

# Northeastern Weed Science Society Newsletter

## November 1999

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### Baltimore, Maryland – Site of the 54<sup>th</sup> NEWSS Annual Meeting

#### Comments from the President

The 54th NEWSS Annual Meeting will be held January 3-6, 2000. I invite you all to attend. The theme is "Herbicide Resistant Crops: Past, Present, & Future". The meeting will open with the Poster and General Sessions on Tuesday morning, January 4. Jeff Derr, our Vice President and Program Chair, has done an excellent job of preparing a program which addresses our most pressing issues as weed scientists. The first issue will be discussed both in the General Session and the General Symposium. The topic is Herbicide Resistant Crops; speakers will deal with science, politics, and public opinion. The keynote address will be presented by Dr. Maud Hinchee of Monsanto. The second major topic is that of invasive weed species. The Industrial, Forestry, and Conservation section will hold a symposium to address the need for partnerships among federal, state, regional, and local agencies. Sometimes I feel that we are on the fringe of the invasive species issue and could be much more involved in this exploding area of

research, education, and funding. We will also sponsor two outreach sessions. One held on Wednesday evening will address invasive species issues for the Nursery Industry. The second held all day Thursday will provide CCA soil and water quality credits for crop advisors.

The meeting site is the Hyatt Regency Baltimore on the Inner Harbor. The hotel is located at 300 Light Street in Downtown Baltimore. It is 15 miles (\$20 cab) from the BWI airport and a short cab ride (\$5) from the Train Station (no, the bullet train will not be ready...they lied). Parking is on site; current rates are \$12 self and \$15 valet. Our room rate is \$99 single, \$109 double, \$119 triple, and \$129 quad. Hospitality suites are available with one bedroom for \$300. Junior suites with one bedroom are \$225. Reservations can be made directly with the hotel by calling (410) 528-1234. You must identify the Northeastern Weed Science Society when making room reservations in order to receive the group discount rate. Our actual hotel reservation code is "WEED." **HOTEL RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY DECEMBER 3, 1999!**

We will again be meeting with the Northeast Region of the American Society of Horticultural Science. Joint activities will be the Social Mixer, Poster Session, and General Symposium. NEWSS members will also be able to attend NE-ASHS paper sessions on Wednesday and Thursday mornings. It is with this Newsletter that we introduce the NEWSS Web Site. Ivan Morozov, a graduate student at Virginia Tech, has become our Web Master. Jeff Derr, Betty Marose, and Bill Curran are serving on this committee. Please check out the site; it is still under construction, and we welcome any comments you might have. Please direct all suggestions to Jeff Derr at [jderr@vt.edu](mailto:jderr@vt.edu). The URL for the web site is [www.ppws.vt.edu/newss/newss.htm](http://www.ppws.vt.edu/newss/newss.htm).

To date, no resolutions have been submitted. The resolutions committee chair is Timothy Dutt. If you have a resolution please contact Tim at (610) 285-2006 or at [tedutt@monsanto.com](mailto:tedutt@monsanto.com).

Any questions or concerns? Let me know at [rbonanno@umext.umass.edu](mailto:rbonanno@umext.umass.edu). If there is a Y2K problem, it is not my fault.

See you all in Baltimore!

*Rich Bonanno, NEWSS President*

## **2000 NEWSS ANNUAL MEETING**

We are set to have an excellent program at the annual meeting in January. The theme will be "Herbicide-Resistant Crops – Past, Present, and Future". There are six invited speakers who will address the legislative, environmental, and social issues that have arisen with genetically-modified plants.

Dr. Maud Hinchee of Monsanto will discuss the techniques used to create herbicide-resistant crops, along with discussing future plans for their herbicide-resistant crops program. Dr. James White from USDA will provide information on the government regulations affecting genetically-altered crop varieties. Dr. Val Giddings of the Biotechnology Industry Organization will provide insight on the environmental issues that have been in the news recently in regards to genetically-modified crops. Dr. Nicholas Hether of Gerber Products will discuss the social and trade issues that have arisen and discuss how his company is addressing bioengineered crops. Dr. Virgil Meier of the Scotts Company will discuss herbicide-resistant turfgrass while Mr. David Tricoli of Seminis Seeds will discuss development of herbicide-resistant vegetable cultivars. Plan on discussing issues that relate to herbicide-resistant crops in the breakout sessions.

We will have three special programs at our annual meeting. Betty Marose is putting together an outreach program on invasive weeds for Wednesday evening. This symposium is tailored towards those attending the Mid-Atlantic Nurserymen's Trade Show, which is

occurring the same week in Baltimore. Betty has also developed an outreach program for Certified Crop Advisors, addressing soil and water quality and other current issues in pest management. This symposium will be on Thursday morning and afternoon. Jon Johnson has developed a workshop discussing the federal, state, and local partnerships that are addressing invasive weeds. This program will be on Thursday morning. My thanks to Betty and Jon for developing these excellent symposia for our membership. Please let others from outside our organization know about these special programs. This is an opportunity for our members to interact with invasive plants groups, native plant societies, crop producers, and other organizations that can benefit from our expertise.

