

# REVOLUTIONISING FIRE ANT CONTROL WITH BOOM APPLICATION

March 1, 2024

*The team at Sundew Solutions has devised a fast and accurate method of treating fire ants – the ANTagonistPRO Rapid Response Large Area Treatment.*



*Fire ant nest before treatment with ANTagonistPRO*

The battle against red imported fire ants has been a longstanding challenge for the National Fire Ant Eradication Program and pest management professionals, with traditional methods of control often proving laborious, time-consuming, and financially burdensome. However, a game-changing solution has emerged in the form of Sundew Solutions' [Rapid Response Large Area Treatment](#). This innovative approach, which uses boom application, marks a significant leap forward in fire ant control, offering unparalleled efficiency and effectiveness in treating large infestations across expansive areas.

For years, the National Fire Ant Eradication Program and pest management professionals have grappled with the arduous task of spearing and injecting individual fire ant nests or resorting to baiting techniques, each fraught with its own limitations and drawbacks. The former method, while effective, demands painstaking precision and exhaustive manual labour. Identifying each nest, spearing each nest at multiple points and administering treatment is not only time-consuming but also physically demanding, often requiring hours of backbreaking work under challenging conditions. Treating an individual nest under ideal conditions requires seven minutes and 10 litres of spray mix as recommended by the National Fire Ant Eradication Program.

On the other hand, baiting, while less physically taxing, presents its own set of challenges. Weather constraints, including rain, extreme heat, or cold, severely limit the application window, rendering it ineffective during adverse weather conditions. Moreover, the need for repeated applications in the face of rainfall drives up costs significantly, both in terms of product expenditure and labour hours.

Enter Sundew Solutions' ANTagonistPRO Rapid Response Large Area Treatment.

“Our Rapid Response Large Area Treatment is a paradigm-shifting approach that redefines the landscape of fire ant control,” commented **David Priddy**, CEO of [Sundew Solutions](#). “Unlike traditional methods, this ground-breaking solution offers unparalleled speed, efficiency, and ease of application.

“The Rapid Response Large Area Treatment process sees Sundew’s ANTagonistPRO polymer-enhanced bifenthrin applied using regular boom spray equipment. This can be by hand boom or boom mounted on a quad bike, utility vehicle or a readily available spray rig. ANTagonistPRO is one of a handful of products that are officially APVMA approved (not to be confused with approved using a temporary Emergency Permit with conditions) for treating red imported fire ants.”

A recent case study in Brisbane illustrates the transformative impact of this innovative treatment approach.

**Marshall Blacklock**, owner of CDI Pest Management, faced a daunting task: treating a site plagued by fire ant infestation spanning an area of 872 square meters. An initial count quickly identified 63 nests with countless smaller colonies. To qualify in the initial count the nest had to be a minimum of 30 cm in diameter. Traditional spearing and injecting methods would have entailed over eight hours of labour, many hundreds of litres of spray mix, and costs totalling over \$2,100 – not to mention the physical strain on workers.

CDI in collaboration with Sundew Solutions developed the new process appropriately called the Sundew Rapid Response Large Area Treatment technique. With this process, Mr Blacklock accomplished the task in under 15 minutes, at a fraction of the cost, using a fraction of the product and a fraction of the effort. Sitting comfortably in an airconditioned vehicle equipped with boom spray equipment, he traversed the area, applying ANTagonistPRO with remarkable ease and efficiency.

## PROFESSIONAL PEST MANAGER

“Granular baits have been provided to the customer for many years and have obviously been ineffective in treating the problem at this site,” explained Mr Blacklock. “Spear and injecting wasn’t an option – the ground is like concrete with the estimate of being able to do the job in eight hours not being realistic.

“At this site we did the treatment on September 4, 2023 and had total nest destruction in less than 28 days. There is an official Bureau of Meteorology weather station based at the site. Forty-eight hours after the initial application of ANTagonistPRO the site had 14.8 mm of rain.



*Marshall Blacklock from CDI Pest Management setting up the Rapid Treatment process*

“As of February 13, 2024 the site remains 100% fire ant free and a total of 625.4 mm of rain has been recorded across the treatment area. You cannot achieve the same results with baits or spear and inject methods currently used. We maintained untreated control nests adjacent to the treatment and exhumed sample nests at 7, 21 and 28 days after treatment to confirm nest destruction. Results were conclusive on the effectiveness of this technique.

“Interestingly, when we first visited the site it was devoid of insects, lizards and other wildlife. Our subsequent visits in February this year saw the return of a variety of insects. We fully expect to see the area return to its usual habitat within 12 months now that the fire ants have been taken out of the equation.

“The Sundew Rapid Response Large Area Treatment numbers speak for themselves. The method is a no-brainer, and a game-changer in this situation. The upshot of this unique application method is that large areas with heavy infestations can be quickly addressed allowing better allocation of resources.”

Mr Blacklock believes one of the key advantages of ANTagonistPRO is its resilience in the face of environmental challenges. Once dry, the product remains unaffected by rain, heat, or cold, eliminating the constraints that plague traditional baiting methods. Moreover, unlike spearing and injecting, which necessitates the identification of every single nest, the Sundew approach offers greater flexibility, reducing the pressure on pest management professionals to locate and treat each individual nest.

The implications of Sundew’s Rapid Response Large Area Treatment extend far beyond mere convenience. Mr Priddy commented, “By streamlining the fire ant control process, this innovative solution alleviates the strain on limited resources, enabling better allocation of manpower and resources to hotspots and challenging terrain. The National Fire Ant Eradication Program, which has long grappled with the drain on labour hours, stands to benefit immensely from this ground-breaking approach.”

By harnessing cutting-edge technology and innovative methodologies, Sundew Solutions has provided fire ant treatment professionals with a powerful tool to combat large-scale infestations swiftly, effectively, and economically. This novel approach will likely play a central role in reshaping future control strategies, safeguarding our communities from this persistent threat.