

**MINUTES**  
**VERTEBRATE PEST CONTROL RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Sponsored by: Merced County Department of Agriculture**  
**Merced County Agricultural Commissioners Office**  
**2139 Wardrobe Avenue**  
**Merced, California 95341**  
**Oct. 10 & 11, 2012**

Members Present

Art Foster  
Mark Novak  
Dennis Bray  
Edward Meyer  
Robert Timm  
Victoria Hornbaker

Members Absent

Dale Huss  
Dan Spangler, Chairperson  
Karen Sweet  
Paul Stapp

Visitors

Jennifer Gordon  
Peter Newman  
Ed Duarte  
Steve Schweizer  
Michael Leoni  
Dave Robinson  
Vince Guise  
Cathi Boze  
Rex Baker  
Arthur Foster  
Donald Mayeda

David Kratville  
Roger Baldwin  
Fred Rinder  
Gary Caseri  
Joe Moreo  
J. Francisco Castaneda  
Rafael Garcia  
Tom Schmit  
Daniel Burns  
Dan Fox

INTRODUCTIONS

Welcome from David Robinson, Merced County Agricultural Commissioner

Dennis Bray called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. followed by the introductions of Committee members and guests.

BAGLEY-KEENE OPEN MEETING ACT AND VERTEBRATE PEST CONTROL RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMPLIANCE

Dennis Bray and the Committee acknowledged the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act and Vertebrate Pest Control Research Advisory Committee (VPCRAC) compliance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Motion:**        **Robert Timm moved that the Committee approve the minutes from the April 25, 2012 meeting. The motion was seconded by Art Foster and passed unanimously.**

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

David Kratville provided an update on new legislation for vertebrate control.

### **SB 1221 Use of Dogs to Pursue Bears and Bobcats**

This bill, except as specified, would generally make it unlawful to permit or allow a dog to pursue a bear, as defined, or bobcat at any time. The bill would exempt from that prohibition the use of dogs by federal, state, or local law enforcement officers, or their agents or employees, when carrying out official duties as required by law.

The bill would eliminate existing provisions allowing for the use of dogs to hunt bears, and would, instead, authorize the use of not more than 3 dogs to pursue bears or bobcats pursuant to a depredation permit issued by the department.

The bill would authorize the department to authorize specified entities to use dogs to pursue bears or bobcats for the purpose of scientific research, under certain conditions.

### **SB 1480 Trapping Licenses**

This bill will revise fees for trapping licenses, and would establish the Trapping Enforcement Account in the Fish and Wildlife Preservation Fund.

The bill would require that fees be placed in the account for specified purposes relating to the enforcement of existing laws and regulations governing trapping. It would also require a Class II trapping licensee to make a reasonable effort to prevent leaving orphaned dependent animal young to die within inaccessible areas of a structure such as a home or business, as a consequence of trapping and killing the mother.

Additionally, The bill would further require Class II trapping licensees to provide clients with a written contract prior to setting traps, containing prescribed information. The bill would make it unlawful to kill any trapped mammal by listed methods or to solicit trapping services business from the public for reasons of health or safety pursuant to specified laws. By specifying these new Fish and Game Code violations, thereby defining new crimes, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

David provided a review and summary of Food and Agricultural Code 6025-6029.

**6025** establishes the need for a vertebrate pest control program based on economic impact and impacts to public health, in addition it establishes the need for an assessment to support research and registration fees.

**6025.2** defines vertebrate pest in regard to FAC 6025-6029.

**6025.3** define research with regard to FAC 6025-6029.

**6025.4** recently added section (AB 634) to allow the use of carbon monoxide for the control of burrowing vertebrate pests (previously this was illegal under 597u of the California Penal Code).

**6025.5 (a)** gives the Secretary authority to establish and administer a vertebrate research program and **(b)1-5** describes the research priorities.

**6026** establishes the **Vertebrate Pest Control Research Advisory Committee** (VPCRAC) and describes the representatives.

**6026.5** gives direction to the VPCRAC on recommending research to the Secretary. The Committee is only required to make one recommendation to the Secretary each year (Currently we are meeting in April and October of each year and providing two recommendations to the Secretary per year).

**6027** creates the Vertebrate Pest Control Research Account.

**6027.1** describes the acceptable expenditures of funds in the Vertebrate Pest Control Research Account.

**6027.5** this section sets the initial assessment at \$0.50 per pound of vertebrate pest control material sold, distributed, or applied by the county for vertebrate pest control purposes. It allows the Secretary (with input from the VPCRAC) to raise the assessment to a maximum of \$1.00 per pound.

**6028** requirement for bi-annual reporting and payment of assessment.

**6029** legislation sunsets on January 1, 2016 (if the Committee desires to extend the legislation we need to begin working on a bill and sponsorship in 2014).

#### **Renewal of FAC 6025- 6029**

The legislation authorizing the Committee to collect the surcharge assessment will sunset in 2016. In 2014, The Committee must initiate the renewal process to extend the sunset. The Committee will need to either work through CDFA's Legislative office or seek a bill sponsor in the legislature. Committee members may be asked to present information to the legislature about how important the vertebrate program is to the agricultural industry in California.

