

Pigeon Control Response

ISSUE

At the May 6, 2019 meeting of the Standing Policy Committee on the Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services (SPC-EU&CS), Ms. Jan Shadick, Executive Director of Living Sky Wildlife Rehabilitation in Saskatoon, requested that the City of Saskatoon (City) ban the use of neurotoxins, such as the product Avitrol (4-aminopyridine), throughout the City due to their ability to cause the inhumane death of pigeons and non-target animals. The Committee resolved, in part:

“That the matter be referred to the Administration for a report.”

BACKGROUND

At specific sites, the City has contracted licensed pest management companies to manage pest populations, including pigeon populations. At some of these sites the product Avitrol has been used. Currently, there are no sites or projects where the City or its contractors are using Avitrol. Pigeon impacts on infrastructure and human health are provided in Appendix 1 - Pigeons. Background information on the product Avitrol is provided in Appendix 2 - Background information on Avitrol. Pigeon control options based on municipal practices are provided in Appendix 3 - Pigeon Control Options – Municipal Practices.

CURRENT STATUS

Currently, the City does not have a written policy on civic or private use of 4-aminopyridine (e.g. Avitrol), neurotoxic pesticides, any other pest management product, or integrated pest management. In 2013, the City partnered with the Saskatchewan Environmental Society to deliver a Pesticide Reduction Awareness Campaign.

The City currently prevents pigeon residency in new and rehabilitated infrastructure by using exclusion methods, deterrents and hiring pest management companies to manage pigeons using methods such as trapping and humane euthanasia. New infrastructure is designed to prevent the residency of pigeons. The Senator Sid Buckwold Bridge, with its 36 cavities and approximately 1,500 resident pigeons, was a unique case. During the rehabilitation of the Senator Sid Buckwold Bridge, barriers or fencing were installed at these cavities to help prevent further residency of pigeons.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

As of 2013, approximately 170 cosmetic pesticide bylaws had been adopted by various Canadian municipalities. These bylaws regulate pesticide use and aim to protect the public from risks associated with cosmetic pesticide use. In regard to the pesticide Avitrol, several cities have specific bans or have stopped using the product on all municipal property and/or in civic contacts, or have stopped using the product at specific sites.

San Francisco, New York City, the City of Boulder and much of Europe do not use the product Avitrol. San Francisco piloted Avitrol over 15 years ago and has since banned this product, however, there is no specific written policy, bylaw or ban. The city has a Reduced Risk Pesticide List that lists approved products for use on city property and all other products not included on this list (e.g. Avitrol) are banned by default.

In 2012, the City of Red Deer stopped using Avitrol to control pigeons at their downtown bus station. In 2015, the City of Halifax banned the use of Avitrol on municipal property. In 2018, the University of Winnipeg committed to not using Avitrol for pigeon management. In 2019, the City of Portland banned the use of Avitrol and other chemicals used to deter birds on all property owned and managed by that city.

IMPLICATIONS

Acceptance of this report will not result in any financial, environmental, safety, or communication implications.

NEXT STEPS

There are a number of steps that the City can initiate going forward.

Following the May 6, 2019 SPC-EU&CS Meeting, Administration stopped the use of Avitrol in civic operations and contracts.

The City's *Contractor Environmental Guidelines* can be amended to include a list of banned products, as well as the requirement for humane euthanasia when euthanasia is necessary for pigeon control. Going forward, City contracts could require a description of pigeon control products and methods to be used during the contract. The City could also develop an administrative policy on integrated pest management and pesticide use. This policy would only apply to civic properties and contracts.

If an area requires pigeon control, the City could pilot management options that have not been used in Saskatoon to date. For example, the use of OvoControl as a long-term flock reduction product could be piloted. Further information on pigeon control options, including OvoControl, are provided in Appendix 3 - Pigeon Control Options – Municipal Practices.

There may be legal issues regarding a ban of the private use of Avitrol or other pesticides. The Office of the City Solicitor has prepared a separate response on this topic (Appendix 4).

APPENDICES

1. Pigeons
2. Background Information on Avitrol
3. Pigeon Control Options – Municipal Practices
4. Confidential Solicitor/Client Privilege

REPORT APPROVAL

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