I would like to thank Ed Beste (Univ. of Maryland), Jeff Borger, Dwight Lingenfelter, and Jon Johnson (Penn State), John Jemison (Univ. of Maine), Annamarie Pennucci (Northeast Turf and Ornamentals Research), and Joe Neal (North Carolina State) for serving as section chairs for the annual meeting. They have been instrumental in developing the program for our annual meeting and deserve our thanks for their hard work. Through their efforts, we have a strong set of papers in each breakout session. If you are asked, please consider assisting the society by serving as a section chair.

We will be meeting again with the Northeast region of the American Society for Horticultural Science. The joint meeting with NE-ASHS worked well last year and we look forward to interacting again with their organization. I thank Carolyn DeMoranville for her help in coordinating papers from NE-ASHS with our presentations.

Listed below is a condensed program for the upcoming annual meeting. I look forward to seeing you in Baltimore.

*Jeffrey Derr, Program Chair*

## **Condensed Meeting Program**

### **Committee Meetings**

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Monday, Jan. 3 - 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 6 - 6:30 - 8:30 a.m. (Old & New Board)

#### **NE-92 COMMITTEE MEETING**

Monday, Jan. 3 - 3:00 - 7:00 p.m.

#### **PHOTO JUDGING COMMITTEE MEETING**

Monday, Jan. 3 - 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

## **AWARDS COMMITTEE MEETING**

Monday, Jan. 3 - 6:00 - 6:30 p.m.

### **STUDENT PAPER JUDGING COMMITTEE MEETING**

Monday, Jan. 3 - 6:30 - 7:00 p.m.

### **PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING**

Monday, Jan. 3 - 5:30 - 6:00 p.m.  
Program/Section Chairpersons and Chair-Elects

### **POSTER JUDGING COMMITTEE MEETING**

Tuesday, Jan. 4 - 7:30 - 8:00 a.m.

### **WEED SCIENCE FIELD DAY COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, Jan. 4 - 5:15 - 5:30 p.m.

### **COLLEGIATE WEED CONTEST COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, Jan. 4 - 5:30 - 6:00 p.m.

### **PAST PRESIDENTS' BREAKFAST MEETING**

Wednesday, Jan. 4 - 6:30 - 8:00 a.m.

### **NEWSS REGISTRATION**

Monday, Jan. 3 - 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.  
Tuesday, Jan. 4 - 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Wednesday, Jan. 5 - 7:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Thursday, Jan. 6 - 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.

### **NE-ASHS REGISTRATION**

Tuesday, Jan. 4 - 1:00 - 5:30 p.m.  
Wednesday, Jan. 5 - 7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

### **OTHER REGISTRATIONS**

Nursery - Invasive Plants Symposium:  
Wednesday, Jan. 5 - 6:00 - 6:30 p.m.  
Certified Crop Advisors Symposium:  
Wednesday, Jan. 5 - Noon - 1:00 p.m.  
Certified Crop Advisors Symposium:  
Thursday, Jan. 6 - 8:00 - 9:00 a.m.

## **Schedule of Sessions**

### **MONDAY, JANUARY 3, 2000**

4:00 - 5:00 p.m. Drop off photos for photo contest  
6:00 - 10:00 p.m. Research Posters & Commercial Displays Set-Up

### **TUESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2000**

8:00 - 10:00 a.m. Research Posters (Authors present);  
Commercial Displays  
10:00 a.m.- Noon General Session  
1:00 - 6:00 p.m. Research Posters (Authors not  
present); Commercial Displays  
1:15 - 5:00 p.m. Agronomy  
1:15 - 4:30 p.m. Ornamentals  
2:00 - 5:00 p.m. Industrial, Forestry, and  
Conservation  
2:30 - 5:00 p.m. Biologically-based Weed Control  
6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Social Mixer

### **WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2000**

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Research Posters (Authors not  
present), Commercial Displays  
8:00 a.m. - Noon Vegetables and Fruit  
8:15 - 11:00 a.m. Agronomy  
8:30 - 11:00 a.m. NE-ASHS, Paper Session I  
8:30 - 11:00 a.m. Turfgrass and Plant Growth  
Regulators  
1:00 - 4:00 p.m. General Symposium:  
"Herbicide-resistant Crops"  
4:15 - 5:30 p.m. NEWSS Annual Business Mtg.  
4:15 - 5:30 p.m. NE-ASHS, Poster Session  
6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Nursery / Invasive Plants  
Symposium

### **THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 2000**

8:00 a.m. - Noon Certified Crop Advisors  
Symposium  
8:30 - 11:15 a.m. Agronomy  
8:30 - 11:00 a.m. Turfgrass and Plant Growth  
Regulators  
9:00 - 11:30 a.m. Partnerships - Invasive Plants  
Symposium  
10:15 - 11:45 a.m. NE-ASHS, Paper Session II  
Noon NEWSS and NE-ASHS Posters  
and Commercial Displays  
Breakdown  
1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Certified Crop Advisors  
Symposium

## Section Chairs for the 2000 NEWSS Annual Meeting

Listed below are the section chairs for the NEWSS 54th Annual Meeting to be held January 3-6, 2000 at the Hyatt Regency Baltimore.

