

# UC Agriculture & Natural Resources

## Proceedings of the Vertebrate Pest Conference

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## OPENING REMARKS--FOURTEENTH PEST CONFERENCE

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Good morning. On behalf of the Vertebrate Pest Council, I welcome you to the 14th Vertebrate Pest Conference.

I am Lew Davis and will be serving as your chairman for this conference. I am rather "a new kid on the block" as this is only the 10th conference I have attended. As chairman, one of the few responsibilities I have is to present the opening remarks. Looking back at past opening remarks, I have found them to be short and not too philosophical except I did research back into the records of time and looked at the proceedings of the first conference held in 1962 here in Sacramento. The first chairman of this conference was none other than our old friend and colleague, Walter E. Howard, also known as Howdy to so many of us.

Along with Howdy, some of these early founders of the conference were Maynard Cummings, who is still very active on the council, as well as Dick Dana, Rex Marsh, and Art Bischoff.

Not only was Howdy chairman, he also presented a paper at that first conference, entitled "Control Methods for Snakes." Now the reason I am telling you all these things is that all these past opening remarks have been quite short, one-half page or so, except for the one given by Howdy 28 years ago; his opening remarks filled seven pages.

Reading over Howdy's paper, I see why he is still coming back; he is still trying to learn to control snakes. It appears that most of those methods he reported on 28 years ago are

no longer valid. Would you believe he advocated poisoned water, strychnine in eggs, fumigation of burrows with calcium cyanide, DDT, Aldrin, toxaphene, gassing of dens, bounties, and finally, blasting of dens.

Just last night Howdy did tell me he is trying for a patent on a snake trap. Not only is it effective, according to Howdy, it is humane.

With all of the concerns that impact vertebrate control throughout the world, it is more important than ever to hold this type of conference; to exchange information on vertebrate control so that we all can do a better job whether it be for health concerns, food production, food storage, or aesthetics.

Let me quote Howdy's ending paragraph in his opening remarks 28 years ago: "An international society would certainly help bring together the existing knowledge in this field and also help to coordinate this kind of research throughout the world. However, this Vertebrate Pest Control Conference by itself will assuredly do much toward advancing our knowledge on how to do a better and safer job of controlling vertebrate pests."

At that first conference, there was one individual from Korea and one from Canada. On our program for the next three days are slated 26 international speakers.

I would say the dream of that first conference is now a reality.

Let us begin this 14th Conference.