

# Controlling red mite

## with a natural solution



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Red mite is a perennial pest that every poultry farmer is familiar with. Hiding by day, and coming out at night to bite and feed on the blood of chickens, red mite is responsible for spreading diseases such as Colibacillosis, Salmonellosis, Fowl Pox, Cholera, Pasteurellosis, and Marek's and Newcastle Disease, as well as many other related issues.

Annual European industry losses are estimated to be as much as £360 million. This pest is persistent, prolific and difficult to eradicate by traditional means, but farmers can actually control it with a much simpler, more natural solution.



An infestation of red mite without control measures

# Red mite: a lean, mean, bloodsucking machine

Like cockroaches, the red mite is a lucifugous animal, hiding by daylight in crevices, under slats and around doors and windows of buildings, and coming out at night to feed – this is why it's often hard to detect an issue before it becomes an infestation. When red mite does come out,

the results can be devastating. A female mite can suck up to 60ml of blood every time it feeds, and it can swell to 15 times its weight by taking six to eight consecutive meals. Red mites are capable of sucking up to five per cent of the blood of a hen in a day.

## The consequences for flocks

As well as spreading disease, an infestation of red mites can result in birds becoming stressed and weakened – which can lead to feather pecking and cannibalism, as well as anaemia and compromised immune systems, leaving them susceptible to disease. Poultry affected by red mite consume more feed whilst actually producing less – it has a very real effect on the bottom line.



Disease



Feather pecking and cannibalism



Greater uptake of feed



Fewer eggs



Smaller and/or downgraded eggs



Human skin conditions



Expensive insecticides



Vet involvement



**10x**  
The usual fatality rate



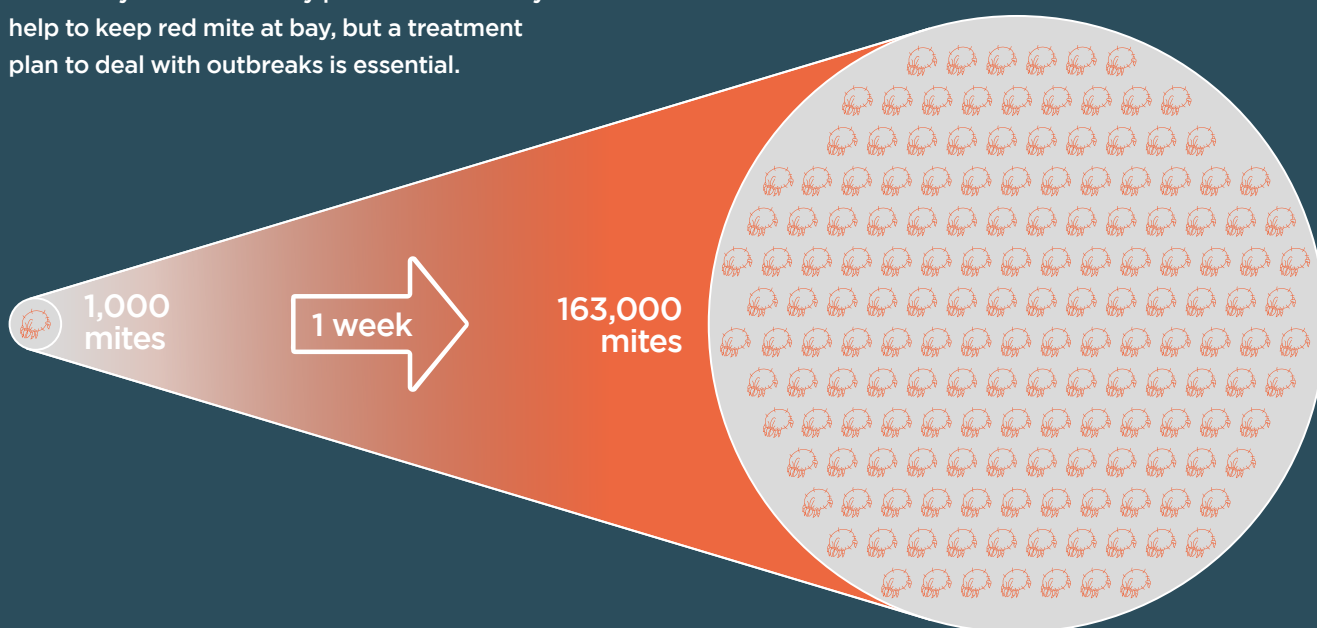
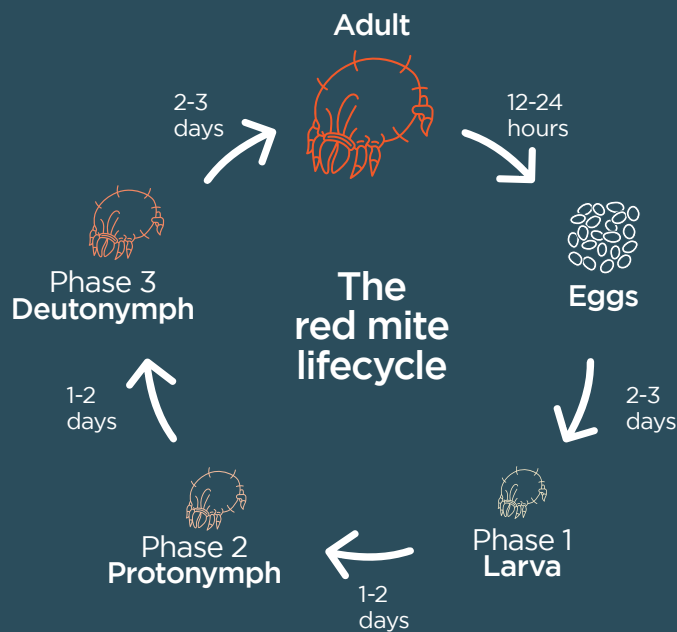
**-25%**  
In egg production