### Program Chair

Jeffrey Derr  
Virginia Tech, Hampton Roads AREC  
1444 Diamond Springs Rd., Virginia Beach, VA 23455  
Phone: 757-363-3912 / Fax: 757-363-3950  
E-mail: jderr@vt.edu

### Agronomy Section

Chair: Dwight Lingenfelter  
Penn State University, 116 ASI Building  
University Park, PA 16802  
Phone: 814-865-2242 / Fax: 814-863-7043  
E-mail: DXL18@psu.edu

### Biologically-Based Weed Control

Chair: Joseph Neal  
North Carolina State Univ., Dept. of Horticultural Sci.  
Box 7609, Raleigh, NC 27695-7609  
Phone: 919-515-9379 / Fax: 919-515-7747  
E-mail: joe\_neal@ncsu.edu

### Industrial, Forestry, and Conservation

Chair: Jon Johnson  
Penn State Univ., Landscape Mgmt. Research Center  
Orchard Road, University Park, PA 16802  
Phone: 814-863-1184 / Fax: 814-863-3479  
E-mail: jmj5@psu.edu

### Ornamentals

Chair: Annamarie Pennucci  
NE Turf and Ornamental Research  
4 Englewood Drive, Raymond, NH 03077  
Phone: 603-895-8480

### Turfgrass and Plant Growth Regulator

Chair: Jeffrey Borger  
Penn State Univ., Landscape Mgmt. Research Center  
Orchard Road, University Park, PA 16802  
Phone: 814-865-3005 / Fax: 814-863-3479  
E-mail: jab267@psu.edu

### Vegetables and Fruit

Chair: C. Edward Beste  
University of Maryland, Salisbury Facility  
27664 Nanticoke Road, Salisbury, MD 21801-8437  
Phone: 410-742-8780 / Fax: 410-742-1922  
E-mail: cb20@umail.umd.edu

### Poster Section

Chair: John Jemison  
University of Maine Cooperative Extension  
495 College Avenue, Orono, ME 04473-1294  
Phone: 207-581-3241 / Fax: 207-581-1301  
E-mail: jjemison@umcc.umext.maine.edu

## NEWSS Registration Policy

Enclosed is the preregistration form for the Annual Meeting. *Note that one side of the form is for Distinguished Members only.* Please fill out the proper side of the form entirely and send with check payable to NEWSS. The preregistration fee is \$20 less than the on-site registration fee at the meeting. Registration is only by cash or check – no credit cards will be accepted.

## Joint Meeting with NE-ASHS

The Northeast Region of the American Society for Horticultural Science will once again hold joint meetings with NEWSS in January 2000, the second year of our trial period of joint meetings. NEASHS will be holding paper and poster sessions on Wednesday and Thursday (Jan. 5-6). Titles for our presentations will be included in the program sent to NEWSS members. Areas of research that will be presented include turfgrass, vegetable crops, and tree and small fruit crops. We encourage NEWSS members to participate in these sessions. Our members are looking forward to attending NEWSS sessions, particularly the General Symposium. Issues surrounding genetically-modified plants are hot topics in the horticultural community.

Our organizing committee believes that the joint meeting provides opportunities for our members to learn from one another, strengthen professional relationships, and form new ones. I am looking forward to meeting with you in January.

*Carolyn DeMoranville, Past President NEASHS*

## Hotel Room Reservations

The Hyatt Regency Hotel is located at 300 Light Street in the Inner Harbor section of downtown Baltimore. The daily room rates for our conference are \$99 for single, \$109 for double, \$119 for triple, and \$129 for quad. Junior suites with one bedroom are available for \$300, and the hospitality suite rate is \$300.

Make your room reservations directly with the Hyatt Regency by calling **410-528-1234**. In order to receive the group discount room rates, mention that you are attending the Northeastern Weed Science Society meeting. Our hotel reservation code is "WEED."

**DECEMBER 3, 1999 is the deadline for room reservations.**



## Baltimore: Attractions & Activities

The Hyatt Regency is situated within one block of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. Many places of interest, including the Maryland Science Center, The National Aquarium in Baltimore, Historic Fell's Point, Little Italy neighborhood, museums, and a multitude of shopping and dining establishments are located in this area. The official website for the City of Baltimore (<http://www.ci.baltimore.md.us/index.html>) and its links provide information on the variety of attractions and activities in the Inner Harbor area and throughout the city. The link to Baltimore's National Aquarium (<http://www.aqua.org/information/visit/>) provides details about admission hours and ticket prices, exhibit listings and maps, and tips for optimizing your visit.

