimated there are more than 200 million cane toads ranging across Queensland, the Northern Territory, northern New South Wales and northern Western Australia. Cane toads have also invaded residential areas, attracted to insects under lights and well-watered lawns in domestic settings. It is estimated that about 1.4 million Australian households are now co-habited by cane toads. As the cane toads' range continues to expand, so the number of cane toad poisoning incidents can be expected to rise.

Pets are particularly at risk, and small children also need close supervision in toad-affected locations. When animals, including pets such as dogs, attempt to eat toads or even just pick them up in their mouths, they can ingest the bufotoxin mixture which is secreted through the toad's skin. When the poison is swallowed or absorbed through mucous membranes such as those in the eyes, nose or mouth, it can affect the heart, blood pressure and breathing, and cause paralysis, salivation, twitching and vomiting. In severe cases death from cardiac arrest can occur, sometimes in as little as 15 minutes.

Until now, feasible methods of cane toad control have commonly involved bludgeoning with a blunt object, or the inconvenient method of catching toads, putting them in a plastic bag and then freezing them for 48 hours. Consequently, householders have long been seeking a humane and safe method to protect pets and wildlife against the cane toad menace.

With an established history in pest management R&D, Australian bioscience company Pestat has, under the guidance of research scientist and Managing Director Dr. David Dall, developed a safe and easy approach to managing the cane toad scourge in domestic settings.

"HopStop® provides the first safe, humane and convenient method for controlling cane toads," explains Dr. Dall. "It has been designed for use in urban and suburban settings to protect local native fauna and provide peace of mind to pet owners and families," adds Dr. Dall. "If lots of people look after lots of little patches, we think a big impact can be made."

"However, we also believe that destroying any animal – pest or not – should always be done in the most humane manner possible," says Dr. Dall. "We believe condoning violence towards animals of any sort sends the wrong social message, particularly to children."

The active chemical in HopStop® is already commonly used throughout Australian households and the product has undergone thorough testing and achieved registration with the Australian Pesticides & Veterinary Medicines Authority.

To use HopStop®, just hold the aerosol can 20 to 30 centimetres away and spray the toad for 2-3 seconds. Within a short time, the toad becomes unconscious, and then dies. Wearing gloves, simply collect the toad 1-2 hours later, and dispose of in a rubbish bin to prevent any animals picking up or trying to eat a dead toad.

HopStop® is readily available in Australia through Bunnings nationally (visit: <http://www.bunnings.com.au> Stockist: 03 8831 9777) and is also available from selected Mitre10 and independent hardware store outlets.

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For more information, or to set up an interview with Dr. David Dall, please contact The Gipps Street Agency:

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To view a video demonstrating the quick and humane effect of HopStop® please visit: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/HopStop/155061921210190>.

HopStop®



THE CANE TOAD EPIDEMIC BACKGROUNDER

How cane toads got here

Originally native to Central and South America, the cane toad was deliberately introduced into Queensland from Hawaii in the mid-1930s in an unsuccessful bid to control the cane beetles decimating sugar cane crops. Since then, toads have bred to plague proportions and have become a domestic and environmental pest that threatens native wildlife, domestic animals and young children.

Growing numbers

Cane toads have a life expectancy of up to 15 years and females can lay between 8,000 to 25,000 eggs at a time, so they are prolific breeders. It's estimated there are more than 200 million cane toads throughout Queensland, the Northern Territory and northern NSW. Recent reports from northern Australia indicate they have reached northern WA, and they are now expected to continue to spread west into the Kimberley region. Their dispersal along flooded creek lines in southwest Queensland has also raised concern that they could eventually spread to the Lake Eyre Basin via river systems such as Cooper Creek.

The impact of cane toads on the environment is now considered so severe that the Commonwealth EPBC Act declares them to be a "key threatening process" to Australia's biodiversity.

The problem of cane toads is not limited to Australia, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature lists them among the top 100 globally invasive species.

Why are cane toads dangerous?

Cane toads are poisonous at every stage of their life: egg, tadpole and adult, and can affect fish and other aquatic species. Adult toads store a poisonous mixture of bufotoxins in small glands in their skin, and can secrete this when threatened, especially from the large paratoid glands at the back of the head.

The toad's poison can be absorbed through mucous membranes such as eyes, mouth and nose, and in humans contact with eyes can cause intense pain, substantial irritation and inflammation, and in severe cases, even blindness.

The risk to humans

Cane toads are well adapted to life in residential areas and can survive in gardens, reservoirs and recreational areas. As they colonise areas of human habitation, toads are a health concern to residents and pose a constant risk to small children and a poisoning threat to pets. They can also be a nuisance by infesting fish ponds and fouling swimming pools.

Poisoning prevention tips

- Ensure small children are supervised in areas where cane toads are present.
- Teach children not to handle toads, and educate them on the potential dangers.

The risk to pets

Cane toads pose a particular threat to pets and are known to be fatal to dogs and cats. According to the Australian Cane Toad Museum, in Hawaii up to 50 dogs a year have died after mouthing cane toads. A study of 90 toad-poisoned dogs treated at one Queensland veterinary clinic reported that the most common sign of poisoning was profuse salivation; other signs included tremors, vomiting and cardiac arrhythmias. Despite emergency treatment, some deaths also occurred.

The threat to biodiversity

Australian native wildlife known to be killed by eating or mouthing cane toads includes goannas, freshwater crocodiles, snakes, quolls and predatory birds.

Renowned for their voracious appetite, cane toads feed on other amphibians, reptiles and insects, thereby reducing the food supply available to other native species. The ornamental snake and the green and golden bell frog have been identified as threatened species likely to be adversely affected by the cane toad. Cane toads are also known to carry diseases such as salmonella, which can spread to native frog and fish species.

No humane solution until now

It's estimated 1.4 million Australian households are currently co-habited by cane toads. Until now there has been no humane, safe and effective method of controlling the cane toad menace around the home, but this situation has been remedied with the release of HopStop®.

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