

Opinion on the use of Hexaflumuron in the context of eliminating termites

Substance name: Hexaflumuron

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Réunion island, which is a french oversea department located in Western Indian Ocean, is severely infested by termites. Indeed, 12 species occur on the island, including the subterranean termite *Coptotermes gestroi*, which is considered one of the most devastating in the world. Each colony contains up to 6 million individuals spread out over a surface area between 400 and 600 square meters. It is widespread throughout the department where it causes significant damages to buildings and ornamental trees.

The elimination of colonies of this subterranean termites can be performed according to two techniques: the injection / spraying of insecticide (1) and bait traps (2).

(1) The first technique consists on the spraying of litters of insecticide in the outer soil around the building, and injections in the building materials (woodwork and masonry).

This technique has been abandoned in recent years because it is not effective in the long term : indeed it will eliminate termite in the perimeter of the treatment but not necessarily the entire colony, which can be located several dozen meters from the building.

Indeed, this technique is not very respectful with the environment and occupants of treated building because non-specific insecticides are widely spread. And it can't be use in the elimination of termite in trees.

(2) The alternative of injection/spraying method is the use of bait traps. This technique is used until middle of 90's in Reunion island. It is based on the use of an Insect Growth Regulator (IGR) which is consumed by termites and spread to the whole colony by trophallaxy.

This kind of treatment is particularly efficient because of it can eliminate the whole colony, but also because it's safe for environment : the active substance is used in very few quantity, and it's used in the bait that prevent it to be reach by children or domestic animals.

Several Insect Growth Regulator exist in the market of termite elimination. However, only one of its is sold in Reunion island in date : hexaflumuron.

Thus, it seems to me essential to allow the use of IGR, and especially hexaflumuron in the curative treatment of subterranean termite colony because of there is no alternative to this active substance in our department.

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