The following text was obtained from Baltimore's website regarding Harborplace and The Gallery:

Harborplace and The Gallery is the heart of Baltimore's famed Inner Harbor. Set adjacent to the sparkling harbor waters, Harborplace & The Gallery is the place to shop, browse, snack, dine, enjoy and just be part of the excitement that is Baltimore. From across the harbor and around the world, millions annually enjoy Harborplace & The Gallery's eclectic, energetic and festive mix of more than 200 shops, restaurants and eateries and its hundreds of entertainment events.

An internationally-acclaimed urban marketplace, Harborplace is reminiscent of the outdoor markets of a bygone era. Its intoxicating mix of locally-owned and one-of-a-kind shops, nationally-known merchants, waterside cafes, ever-changing kiosks and food eateries, all under two glass-enclosed pavilions was the catalyst in Baltimore's now famed renaissance. Harborplace's graceful and elegant sister across the street, The Gallery, features more than 75 shops and eateries lining an open, vaulted six-story atrium with cascading escalators with one of the best harbor views in Baltimore.

While Harborplace has strong local support with more than half of all customers coming from the Baltimore area, it is also the No. 1 visitor attraction in the city. Sharing the Inner Harbor with The Gallery - and just steps away - are the National Aquarium in Baltimore, Maryland Science Center, American Visionary Art Museum and numerous fun "to-do's" for kids from paddle boats to a carousel.

## Placement Service

The NEWSS provides a placement service for members at the annual meeting each year. This service is open to any institution or commercial firm seeking employees as well as individuals desiring positions. See the inserted page in this newsletter for "Position Available" and "Position Desired" forms. Return forms to the Sustaining Membership Chairman: Carroll Moseley, Novartis Crop Protection, P.O. Box 181300,

Greensboro, NC 27419.

The forms will be available for inspection at the placement service desk during the annual meeting in Baltimore. After that date, the forms will be forwarded to the WSSA placement service chairperson.

## Commercial Displays

All Sustaining Members of the NEWSS are eligible and encouraged to participate in the Commercial Display Session at the Annual Meeting in Baltimore. This session is held in conjunction with the Poster Session. Displays can remain in the room until Noon on Thursday, January 6. This is an excellent opportunity to inform the membership of your services and products.

Table space can be reserved by contacting the Sustaining Membership Chairman:  
Carroll Moseley, Novartis Crop Protection, P.O. Box 181300, Greensboro, NC 27419. Phone: 336-632-7754  
E-mail: [carroll.moseley@cp.novartis.com](mailto:carroll.moseley@cp.novartis.com)

## Rules for the NEWSS Photo Contest

Photographs may be submitted in slide, print, or electronic media. **If submission is in electronic format it is the responsibility of the contestant to provide a means for viewing the image(s).**

- Contest is open only to members of the NEWSS.
- Subject of photo is to be any photogenic subject that is associated with Weed Science.
- Each contestant may enter up to 5 photographs, but can win only one prize.
- Prints should be no smaller than 35 sq. in. or no larger than 80 sq. in. Prints should be mounted.
- Slides must be in a 2" X 2" mount that will fit in a standard carousel slide tray and should be labeled as to which side goes toward the screen.
- All photographs should be labeled with name and address. Prints should have a business card that will be attached to the mat for display after judging.
- Members of the Photo Contest Committee will judge the Contest.
- Judges will consider factors such as;
  - a subject,
  - b composition,
  - c technical aspects, and
  - d overall appeal.
- Prizes include certificates and \$100 for first, \$50 for second, and \$25 for third.
- Contestant does not have to be present to win.
- Entries will be returned to the owner after the Contest.

Photo entries may be submitted in person to the Photo Contest room in the Hyatt Regency no later than **5:00 pm on Monday, January 3, 2000**. Entries may

also be mailed to the Awards Committee Chair (David Vitolo) with delivery scheduled no later than **December 15, 1999:**

D.B. Vitolo  
Novartis Crop Protection  
67 Pinewood Rd.  
Hudson, NY 12534

## **Candidate for NEWSS Vice-President**

### ***David J. Mayonado***

David J. Mayonado, a native to Maryland, earned a B.S. degree in Chemistry in 1982 from Bridgewater College in Virginia. He received a M.A. degree in Chemistry from the College of William and Mary in 1984 then worked 2 years for the Rohm and Haas Company in herbicide discovery as a synthesis chemist. Dave then attended Virginia Tech where he earned a Ph.D degree in Weed Science in 1988. Upon completing of this degree, he joined the Monsanto Company as a Senior Research Biologist in the herbicide discovery group in St. Louis, MO. In 1992, Dave returned to Maryland as a Field Development Representative for Monsanto covering the Mid-Atlantic region.

Dave became a member of the Northeastern Weed Science Society and the Weed Science Society of America in 1985. He served on the NEWSS executive committee from 1994 to 1998 as Sustaining Membership chair. He also served as the NEWSS representative on the WSSA's publications promotion committee from 1995 to 1997 and on the WSSA's local arrangement committee in 1996.

Since joining the NEWSS, Dave has authored or co-authored 10 research papers, one refereed journal article and has co-authored 2 patents. He is certified by ARCPAC's as a Professional of Weed Science and is CCA certified in Maryland.

