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PROGRESS REPORT TO THE SECOND PINE MOUSE SYMPOSIUM ON CONTROL MEASURES BY NEW YORK GROWERS

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In the past year, The Pine Mouse Action Committee of the North Eastern Fruit Council, mounted a successful campaign to secure a state label for endrin. This was a temporary state label for special use in pine vole infested orchards. Warren Smith, Extension Agent, will explain in more detail how this was done and what restrictions were imposed. To most of you, this may not seem like we made much progress, but this is the first time a persistant chemical has been returned to the active list. We feel the endrin will give us the needed vole control in orchards until we can mount a serious research effort for the development of an economical, integrated control program.

The motivation to request a state label for endrin came from two areas:

First, from grower comments at the first symposium in Winchester, VA. Last year, we came to the conclusion that endrin was the only currently available control method in which there was any confidence. New York growers were the only ones who had a serious vole problem and could not use endrin.

Our second motivation came when the snow cover melted in March of last year. Many growers discovered unprecendeted damage levels where alternative control measures had been used. Most growers made tarpaper baiting stations and applied either Rozol or Ramik pellets for control. A few of the worst orchards suffered complete damage to 60% of the trees with an additional 25%-30% of the trees being partially girdled. The continue effacacy of these methods was in serious doubt.

The Pine Mouse Action Committee then requested the Bureau of Pesticides to make a risk-benefit analysis of the situation as a basis for issuing a state label for endrin. An orchard tour was conducted and because of the damage they agreed to hold a public hearing and make a decision for granting state label based on the testimony. After two public hearings, we did receive a strict, temporary state label for endrin use.

The grower response to renewed use of endrin was very enthusiastic. We felt that endrin would be effective because vole populations had not been exposed to it for so many years.

The most common method of application was by air-blast sprayer, although some growers did use pressure sprayers. To

make them more effective, most air-blast sprayers were modified with shieldsto direct the air to the ground under the drip line.

Because of the restrictive nature of the label, there were several state inspectors in the field checking applicators to make sure safety procedures were being followed. All applicators were required to wear rubber suits, boots, gloves, and face masks during application. The inspectors did stop a few growers from spraying until the applicator was wearing the protective equipment.

Through Cornell University, The Pine Mouse Action Committee is also submitting a proposal for research funding to the U.S. Department of Interior. We have had support for this proposal from state industry groups, as well as some of our neighboring states in the Northeast who also harbor vole populations.

Several growers are also cooperating with Jay McAninch, a wildlife biologist with the Cary Arboretum. Our aim is to record and evaluate several factors in the orchard pine vole ecosystem to determine which of these factors are significant to high vole populations. We will then try to manipulate the significant factors to discourage reinfestation in the endrin eradicated areas. We will also be evaluating different mowing techniques and some different orchard grass covers.

These growers will also attempt to encourage predator species such as the kestrel hawk and short tailed weasels. Perch sites will be placed in the orchard with nesting boxes attached to encourage these hawks to use the orchard as a home site--hunting area. To induce higher populations of short tailed weasels, we will be building denning sites adjacent to the orchard.

We are optimistic that with adequate funding from U.S.D.I. and selection of talented researchers, we can develop and test theories leading to an integrated control program in 3-5 years.