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R. N. Barber Orchards, Waynesville, N.C.

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POSITION RELATIVE TO ENDRIN AND ZINC PHOSPHIDE
FOR CONTROL OF PINE MICE AND MEADOW MICE

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Barber Orchards has been an operating orchard since 1903. We are commercial growers with about 31,000 trees. Our number one problem over the years has been the loss of trees due to destruction of root systems by these two species of rodents.

In the 1920's, 1930's, and 1940's we lost consistently from 200 to 500 trees per year, even though we were putting out every type of bait known in every type of container and under yard squares of roofing paper, which was the recommended manner of baiting. We used poison, cats, wheat, and chaffers which we got from Florida. In spite of all our efforts and losses, we still were working with bridge grafts and approach grafts on as high as 2,000 mature trees per year. Yet, the loss continued. We were using all available labor to do this.

As soon as Zinc Phosphide came on the market, we used it on the grain and put it into breather holes in the orchard during the winter months. This product reduced some of our loss of trees, but due to lack of adequate labor, this time consuming operation could never be more than 40 to 60 percent effective; as it takes a conscientious, well-trained group to carry out this work on a commercial orchard. We continued to lose hundreds of trees.

When Endrin became available, we immediately in 1954 or 1955, got in touch with Dr. Frank Horsfall of V.P.I. and asked for all available help and information. He came to our orchard and helped us get started.

At the present time, we lose on an average, less than 100 trees per year. Our program consists of putting on one spray in the dead of winter with Endrin and making two applications of Zinc Phosphide treated grain.

Any measure of restricting any one of these practices would allow a build-up of hundreds of thousands of mice and destroy hundreds of trees, as these mice bear a litter every two weeks. It doesn't take a mathematician to figure that a few dozen pairs could produce numbers into the millions of mice in a matter of months.

Any measure of control less than the present practice would in a matter of several years destroy our orchards. There are no other chemicals available which give adequate control.

Any recommendation such as going back to strychnine treated grain is worse than nothing, as it only gives the orchard man false hopes while he sees his trees turn pale and die.

North Carolina is now producing over 6,000,000 bushels of apples per year in commercial orchards. This production is now possible only because, we can in a measure, control mice. The production of this state has gone up approximately 300 percent since Endrin became available. It could not have been attained otherwise.

The elimination of Endrin and Zinc Phosphide would spell the death of the apple industry and would result in millions of dollars loss to the commercial orchardist and drive the price of apples so high, the public could not buy them.

To argue that Endrin and Zinc Phosphide kills wildlife or is dangerous is unrealistic and unfounded.

I live in a house which my dad built when I was 4 years old. I am now 70. I now have grown children who were raised in this house and my grandchildren play in the grass and the apple trees.

There are 15 other houses on our orchard and there have been three to five generations who have been raised in these homes. No child or wildlife have been poisoned.

There are no less than 20 species of birds including quail, doves, cardinals, tohees, wrens, juncos, titmice, catbirds, grackles, blue jays, blue birds, mockingbirds, and grosbeaks that nest in our orchard.

There are an abundance of squirrels, rabbits and opossums. In fact, squirrels raise their young in trees within 20 feet of my house. I also have apple trees within 20 feet of my house.

I believe in the preservation of wildlife and consistently gave liberal donations to the National Wildlife Federation, until this organization became the 'mouthpiece of Rachael Carson' and began the ill-timed effort to remove some of the essential chemicals which has made the United States the breadbasket of the world and had made it possible to produce such a surplus, that wildlife can live on this surplus. The results now are that nearly every type of wildlife is increasing and the numbers are greater now than when Columbus discovered America.

There are exceptions. The carrier pigeon, the condor and the whooping crane, and also the buffalo. But it was not DDT nor Endrin nor Zinc Phosphide that reduced or eliminated them. Yet, some of our well-intentioned people would have us eliminate chemicals that are necessary for the production of food to feed our population. It is hard to prove that because a bald eagle egg did not hatch, it was the result of any chemical known.

I feed birds and squirrels the year around. They thrive in trees sprayed with Endrin and on land where we put Zinc Phosphide treated grain.

The same people who seek to preserve wildlife, are in a measure, the ones who will destroy it for the lack of food.

The farm population of the United States are the greatest protectors of wildlife. They have been isolated from the so-called protectors by the methods employed and that can be smoked over for some months and years.

I subscribe to and read about 12 farm or orchard publications. The voice of agriculture is unanimous in opposition to the edicts of the people who sit in ivory towers behind desks in air-conditioned rooms and spell the methods and rules by which a farmer produces the food for his survival and the population of the United States.