## **Plan to Attend the 2000 WSSA Annual Meeting in Toronto, Canada**

The 2000 WSSA Annual Meeting in Toronto is quickly approaching. The meeting starts on Sunday February 6 with the General Session in the afternoon followed by the Presidential Reception and ends Wednesday February 9 after the Awards Banquet. The meeting will be held at the Weston Harbour Castle Hotel in downtown Toronto. The hotel is in close proximity to many restaurants and shopping. The venue is a large multi-story hotel with an international flavor. It has an attached convention center where much of the meeting will take place. The hotel boasts comfortable rooms, an excellent health club, swimming pool, and both tennis and racquetball courts for hotel guests.

A number of symposia are planned as well as pre, during, and post tours. Symposia will include the following:

- Weed Control, Weed Management, or Weed Science....Which will it be? – Monday morning
- Partnerships Now...Weeds Won't Wait – Monday afternoon
- Herbicide Resistant Crops: Implications for Latin American Agriculture – Tuesday morning
- Herbicide Adjuvants – Tuesday afternoon
- Allelopathy: Past Achievements and Future Approach – Wednesday morning
- Impact of Genomics and Biotechnology on Weed Science – Wednesday afternoon

The conference tours will include a tour of Toronto on Sunday, Feb. 6, a tour of the Niagara region on Monday, a museum tour on Tuesday, and a post conference tour of the Niagara region that includes the greenhouse industry, the wine region, and Niagara Falls on Thursday. This year's conference will cost \$145 for WSSA members that pre-register (\$200 for on-site registration) and \$40 for students. A meeting brochure and additional information should be available after Nov. 1. To find out the latest information about the meeting, visit the WSSA website at <http://ext.agn.uiuc.edu/wssa/>.

***Bill Curran, WSSA Representative***

## **NEWSS Legislative Committee Report**

### FOOD QUALITY PROTECTION ACT OF 1996 (FQPA)- UPDATE:

Since the last NEWSS Legislative Committee Report we have "celebrated" the third anniversary of the Food Quality Protection Act. In "honor" of the event on August 2, 1999, Carol Browner, Administrator of the EPA, announced "voluntary agreements" to cancel many uses of methyl parathion and azinophos methyl. In her statement she also announced that the agency "has targeted several other older, widely used pesticides for priority review within the next year and a half including atrazine" and several others. On the same date there was also a technical review of the decision making process used to reach the decision to cancel specific uses of methyl parathion. This technical briefing was originally to have been held in October or early November at the end of a six-step review process outlined by the TRAC committee. There is little credibility to statements that this timetable was advanced to protect public health, not to make a political statement.

On August 3, the House Agriculture Committee - Subcommittee on Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition and Forestry held a hearing about the Public Health Effects of FQPA implementation. The committee members present were furious about the EPA decisions announced on Aug. 2. In a nutshell they charged that EPA had short circuited the process developed to review registrations under FQPA. This process was to include decisions based on science, public involvement, transparency in decision making, and a reasonable transition strategy for growers who might lose registered uses. They charged that science was taking a back seat to politics, that EPA had squandered the good faith which had been developed to date through the TRAC process, that Registrants had been coerced into signing "voluntary agreements" which included "gag clauses" and that the timing of the announcement was such that it had very high potential to damage public confidence in foods that are currently being harvested.

Legislation has been introduced in both the House and Senate (HR 1592 and S 1464) to require adequate time to develop the scientific data needed to make decisions under FQPA. In late summer these bills seemed to be gaining wide support.

EPA recently published a new report on its progress in carrying out the Food Quality Protection Act over the past 3 years. Highlights in "Implementing the Food Quality Protection Act: Progress Report" include how EPA has taken several actions to eliminate or reduce the use of pesticides on foods commonly eaten by children, and registered several new, safer pesticides that pose less

risk to the public and environment, and that can be used as alternatives to older, more toxic conventional chemicals. Other accomplishments detailed in the report include external outreach efforts that have resulted in greater public participation in many of EPA's pesticide programs, the establishment of sound, new science policies, and the creation of programs that support integrated pest management practices, among others. Copies of the progress report are available by calling 703-305-5017, or by connecting to EPA's website: <http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/fqpa/>.

EPA has or will issue approximately a dozen Registration Eligibility Documents (RED's). They are being made available for comment but on very short turn arounds. Some of these REDs include risk mitigation measures that could affect user groups, and this may generate questions, requiring EPA to brief concerned parties. The REDs scheduled include the herbicides pebulate, EPTC, and bensulide.

### AGRICULTURE BIOTECHNOLOGY

During the week of October 4, there were several hearings related to agricultural biotechnology. There were two days of hearings by the Senate Agriculture Committee, a hearing of the House Science Committee and a hearing of the Senate Finance Committee, International Trade Subcommittee. Below is a summary of these hearings:

House Science Committee Hearing / October 5, 1999 - The House Science Committee was primarily critical of the science behind some of the sensationalist stories which have been widely heralded. The risks of increased antibiotic resistance due to the presence of antibiotic-resistant selectable markers and of Monarch butterfly decimation were discussed and refuted by scientists with specific expertise in these issues.

