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# **CURRENT COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES BETWEEN APHIS-ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL AND THE EXTENSION SERVICE**

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The basis of our cooperation is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which was signed between the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the Extension Service (ES), both agencies of the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), on May 14, 1987. The purpose of the MOU is to "establish policies and administrative arrangements for a working relationship" between the two agencies and "to provide procedures for planning, coordinating, and developing cooperative vertebrate...programs."

The MOU points out that APHIS-Animal Damage Control (ADC) has responsibilities in research, operational, and technical assistance programs, which are authorized by the Animal Damage Control Act of March 2, 1931 (7 USC 426-426b). The ES is the educational arm of USDA, and provides leadership and technical assistance to State Cooperative Extension Services for educational programs, which are authorized by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 (7 USC 341-349). The MOU is very general and allows for a wide variety of working relationships between the ES and ADC. In addition to this national MOU, several MOUs have been developed between ADC and State Cooperative Extension Services. These documents involve different levels of detail, but generally outline responsibilities

and duties. The objective of this exercise is to identify current and specific cooperative activities between ADC and ES.

## **METHODS**

In preparation for this presentation, I asked a series of questions of all ADC State Directors and also interviewed James E. Miller, National Program Leader for Fish and Wildlife with the ES in Washington, DC. The information presented here is what resulted from those contacts.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Currently, ADC has state or district offices in 44 states and is opening an office in one more state (Alabama) this year and perhaps in another state next year. There are state Cooperative Extension Service offices in all 50 states, plus Ontario, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The likelihood of interaction and the opportunities for cooperation between these two organizations around the country are high.

The ADC is a wildlife management organization, supervised primarily by wildlife biologists, so the most logical point of contact for ADC with the ES is the Extension Wildlife Specialist. The ES has approximately 58 Extension Wildlife Specialist positions in 37 states. In 15 of

these states, ADC and an Extension Wildlife Specialist are located in the same city.

The frequency of contact between ADC and Extension Wildlife Specialists varies widely. Contact is almost daily in New Mexico, where offices are in the same building. In 5 states, contact occurs weekly, while contact is biweekly in 7 states and monthly in 10 states. Overall, our contact is at least monthly in 23 of 37 states. Contact is less frequent in other states, and occurs only rarely in 3 states. State Directors indicated that contact varies seasonally, with almost daily contact during some damage seasons.

Extension Wildlife Specialists and ADC personnel in many locations have worked jointly on a number of educational projects involving wildlife damage resolution, including leaflets, videos, workshops, exhibits, displays, seminars, booths, newsletters, and even testimony. We have also jointly conducted in-service training, served together on working groups, and reviewed papers for publication. Extension Wildlife Specialists and ADC personnel jointly serve on many local committees or working groups in the states of Arkansas, California, Colorado, Indiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Wisconsin, and West Virginia.

A good relationship and joint effort between the Extension Wildlife Damage Specialist and ADC here in Nebraska led to the establishment of a Cooperative Education Program at the University of Nebraska. This program has allowed a wildlife student to be employed for two 3-month training periods with ADC. That student is finishing his second year in the program now and will report for a full time position with ADC soon in Arizona.

In some states, duties have found logical niches between Extension Wildlife Specialists and ADC. For example, ADC often refers requests for information on wildlife enhancement to Extension Wildlife Specialists, while wildlife damage requests are frequently directed to ADC for response. In several states, Extension Wildlife Specialists working with ADC have developed educational materials or programs to broaden the audience and to deepen the understanding of wildlife damage management.

The ES employs specialists in many disciplines besides wildlife. Many of these specialists are faced with wildlife damage as part of their duties. Thirty-eight of 44 ADC offices reported having quite regular contact with these other extension specialists, especially those working in the areas of crops, livestock, horticulture, aquaculture, forestry, and pesticides. ADC personnel have assisted these specialists in developing leaflets, videos, and other publications, as well as participating in workshops and demonstrations on wildlife damage.

In many states, Cooperative Extension Agents (county and district) contact ADC directly for wildlife damage control information. Conversely, ADC may routinely send information by direct mailing to Extension Agents. However, if the Extension Wildlife Specialist is interested and knowledgeable in wildlife damage, he will serve as an active participant in this relationship.

Many Extension Agents recommend pesticide products that are manufactured by the APHIS Pocatello Supply Depot. Examples are gas cartridges for controlling marmots (including woodchucks or groundhogs), and zinc phosphide-treated grain to control prairie dogs. ADC State Directors must approve the shipment of all

Pocatello Supply Depot products into their states. Arrangements are made between the ES and ADC for this coordination.

The most ambitious joint project currently being carried out between APHIS-ADC and the ES system is the revision and publication of 5,000 copies of the handbook, "Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage." This publication is being financed by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and APHIS-ADC. Individuals representing numerous agencies are contributing as authors and reviewers of the 65 proposed chapters in the handbook. An update on this handbook revision is presented elsewhere in these proceedings.

The ES and ADC serve with others to develop programs and arrangements for 2 national conferences on managing wildlife damage—the Great Plains Wildlife Damage Control Workshop and the Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conference, both of which occur bi-annually. We have a similar arrangement in California with the Vertebrate Pest Conference, which is more international in scope.

The most unique relationship between the ES and ADC exists in Texas, where 91 state employees of the Texas Animal Damage Control Service (TADCS) are supervised by ADC. The TADCS is administratively connected to the Texas Agricultural Extension Service. This intricate arrangement requires close coordination, but makes for a productive relationship between operations and education.

### CONCLUSION

Many species of wildlife such as beavers, Canada geese, coyotes, double-crested cormorants, deer, and others have managed to expand their ranges and increase their numbers in the United States, in spite of a growing human population. This expansion of populations has increased the conflicts that occur between humans and many very successful species of wildlife. The need for work in the area of wildlife damage conflict resolution is increasing correspondingly. Cooperation between ADC and the ES is good—maybe better than it has ever been—but the opportunities for new partnerships are growing daily. We look forward to our future together.