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Workshop-Discussion Session

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Workshop-Discussion Session

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The purpose of the workshop-discussion session was to establish a list of ideas that would provide the best focus and direction to improve wildlife damage control programs. During this session the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) (Delbecq et al. 1975) was used to: 1) identify and rank obstacles that limit the effectiveness of wildlife damage control efforts, and 2) generate possible solutions to the most important obstacles. This format allowed equal and full participation and was successful in generating many original ideas.

METHODS

About 70 participants were separated into 6 independent groups. Everyone privately listed obstacles that limit the effectiveness of wildlife damage control efforts. A round-robin recording process was used to record all of the ideas generated in each group. Then all of the recorded ideas were discussed in order. During the next step, each group ranked their ideas according to importance. Finally, each person privately listed possible solutions to the obstacle ranked most important by their group.

RESULTS

The average number of obstacles recorded by a group was 25. Similar ideas were generated but ranked differently among groups. The most important obstacles were: lack of damage assessment, efficacy, risk, and benefit/cost data (2 groups); lack of public education, understanding, and support (3 groups); and lack of effective techniques (1 group). Other highly ranked problems were: "you do it for me" attitude; lack of manpower; lack of funding; legal restrictions; inability to control environment; lack of damage control information in wildlife curricula; politics; conflicting values; attitudes of wildlife professionals; lack of basic biological data on pest species; and lack of communication.

The following solutions were suggested for the 3 most important obstacles that limit the effectiveness of wildlife damage control efforts:

Obstacle i:

Lack of damage assessment, efficacy, risk, and benefit/cost data.

Solutions:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| -standardized techniques | -integrated research funding |
| -continued research | -direct data collection toward top |
| -educate public | priorities |
| - pass data on | -evaluations and documentation |
| -users pay fund | -develop documented case histories |
| -recognize need for research | -involve universities with field |
| -public involvement | efforts and private sector |
| -easy ways to establish thresholds | -use science (facts) to reduce |
| -include in education | regulatory burden |

- learn registration process
- educate new researchers and graduate students
- time element-consideration in research programs

Obstacle 2:

Lack of public education, understanding, and support.

Solutions:

- involve news media
- teacher training and curricula at all age levels
- GPAC work with conservation groups on TV spots
- more complete applicator training
- advertise information availability
- national center for ADC information
- secondary school education
- extension emphasis (growth) on consumptive use
- improve programs and practices
- follow-up on education
- dramatize hazards and damages of nonsupport funding
- influence through popular entertainer:
- lobbying organizations
- maintain credibility
- cooperate with special interest groups
- justify
- coordinate between differing interest groups
- provide data and results to media
- get attention of social and fraternal organizations
- target information to specific audiences
- obtain support of influential persons, including politicians
- regular update for professionals
- revise rules
- incorporate wildlife damage in A, wildlife courses
- produce quality education materials
- increase media efforts
- agency priority for animal damage control
- improved services to public through extension agents
- form advisory groups
- collect, analyze, and publish data
- use of non-lethal methods to gain public support
- public education at fairs
- public meetings
- good P.R. people
- public education pamphlets

Obstacle 3Lack of effective techniques.

Solutions:

- define "effective technique"
- establish goals of techniques
- research and development
- interpretation of techniques
- dissemination of information
- develop incentives for private industry
- training of extension personnel
- better utilization of present techniques
- education-apprentice program
- private interest support of research
- more evaluations of techniques
- identify economic gain to individual
- identify economic gain to society
- utilize expertise of commercial applicator
- ease restrictions through polities
- create public awareness

CONCLUSIONS

Time did not allow for discussion or ranking of these solutions. Ideas generated during this session indicate areas in wildlife damage control that need to be improved. The next step in organizing a successful plan of action could be to develop a "Step-down Plan" (Phenicie and Lyons 1973). This process involves transposing ideas into a primary objective, and then reducing this objective into less complex subordinate objectives until terminal action items are reached. Wildlife damage control efforts will overcome all obstacles only if a viable plan is formulated and carried out.

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