Senate Agriculture Committee, Agricultural Biotechnology Hearings / October 6 and 7, 1999 - There were two witness panels on each day of the hearings. The panelists on the first day included leading scientists who discussed the methods, status and promise of the technology as well as some of the socioeconomic implications for farmers. The mood of the testimony on the first day was positive towards agricultural biotechnology and did a good job of creating a public record of the potential inherent in this technology to solve problems in both developed and underdeveloped countries. The benefits of biotechnology were discussed in terms of pesticide use reductions, improved human nutrition through altered vitamin, protein and nutrient profiles and the potential for GMO crops as a delivery system for vaccines which could help solve significant health problems in the developing world. There were several concerns voiced at the hearings. One raised by Senator Kerrey was that despite all the promise of the



technology there appeared to be a serious disconnect between the industry and public sentiment about GMOs. The other raised by Dr. Hurl, an agricultural economist at Iowa State University is that producers are getting squeezed by increasing consolidation within both their input suppliers and their output buyers. Another issue that was raised was the issue of poor science and press sensationalism. Dr. Arntzen pointed out that the infamous "Monarch butterfly" study had been rejected for publication in Science and rejected by another reviewer as too preliminary. Even though there has been substantial rebuttal and criticism of the original report this information has not been adequately broadcast to the public.

The panelists on the second day included representatives from the regulatory agencies which oversee agricultural biotechnology, (USDA, FDA, EPA), as well as representatives for producers, grain marketers, and the biotechnology industry. It was pointed out that it is often impossible to reach the public with the results of sound research. There was a prevalent sentiment among the panelists that the administration should take a stronger position through the top levels of the USDA, EPA and FDA to inform the public about the safety reviews, testing and promise of biotechnology.

Senate Finance Committee, International Trade Subcommittee Hearing / October 8, 1999 - This hearing was held primarily to determine what stance the administration intends to take in upcoming World Trade Organization talks which will be held in Seattle in December. The hearing addressed several aspects of agricultural trade negotiations and biotechnology figured very prominently. David Aaron, Commerce Undersecretary for International Trade, stated that the U.S. would resist any effort to reopen the SPS (Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement) which requires that decisions about approving ag-biotech products be based on science. He said that reopening the SPS agreement might allow Europeans to include the "precautionary principle" which would require the products to be "proven safe" before allowing imports.

During the hearing Senator Kerrey (D-NE) stated that a new administration effort on ag-biotech is needed because the issue has gone beyond a regulatory issue to one of politics and consumer perceptions. The concept he outlined would include involvement of several other federal health agencies (National Institute of Health, Health and Human Services and the Surgeon General) in addition to the current involvement of the FDA. Such a full-court press is consistent with the sentiment expressed at the Senate Agriculture Committee hearings which called for more Administration effort to educate and inform the general public about the promise of these

crops and the scrutiny they undergo.

Two underground organizations teamed up to destroy crops and equipment at two genetic engineering (GE) facilities in Woodland, California in September. Organic-gardening guerilla groups "Reclaim the Seeds" and "Future Farmers" joined forces to decontaminate a test plot of GE sunflowers and fifty rows of GE research corn planted at a Pioneer Hi-Bred International research facility as well as several hundred GE research melons at the Rogers NK Seed Company Research Station. At the melon site, the concerned nighttime gardeners also disabled an irrigation system, dismantled trellises of two GE greenhouses and fully disassembled a third. "Any university or corporation proclaiming the benefits of biotechnology or found to be engaging in GE research will have their crops nonviolently decontaminated by the growing movement to protect the fabric of life," forewarned "Johnny Appleseed" of Reclaim the Seeds. These same two groups have threatened a coordinated nationwide day of action on October 27.

To ease the dilemma over the uncertainty caused by genetically modified organisms (GMO), the American Corn Growers Association (ACGA) is proposing that farmers should look at the option of planting NON GMO crops if certain questions are not answered. This is not an issue over the health or scientific effects of GMOs. It's an issue over production agriculture's inability to answer the many questions that surround this controversial issue. "GMOs have become the albatross around the neck of farmers on issues of trade, labeling, testing, certification, segregation, market availability and agribusiness concentration. Until all these issues are answered, it is best for production agriculture to examine alternatives to planting GMOs," said Gary Goldberg, Chief Executive Officer of the ACGA.

#### INVASIVE SPECIES UPDATE:

Working through the Weed Science Society of America's Washington Liaison Committee and the Noxious Weed Committee, three WSSA candidates were chosen as WSSA nominees to the Invasive Species Advisory Board. This was done in June, prior to the official Federal Register request for nominations so that we could have the candidates' names in place prior to the first meeting of the Invasive Species Council on July 22.

