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ASTM - BIRD CONTROL TESTING STANDARDS

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Most of you are familiar by now with ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) and the activities of its Subcommittee E35.17 on Vertebrate Pesticides. ASTM's primary business is that of assisting nonpaid, technical volunteers in developing consensus testing standards in a large number of fields. Most of these testing standards or test methods detail how to conduct specific evaluations of a product, or components of a product, based on the best and most current technology available. Consequently, many of these testing standards are used by government or industry for quality control or for regulatory operations and decisions.

ASTM subcommittee E35.17 has been active in the vertebrate pesticide field since 1974, developing testing standards for birds, rodents, and predators. The standards that have been developed are diverse and, because of a perceived need by many subcommittee members, have broken new ground for ASTM. For example, the subcommittee developed standards for the use of strychnine on birds and of 1080 on predators, primarily because no standards or use directions existed in published format. The subcommittee has also developed more traditional testing standards for avicide, rodenticide, and predacide development and methodology standards for determining LD_{50}S and R_{50}S.

Although the standards development process within ASTM and E35.17 has been slow, it has already been rewarding and beneficial to most of us in the vertebrate pesticide field. The consensus method used by ASTM has allowed E35.17 to review test methods being used by a number of laboratories, select the best from each, and combine them into a format that all of us can live with, if not enthusiastically support.

As a result of the standard development activities of ASTM, I believe the field of Vertebrate Pest Control has been strengthened, and its credibility has been enhanced. It now appears that many of the E35.17 developed test standards will be used by governmental regulatory agencies (i.e., EPA, FDA) as guidelines for pesticide or animal drug registration purposes. As of 1979, we have come full circle. The first of our test standards was accepted and published in 1975. These must now be renewed or revised to reflect the current state-of-the-art, a process that is beginning this year. Other approved testing standards are being modified to improve their quality or to expand their scope.

There are a few clouds on the horizon, however, and I think that all of you should be aware of them. First, many of the people involved in E35.17 have been active in the subcommittee since its inception. Many of us are getting "burned out" because the test standards development process requires a lot of effort and time to be successful, more than some of us can continuously give. For instance, I was the chairman of the Avian Task Force within E35.17 for approximately 5 years, a position from which I resigned in June. So far we have been unable to find a successor and an interested and competent volunteer is badly needed. My resignation was not submitted because I wish to discontinue my association with E35.17, but it was based on my philosophy that periodic changes in subcommittee or task force membership are necessary to infuse new blood into the system and keep good testing standards and ideas flowing.

The second problem area I anticipate is within the E35 organization itself, specifically E35.25, the subcommittee on Avian and Wildlife Toxicology. This is the newly formed subcommittee that split off from E35.21 (Safety to Man and Animals) that is beginning to

develop test standards for the determination of wildlife hazards. To date, E35.25 generally has ignored many of the contributions and standards of E35.17 and the expertise of its members in evaluating wildlife hazards. Since many of the E35.17 and E35.25 standards overlap, they should be as consistent as possible and incorporate the best that technology has to offer. This potential problem area can be solved only by closer cooperation between both subcommittees and the recogntion that none of us has all the right answers.

The vertebrate pesticide and wildlife hazard fields are both relative newcomers to this rapidly changing world, and both need greater participation. Help us, if you can, by taking part in our activities and evaluating our standards. You do not have to be a member of ASTM to participate in task force activities and standards review. ASTM membership is required only if you desire to vote on new or developing standards.