

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS GIVEN AT THE 70TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN MOSQUITO CONTROL ASSOCIATION AND THE 29th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MID-ATLANTIC MOSQUITO CONTROL ASSOCIATION, FEBRUARY 2004

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Good morning: I, too, would like to welcome all members, guests, and visitors to this 70th Annual Meeting of the American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA).

It has been a privilege to serve as President this past year. Just think—this is our 70th AMCA annual meeting. I want to thank you for timing my Presidency to coincide with the number of years of AMCA's annual meetings with a President who is also in the 70s.

This morning, I want to cover some things that we have accomplished this past year—and some things that are still on the table. I will also discuss a few things that our association still faces and, in addition, discuss a few thoughts on what needs to be done; however, not necessarily in that order. To prepare this presentation, I canvassed several members as to issues they considered important. The following, therefore, consists of my thoughts mingled with their own.

VOLUNTEERISM

We have an association with many dedicated volunteers that keep our association strong and viable. I just want to say at this time, and I am sure I speak for the officers and Board members, that we thank all volunteers for your past and future services. Although many serve our association in different ways, there is still a need for more volunteer service. Therefore, for those members that have not served and want to become active in the AMCA, contact the AMCA office or your regional director. I am suggesting that the AMCA central office keep a list of members who wish to volunteer for various committees. This list can then be used each year by the President-Elect to complete the committees needed for his or her term as President. Each of you has expertise that the Association can utilize, and volunteering is a fine way to see how the Association works, and it is a good way to get to know your colleagues. Therefore, if you want to become part of your association, let us hear from you.

MEMBERSHIP

Our membership is now up to approximately 1,750. This includes over 100 new members this

past year. We now have 95 sustaining members and are increasing this number each year. This increase is great; however, we need to continue to increase our recruitment of regular members to insure the longevity of our association. Therefore, I am suggesting that we organize and conduct a membership drive. Our membership committee consists of directors of each region and is chaired by our business manager. I suggest we appoint individual members who would represent state organizations and universities to act as membership coordinators. I know that other associations have done this and have provided certain incentives such as free registration, cash prizes, etc. for those that sign up the most new members each year. I see no reason why we cannot do something similar. Look around you. Look at the person next to you and ask yourself this question: Who will be sitting there five, ten years from now? Think about it. The future of AMCA will be the young people of today.

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Legislative issues confronting AMCA generate some of our largest expenditures, but the Board unanimously agreed that the cost is justified; I am also of that opinion. If we can win the big one, we should have a foot-hold in fighting other issues.

On the national scene we have remained a player in the Clean Water Act/National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (CWA/NPDES) and Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA)—issues that affect our day-to-day mosquito control operations. We have been involved within both the regulatory and judicial arenas, but our ultimate success will entail continual input. We have experienced a significant success last year with the issuance of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) interim guidance.

I believe at this time we have no other choice but to take the CWA case to an ending. I believe the Board is in agreement with this, but I would like see how you, the members feel about this issue. The question I have for you is: Do you want to work under FIFRA, or do you want to work under the CWA? I hope you understand that if you are required to get NPDES permits, you will likely have to do water monitoring after pesticide appli-

cations. Monitoring is very expensive and an added expense that I do not deem necessary if we can get EPA to make a ruling in our favor. Therefore, if you are in favor of seeing AMCA through the legislative issues with which we are now involved, or even if you are not, voice your opinion to your board representative.

We would not have been as far as we are today on legislative issues without having a very first-class group in McDermott, Will, and Emery working for us in Washington. But this does not come without cost. As you are aware, there are many legislative issues on the table that face AMCA, and we may not be able to be involved in all of these issues due to the expense. We may, in the future have to be selective in the issues we wish to explore. Over the past several years, the Officers of AMCA have been discussing ways to decrease legislative costs. We have had talks with the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) and have done some cooperative work with the Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE) association along these lines.

Discussions are still ongoing with NPMA and we hope to have some conclusions this year. Many of you have heard that we have been having meetings with them to discuss items of mutual interest. After several meetings, we agreed to four items where we could each benefit. We presented these four items at the interim board meeting, and three of the four were approved by the board to further investigate possible cooperation. These included (1) working on common-interest legislative issues, (2) Washington Day meeting collaboration, and (3) training in mosquito control strategies. Committees were assigned to look into the three areas. Thus far, there has been little response from NPMA. However, of the three items mentioned, it seems that Washington Day collaboration has the most promise.

For those that are concerned that we may become associated with or be sustaining members or partners with NPMA, or RISE for that matter, I seriously doubt that this will happen or that we would want this to happen. AMCA has its own identity, and we must keep this identity.

To follow up on other ways that we could increase our voice in legislative issues, we could consider collaboration with other associations, such as Weed Science, Forestry, the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, Farm Alliance, etc., that are facing some of the same issues with the CWA. If we could combine forces and present our problems as a common front, I think this would go a long way in convincing lawmakers they are on the wrong track. It has been my experience that lawmakers are bean counters, and the more beans we send them, the more they will listen. Therefore, we need to start thinking how to raise more beans, so to speak.