The nominees were chosen based on their reputation and experience and their ability to bring different geographic, technical and public/private sector interests to the table. The nominees are Nelroy Jackson, Steve Dewey and Randall Stocker. The Federal Register announcement seeking nominees came out on September 24 and nominations closed on October 24.

On August 20, 1999, the WSSA signed on to the following letter:

Dear Vice-President Gore,

The undersigned organizations write in support of a proposal within the authority of the Administration that would simultaneously help struggling farmers, hard-pressed wildlife and water quality. We urge you to take quick action to offer farmers a large proportion of their total contract payments up front when they enroll buffer lands, wetlands and related "continuous enrollment" and "CREP" lands under the Conservation Reserve Program.

The Clinton Administration and the Department of Agriculture have set goals to establish grassed and forested buffers along two million miles of streams and to achieve a net goal of 100,000 acres of wetland restoration per year. Such buffers and wetlands benefit wildlife and filter pollutants that can harm water quality. Most of the incentives for such efforts are provided by the continuous enrollment and "CREP" portions of the Conservation Reserve Program, which allow farmers to establish buffers on cropland and pastureland and some wetlands and receive annual rental payments for up to fifteen years. But enrollments have been slow and have reached only a small percentage of the projected acres needed. In a market economy, these low numbers suggest that incentives are not sufficient.

The Agriculture Department has the authority to sweeten the incentives by offering farmers a large proportion of their full fifteen years of rental payments up front using budget authority under the CRP. Other changes to enhance the buffer program would also be worthwhile, but an incentive of this size is probably among the actions necessary to meet Administration goals for buffers and wetland restoration.

In today's tough farm economy, such an offer also represents one of the best ways for the Administration to get money out to working farmers quickly without depending on further Congressional action. Buffers, contour strips, wetlands and related enrollments under CREP and the continuous enrollment program are not only among the most environmentally valuable but are the kinds of enrollments of interest to working farmers who want to continue to farm most of their fields. Up front payments for those lands would simply enroll land already targeted while simultaneously providing meaningful levels of cash to hard-pressed farmers and all by changing only the timing of federal spending, not its overall amount.

We therefore urge you and the President to work with USDA to provide a large proportion of contract payments up front on lands eligible for continuous enrollment and CREP.

#### MISCELLANEOUS /STATE ISSUES:

The USDA Economic Research Service has issued a report titled "Pest Management in U.S. Agriculture". This Agricultural Handbook No. 717 (AH-717) was authored by Jorge Fernandez-Cornejo and Sharon Jans. The report describes the use of pest management practices, including integrated pest management (IPM), for major field crops and selected fruits and vegetables. The data came chiefly from the 1996 Agricultural Resource Management Study (ARMS) developed by USDA. Because different pest classes may dominate among different crops and regions, requiring different pest management techniques to control them, the extent of adoption of pest management practices varies widely. To order this or any other ERS report, visit the USDA Order Desk at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/prodsrvs/sales.htm>.

On October 13, 1999 the Senate approved the conference report on a bill to provide fiscal 2000 appropriations for agriculture, rural development, and related agencies. Funding for the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service includes \$486 million for research and education activities, and \$425 million for extension activities. The bill contains \$834 million for the Agricultural Research Service.

The FY 1999 USDA Pest Management Alternatives Program (PMAP) awards are currently being distributed. The list of successful projects our posted at: <http://www.reeusda.gov/ipm/projects.htm>.

In late July the Environmental Working Group (EWG) lashed out on atrazine in a report "Into the Mouths of Babes" (for more information, contact <http://www.ewg.org/pub/home/reports/mouthsofbabes/mouthsofbabes.html>). They claimed that atrazine is polluting tap water in almost 800 Midwestern communities, and the government has underestimated exposure to the carcinogen by 15 times for infants fed formula mixed with tap water.

The EWG report stated that:

- Atrazine is applied to 50 million acres a year, with contaminated tap water found in 796 towns throughout Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska.
- Drinking water polluted by atrazine is consumed by approximately 10.5 million Midwesterners.
- Some tap water is so contaminated that infants get their lifetime limit of atrazine before they are four months old. In 40 towns, infants get their lifetime dose of atrazine by their first birthdays.

Novartis, the primary producer of atrazine countered "Into the Mouths of Babes' might better be titled 'Out of the Mouths of Alarmists,'" said Dave Whitacre, senior

vice president of science for Novartis Crop Protection, Inc. "The fact is that levels of atrazine cited in the EWG report do not put infants, children or adults at risk. Parents have no reason to fear the safety of the drinking water in their communities. The EWG has misrepresented scientific facts to attempt to create panic among American parents. The EWG has a history of shunning the time-honored scientific peer-review process in evaluating the accuracy of its positions," added Whitacre. "Government-established standards provide a wide margin of safety to all populations."

Meanwhile, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is actively working on an updated and comprehensive scientific review of atrazine, particularly in regard to the safety of children. In fact, even under the new Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) guidelines, infants could consume more than 1000 times the volume of water with the highest atrazine concentrations indicated in the EWG report, and still be well within stringent, established safety margins.

