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Highlights of the Third Eastern Pine and Meadow Vole Symposium

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE THIRD EASTERN PINE AND MEADOW VOLE SYMPOSIUM

The Third Eastern Pine and Meadow Vole Symposium was held in New Paltz, New York, February 14-15, 1979 to further create an awareness of the fruit growers' serious tree girdling problem. The meeting served to focus attention on a diversity of information on animal biology, control strategies and information dispensing mechanisms. Research funding sources, chemical and cultural control methods, clearance of new materials, and governmental involvement in pine vole problems were discussed.

The \$1.3 million U. S. Congressional "add on" appropriation to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service for work on pine voles was discussed by John Seubert. At the time of the meeting, priority research goals and organization of fund management were in the development stages. Dr. Seubert announced that Bob Stehn had been designated to assist in the coordination of the contract research with various institutions and would soon be visiting potential cooperators.

Reports on two new anticoagulant baits, Brodifacoum (Volak, BFC, ICI 581) made by Imperial Chemical Industries and Bromodialone marketed by Chempar Chemical Company were encouraging. A cellophane packaged Volak bait provided a new concept of baiting. Packaged baits were reported to prevent bait spoilage, provide tree protection under snow cover, and provide bait for invading animals which may repopulate areas after treatment. Yearlong availability of bait may prevent normal rebound of populations in toxicant treated areas; however, packaged baits must be protected from nontarget species and this may be accomplished by placing packets under bait stations weighing 5-10 lbs.

After a New York State ban on Endrin in 1971, this state allowed the emergency use of Endrin for one year in the fall of 1977 for pine vole control. Apparently the State Department of New York denied its continued use for 1978, and a number of growers expressed their great need for Endrin for pine vole control. An Endrin study conducted in the New York Hudson Valley area in the fall of 1977 was still being compiled at the time of the Third Symposium. To my knowledge, New York State is the only state which has banned Endrin use for pine voles in orchards.

In the center of the pine vole geographic range (Virginia and West Virginia), the presence of Endrin resistant strains of voles has caused a great reduction in the usage of this material. Careful evaluation of vole populations (using apple indexing methods) after Endrin failures has allowed growers to follow up with anticoagulants and greatly reduced tree losses which would have occurred even though Endrin had been used. Hand and broadcast baiting of anticoagulant baits are now the main control methods. Supplemental cultural control (cultivation and herbicide combinations) has been an aid to control; however, toxicants still remain as the only reliable method that has removed high populations rapidly before the fall and winter damaging period.

In 1978, a National Pine Vole Advisory Council was appointed by a number of State Horticulture Societies to include individuals which could be politically active. In most states a fruit grower representative, a research, and an extension person was chosen. (This advisory group is separate from any advisory group that the U. S. Fish and Wildlife may organize or appoint to help manage the "add on" appropriation.) Members of the Pine Vole Council listed below have the responsibility to help keep other states informed of developments on funding, registrations, and general health of the concerted efforts of the states. It is quite obvious that developments in one state may affect other states, particularly with regard to chemical registration. The present elected Advisory Council Chairperson is Ross Byers; however, all persons on the Council have the responsibility to inform the whole group of major activities which could affect counterparts in the other states. Below is a listing of those individuals currently on the Council:

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