As I have repeatedly said, fighting legislative is-

ues gets expensive, but at this time, I see no other options but to continue as we are, at least until we can get one or two of these court cases under our belt. There is a possibility that eventually we can find other less expensive ways to have us represented in Washington. I know that there is a concern as to the expenses involved in our legislative action issues, and that is why we must find other support. Again, what we need is membership involvement. If each member would voice their opinion on issues facing mosquito control to their regional directors and participate in committees, it would help the board to set some priorities. As I have stated before, legislative issues are not going away. The CWA has opened the door to activists who are bound to use the law to tie up any mosquito operations. We, as a profession, need to be more proactive in addressing the needs for more mosquitocides in vector control programs but, at the same time, promote the use of integrated management. This may entail a grassroots program to get districts to proactively dispel some of the myths surrounding adulticides and the other methodologies we use to control mosquitoes. For example, our efforts on environmentally safe source reduction of mosquitoes are well documented, but we need continual exposure and reinforcements of safety of these methods. As one person told me, "our usage of chemical tools should not be a source of embarrassment or only spoken of in dark rooms." The activists are gaining the inroads and are psyching the public as to the supposed ill effects of legally registered mosquitocides. If we do not begin a program to educate the public, our fight will eventually be lost, despite our legislative activity efforts.

Therefore, I ask you to talk to your regional representatives as to the direction you want us to go, or give us some alternative solutions if you have them. After all, this is a membership-driven association and your thoughts on this issue will influence the direction we should take. Legislative issues are not going away, and if we do not try to rectify the wrong now, we may not be in business very long.

EDUCATION

Our public education program is being revised and upgraded. This will take time and entail funding expenditures and expertise (in making public service announcements, brochures, etc.) that we do not have at the present. That is where NPMA and RISE may be able to help. They have the capabilities and the resources to produce the brochures and provide public service announcements that we do not. Even your own districts have some resources to produce public service announcements. AMCA does not have this capability, but we should have. Public service announcements on the good science used in mosquito control, placed on national TV

with the AMCA logo, would go a long way in public relations. I believe that this would be a good way to ward off the bad image that activists have painted. Perhaps each district manager could provide support for a program of this nature. This does not mean that this would replace our efforts on the legislative scene immediately, but it would certainly help get public opinion on our side. I firmly believe that if we fund more to public relations and education, we will eventually save dollars on legislative actions. All we are doing now is trying to put out fires, and when one is put out another starts. I see no end until we can educate the nonactivist that what we are doing is safe and beneficial. If we can influence the public on the side of science, we will have gone a long way toward shielding ourselves from the legislative actions. In the meantime, AMCA and districts need to step up efforts to educate their constituents in the vital role of mosquito control. I am convinced that continuing education material will save the Association and the districts considerable expenditures in the legislative area.

However, education will take time, and we still have important issues on the table. Therefore, we will continue to track and to develop appropriate responses when necessary concerning label languages on EPA-registered mosquito control products, reregistration of public health pesticides, U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFW) vector control guidelines, school Integrated Pest Management (IPM), the Entomological Society of America (ESA), the Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health (MASH) Act Bill, and other possible unknowns.

We will continue our most successful program, and that is the Annual Washington Day event. Bringing our concerns directly to the attention of lawmakers has been a very successful educational program. Because of our Washington Day events, and with some help from West Nile virus (WNV), we are now a more recognized association and are often called on to participate in national level panels to shape pesticide use and public health policies. This activity benefits all of our members, and I encourage each and every one of you to participate in our Washington Day in May of this year. Plan to participate and encourage your trustees and commissioners to attend.

CORE FUNCTIONS

Besides the legislative issues that have taken considerable time, we need to continue supporting our core functions. We need to maintain and enhance the Journal of the American Mosquito Control Association (JAMCA), to get the JAMCA publication procedures done electronically, and to have the journal available online to subscribers. We need to maintain and enhance our Web page and provide essential links to other Web sites. With this Web

page, we have a natural place to start educating the public. Also, in the near future, I would like to see the newsletter and even voting done online.

Furthermore, we need to develop our central office capabilities through a move to new facilities and provide training and expansion of staff as needed. We need to continue to enhance our training and continuing education opportunities to members and others in the mosquito control community by providing educational materials and dissemination of information.

MOSQUITO CONTROL COLLABORATIVE

I would like to bring one other item to your attention. The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), in partnership with the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), have assembled the Mosquito Control Collaborative (MCC). The collaborative consists of representatives from state and local governmental agencies, as well as health, environmental, agricultural, and mosquito control organizations involved in public health and mosquito control. The goal of the MCC is to develop a set of recommendations that addresses state and local needs for developing, maintaining, and funding mosquito control programs.

Topics that the collaborative will consider in drafting the recommendations include threat assessment; control options; use and evaluation of scientific and technical reports; governmental structure options; federal, state, and local roles; legal issues; public information and media relations; stakeholder participation; and workforce and training issues. This spring, the collaborative will discuss and draft the recommendations, which will be available in May 2004. David Brown will represent AMCA on this discussion and drafting of the recommendations. For more information, please contact Dr. Chet Moore, who will have a poster presentation at this meeting describing the project. I encourage all of you to visit the poster and provide input to Chet on this important area.

OPPORTUNITIES

As much as I have stated about the legislative issues we face and the expenses incurred, this has not all been bad. I look at these things as opportunities—opportunities for AMCA to become recognized as the leader in our field, opportunities to educate the lawmakers and the public, and opportunities to help shape the laws that affect our association and members, instead of doing what we have been doing, reacting after the fact. We have the opportunities—do not let them slip by.

Thank you for your attention and enjoy the meeting.