SOUTH AFRICAN PEST CONTROL ASSOCIATION
SUID-AFRIKAANSE PLAAGBEHEERVERENIGING
SAPCA

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Dear estate agents,

As an association committed to best industry practices, we feel it our duty to warn prospective home buyers that they should be aware that they are not necessarily protected against all wood destroying organisms – even though the deed of sale says a beetle inspection has been carried out.

In many cases the condensed or limited reports of woodborer inspectors only cover two types of beetle (*Hylotrupos bajalus* and *Oxypleuris nodieri)*. Dry rot or other wood destroying insects and termites - including the common furniture beetle - do not have to be mentioned. This may have dire consequences for the new owner, the seller and the agent.

We therefore appeal to estate agents and conveyancers to protect buyers by insisting on the SAPCA wood destroying organism clearance certificates which can only be issued by registered inspectors if the property is free from all wood-destroying organisms. Where it is not, suitable eradication measures will be recommended. This is the only valid and proper way to ensure that genuine beetle-free properties are transferred onto the names of their new owners.

It is disturbing that there are estate agents and attorneys accepting any form of "beetle free" documentation, many times from individuals who present a "P number" (registration number) issued by the Department of Agriculture, on the pretext that it qualifies them to do beetle inspections. While P numbers are valid for structural pest control, weed control and fumigation, woodborer inspectors have a specific specialized qualification. Giving such false information is regarded as fraudulent and illegal.

We strongly recommend that clients and conveyancers insist on wood destroying organism registration right from the start. It is indeed within the buyer's right to insist on a SAPCA certificate and the agent and the attorney are obliged to ensure that the inspector is duly qualified.

SAPCA also urges members to report unregistered companies or individuals doing beetle inspections. A buyer may also turn down an unregistered inspector's beetle report and certificate and refuse to pay the relevant fees.

An example of our recommended Beetle Clause in terms of wood destroying organisms as well as contact details of SAPCA representatives in your area are available on our website at www.sapca.org.za

We will be hosting a Wood Destroying Organisms Workshop at our annual PestBiz convention running on 16 & 17 August at the Southern Sun Elangeni Hotel and Conference Centre in Durban. Should you wish to attend this convention, please do not hesitate to contact our offices.

We hope that you will share our commitment to good practice in this regard.

Sincerely,

Lynette Cokayne
CEO