A severe infestation can result in 10 times the usual mortality rate and egg production can drop by 25%. Those eggs produced may be smaller and/or stained with blood, resulting in them being downgraded.

Mites also have a consequence for humans – aside from being unpleasant, their bites can cause dermatitis and eczema.

# Why red mite is hard to eradicate

Red mite is prolific – the breeding cycle from egg to adult takes only seven days in optimal conditions. The male mates with three or four females every day and one fertilisation is enough for the female to continue to lay eggs for 50 days. Within a week, 100 mites can multiply to 163,000 mites. In addition to this, mites can survive for up to 8 months without a feed, so even if a shed is empty, they are still there. They also don't die off during the winter, they simply hibernate. Of course, good husbandry and biosecurity practices will always help to keep red mite at bay, but a treatment plan to deal with outbreaks is essential.



## Blitz methods of controlling red mite

Effective treatment of red mite should include a thorough turnaround procedure before the placement of birds. Insecticides such as Exzolt can successfully eliminate red mite in a shed if administered correctly. Exzolt works by disrupting the nervous system. Because of its potency, it's an expensive treatment, only available from vets. While highly effective, it does not prevent reinfestation if red mite is carried back into the shed at any time. There is also a danger that mites can develop a resistance in the event of repeated or insufficient use.

A non-chemical approach might be to use a desiccant or degreaser such as [Smite Organic DE Powder](#) or [Smite Professional](#) – these products attack the exoskeleton of the mite, resulting in death. Red mite is a persistent and ever-present threat, and products such as these require manual application, which can become time-consuming.

There is, however, an alternative...



# Oblitermite: A natural, proactive solution

Oblitermite is formulated from a unique combination of hydroalcoholic plant extracts:

**Oregano** - (origanum vulgare)



**Purple coneflower** - (Echinacea Purpurea)



**Ginseng** - (Ginseng)



**Rosehip** - (Cynorrhodon)



These completely natural extracts stimulate the bird's blood into creating its own natural toxins, which cause the mite's blood to coagulate.

Because Oblitermite is a completely natural solution, it has zero withdrawal time for both eggs and meat,

and there is no danger of the mites developing any cross-resistance. It can be simply administered via the drinker lines whilst the birds are in-situ, and no protective equipment is required. Oblitermite is safe for birds, safe for workers and safe for the eggs.

## Dual-action tonic

Oblitermite also acts as an excellent tonic for overall bird health.

- The aromatics – ginseng, echinacea, rosehip, and oregano – are well-known for their anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidative effects.
- Vitamin C boosts the immune system.
- Added electrolytes ensure optimal absorption of nutrients.



# How to use Oblitermite

Oblitermite is easy to administer through drinker lines.

Our recommended course of action to keep red mites at bay each cycle is as follows:

Week	Treatment duration
18	4 consecutive days
22	2 consecutive days
26	2 consecutive days
30	2 consecutive days
38	4 consecutive days
42	2 consecutive days
50	2 consecutive days
58	2 consecutive days
66	2 consecutive days
74	2 consecutive days



In the case of a severe infestation, the dose rate can be doubled for the first four days of treatment (1L of Smite Oblitermite per 1,000L water).



Oblitermite is a very cost-effective solution to a perennial problem. In an industry where there is constant pressure to reduce our reliance on potentially harmful chemicals or insecticides, it makes sense to harness healthy, widely-available ingredients, and provide the hen with the means to naturally defeat what can be a devastating pest.

For more details on how farms have incorporated Oblitermite into their pest control programmes, [get in touch](#) with one of our expert advisors today.