"We have 40 years of valid studies using sound methodology to support the safety and value of atrazine," said Whitacre. "Consumers are being irresponsibly and unnecessarily alarmed by this EWG report. We simply cannot allow pressure groups like the EWG to dictate public policy."

*Jerry Baron, Legislative Committee Chair*

## **1999 NEWSS Collegiate Weed Science Contest**

The 1999 Northeastern Weed Science Society Collegiate Weed Contest was held July 19 and 20 at the campus of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA. Scott Hagood was chair of the committee that conducted the student contest. Scott was assisted by Kevin Bradley, Steve King, Claude Kenley, Ivan Morozov and Judy Fielder in the Department of Plant Pathology, Physiology, and Weed Science at Virginia Tech, along with numerous company representatives and university personnel. Our thanks to Scott Hagood and his committee for a job well done!

Special thanks to American Cyanamid, AgrEvo, BASF, Dow AgroSciences, DuPont, Monsanto, Novartis, Rhone-Poulenc, Rohm and Haas, and Southern States for providing financial support for the contest. Scott utilized Smithfield Plantation as the base for the contest. Grower problems were held there, along with the turf center and even at Lane Stadium. Sprayer calibration was held at the duck pond. Herbicide symptomology was held at the plantation, while weed identification was conducted at the beef center.

Participating teams came from the following universities: Cornell, Delaware, Guelph, Kentucky,

Maryland, North Carolina State, Nova Scotia, Penn State, SUNY-Cobleskill, and Virginia Tech. A total of 31 graduate students and 25 undergraduate students competed. Volunteers and students were treated to a pig-picking after the contest, during which the award winners were announced.

In the graduate division team awards, first place went to N.C. State (Shawn Askew, George Scott, Andrew McRea, coached by John Wilcut), second place to Virginia Tech (Rob Richardson, Peter Sforza, Andy Bailey, Greg Armel, coached by Dan Poston), with third place going to Penn State (Wade Esbenshade, Steve Josimovich, coached by Dwight Lingenfelter).

In the undergraduate team awards, first place went to Nova Scotia (Kerry Cluney, Gordon Murray, Peter Burgess, Stephen Crozier, coached by Glen Sampson), second place to SUNY-Cobleskill (Steven DuBois, Andrew Miller, coached by Doug Goodale) and third place to N.C. State (Kevin Clemmer, John Lowery, Keith Burnell, coached by John Wilcut.)

For individual Graduate students, Rob Richardson of Virginia Tech placed first, Shawn Askew of N.C. State placed second, Art Graves of Virginia Tech placed third, and George Scott and Andrew McRea, both of N.C. State, tied for fourth.

For individual Undergraduate students, Keith Burnell of N.C. State placed first, Gordon Murray of Nova Scotia placed second, and Andrew Miller of SUNY-Cobleskill placed third.

*Report and Photos by Jeff Derr*

Contestants enjoy some food and beverages at the 1999 NEWSS Collegiate Weed Contest in Blacksburg, VA.

Scott Hagood of Virginia Tech – Chairman and Host of  
the 1999 NEWSS Collegiate Weed Contest

Rich Bonanno, NEWSS President

Sprayer Calibration portion of contest.

Herbicide Identification portion of contest.

Diagnosing one of the “Grower Problems”.

Another “Grower Problem” being addressed.

Grower Problem – Athletic Field Turf

Grower Problem - Corn

1<sup>st</sup> Place Graduate Team – North Carolina State Univ.

1<sup>st</sup> Place Graduate – Rob Richardson, Virginia Tech

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Graduate Team – Virginia Tech

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Graduate – Shawn Askew, N.C. State

3<sup>rd</sup> Place Graduate Team – Penn State Univ.

3<sup>rd</sup> Place Graduate – Art Graves, Virginia Tech  
(photo not available)

1<sup>st</sup> Place Undergraduate Team – Univ. of Nova Scotia

1<sup>st</sup> Place Undergraduate –  
Keith Burnell, N.C. State

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Undergraduate Team – SUNY-Cobleskill

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Undergraduate –  
Gordon Murray, Nova Scotia

3<sup>rd</sup> Place Undergraduate Team – North Carolina State

3<sup>rd</sup> Place Undergraduate –  
Andrew Miller, SUNY-Cobleskill

## **Submission of Articles for the NEWSS Newsletter**

Please submit articles for the NEWSS newsletter (including items for "People in the News") to the Public Relations Representative, Todd Mervosh.

I prefer that articles be sent to my email address: **tmervosh@caes.state.ct.us**. Otherwise, send a hard copy, plus a version stored on diskette (preferably in Microsoft Word for Windows) to:

Todd Mervosh, Conn. Agric. Exp. Stn., 153 Cook Hill Road, P.O. Box 248, Windsor, CT 06095.

The deadline for items to be included in the April 2000 newsletter is **March 17, 2000**.

Please send address changes or changes in membership status to the new NEWSS Secretary/Treasurer:

Dave Yarborough, University of Maine, 5722 Deering Hall, Orono, ME 04489.

