

Presidential Address

DR. ALVA P. BURKHALTER

Coordinator

Bureau of Aquatic Plant Research and Control

Department of Natural Resources

Tallahassee, Florida 32304

It is indeed my pleasure to welcome you to the 14th annual meeting of the Hyacinth Control Society. I would particularly welcome those new members to the Society. We encourage you not just to become members, but to become active, working members of the Society. I am reminded of the man and his son who were attending church service; and when the collection plate was passed, the father put in 5¢. After the service the father was complaining to other members of how poor he felt the sermon had been. His son spoke up and said, "You can't expect much for a nickel!"

I would, in this address, like to take the opportunity to discuss with you several changes or trends to be aware of in this and future years.

First, I would like to briefly discuss the applicator certification program. The Florida Legislature, this past session, passed a bill related to applicator certification. This will give the Florida Department of Agriculture the authority to begin implementation of provisions of an earlier federal law. At present the Florida Department of Agriculture plans to transfer the applicator certification responsibility for aquatic weed application to the Department of Natural Resources.

As you may know, last year the Department of Natural Resources held two applicator training schools—one in Fort Lauderdale, one in Bartow. We plan this winter to hold several additional schools of this nature so that those who were either not able to attend the past schools or would like to attend the school again, may be able to do so. In addition, we are preparing a training manual. Following these schools we plan to begin some form of testing and certification program. Testing will follow closely those areas of training presented at the schools.

I feel with certification will come professionalism. In order to be a professional, a person must know his field of endeavor. This will require training and will also require that a person stay abreast of new development within the areas in which you are weak, and to stay up-to-date.

What will certification offer you? Professionalism leads to better salaries, job security, advancement, etc. As it now stands, aquatic plant control has little to set it apart from unskilled labor. You and I know aquatic plant control is far from unskilled labor, but others may not. If you have to be certified to conduct a job, then that implies you have to be skilled or trained. It also protects your job in that without this skill none can fill your job. It will be a better system and an improvement, but it also requires extra effort on your part.

Second, I encourage you to expand your knowledge of control practices, particularly in the area of biological controls. Most of you are familiar with machinery, its advantages and disadvantages; most of you have become familiar with chemicals, their proper and improper usages, and for the most part will have little trouble being certified in this area. However, few applicators are familiar with biological organisms that can be used or techniques for their use. I feel that in future years, this too will be a widely used method of control. The use of fish, insects, and diseases is already upon us. I feel it behooves us to learn more about these areas of control and how they can be integrated into our present programs.

Third, the next and final part relates to the energy crisis. You know of the oil shortage and have experienced its pinch. This has affected your herbicides, and you know some materials are now hard to obtain. In fact, in every thing you do there seems to be shortages involved. However, all of these problems can be overcome and eventually placed behind us, provided we don't experience the worst shortage of all—an attitude shortage. We have been told to tighten our belts, to be more efficient, to turn down our thermostat, and on and on. However, the measures are only temporary measures and will have little permanent effect on our society, our nation or any other nation unless they are accompanied by an honest effort to overcome these problems. It behooves us now more than ever that we each not allow within ourselves an internal energy shortage.