#### FINANCIAL REPORTS

Ms. Victoria Hornbaker provided the Committee with information on the program budget, revenue, expenditures, and projections. The program budget for FY 2012/13 was authorized at \$600,000 and the program has spent approximately \$254,747 to date, including encumbrances. Research expenditures including encumbrances for FY 2012/13 are approximately \$216,603. The administrative budget for FY 2012/13 was set at \$189,867 and the program has spent approximately \$24,874.01.

**Motion:**        **Art Foster moved that the Committee approve the budget as presented. The motion was seconded by Robert Timm and passed unanimously.**

**Motion:**        **Art Foster moved that the Committee retract the budget approval previously. The motion was seconded by Edward Meyers and passed unaminously.**

The Committee discussed its concerns regarding the increased overhead charges, including information technology, legal, division and executive.

## **VPCRAC Fund Condition & Reserve (minimum required)**

The minimum account balance required to maintain the program is equivalent to six months of operational and overhead charges, approximately in the amount of \$250,000. It would be better if the program had at least 1 year of funds to make sure the program has funds to cover anything that occurs during the year.

## STRATEGIES FOR INCREASE REVENUES AND DECREASING COSTS

### **Incremental Increase of Surcharge**

The Committee members asked for this discussion item and asked for County Participation. David Kratville prepared a series of questions that were emailed to counties prior to the meeting. Several county and industry representatives were in attendance. Representatives were present from Fresno, Merced, Mariposa Modoc/Lassen, Stanislaus, Tulare, Kings, Contra Costa and Alameda Counties. In Addition, representatives were present from Liphatech, Ocean Mist Farms, Romab Enterprises and Dan Burns Farming.

Dennis Bray began the discussion by asking the representatives in attendance to share their thoughts on raising the surcharge. Most of the attendees felt that the VPCRAC program is valuable and that a small increase in the surcharge could be tolerated if it would protect the viability of the program. The following is a summary of the responses that the Committee heard on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Gary Caseri, Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner** thought that a \$0.05 increase in the surcharge would be acceptable.

**Joe Moreo, Modoc/Lassen County Agricultural Commissioner** stated that "a raise of \$0.05-\$0.10 in the price will not make a difference in bait sales in his counties, because when someone needs bait they figure out how to get it."

**Dave Robinson, Merced County Agricultural Commissioner** and **Donald Mayeda, Merced County Deputy Agricultural Commissioner** said that a \$0.05 increase would be fine because with the fluctuations in grain prices, causing bait prices to go up and down, most bait purchasers will not notice the increase.

**Roger Baldwin, University of California**, stated that "a \$0.05 raise sounded right" and that maybe advertising would help to get the word out that the baits are available for purchase at participating counties.

**J. Francisco Castaneda, Ocean Mist Farms** said a \$0.05 raise would not be bad since they have to make sure to keep the voles out of the artichokes. From his perspective, the need will outweigh a small increase in the bait surcharge.

**Vince Guise, Contra Costa County Agricultural Commissioner**, said if the Committee decides to increase the surcharge then the money generated from the increase should only be used on research and maintaining label registrations. He was fine with a \$0.05 raise in the surcharge.

**Cathi Boze, Mariposa County Agricultural Commissioner**, said a \$0.05 increase in the surcharge is fine. The main thing affecting sales in her county is the reclassification of the labels as restricted use materials, requiring users to be licensed. She has many "ranchettes" in her county who are not licensed and cannot purchase bait.

**Rafael Garcia, Tulare County Deputy Agricultural Commissioner** said a \$0.05 raise would be fine. He has "ranchettes" in his county as well and they are facing the same challenges as Mariposa.

**Steve Schweizer, Kings County Deputy Agricultural Commissioner** and **Michael Leoni, Kings County Biologist** said \$0.05 or \$0.10 raise in the surcharge would be fine. They agreed with Merced County that the fluctuating grain prices makes the bait prices fluctuate.

**Fred Rinder, Fresno County Deputy Agricultural Commissioner** agreed with Kings that \$0.05 raise would be fine and that the grain prices mainly affect the bait prices.

**Tom Schmit, Liphatech**, said that their baits do not compete with the CDFA baits so a \$0.05 raise in the surcharge would still make the baits more affordable than Liphatech's baits.

Rex Baker, Romab Enterprises, said a raise in the surcharge at \$0.05 would be fine.

**Ed Duarte, Alameda County Deputy Agricultural Commissioner** said the cattlemen may have an issue with the surcharge going up but if it was only \$0.05 he thinks they will be fine with it.

The Program is down to 18 participating Counties, however no Counties in Southern California are currently mixing bait, so southern counties have to buy bait from Kings County or another county farther north. The Committee members present at the meeting had various opinions about raising the surcharge. All members felt they would like to have a conference call to include the Committee members that were not present on the 10<sup>th</sup>, before voting on increasing the surcharge.

#### **Decreasing Costs by Reducing Budget Authority (pro rata and indirect charges)**

The budget was reduced by \$100,000. If program goes over budget the Committee would have to ask the Secretary to increase spending authority. The Committee decided that till the \$100,000 is taken off the budget for the empty position they decided to retract the motion to approve the budget as presented. The new budget would set budget for personal services to \$203,509.00 and an overall budget of \$529,622.00.

**Motion: Robert Timm moved that the Committee approve a program budget of \$529,622 for the 2013/14 fiscal year and accept the Financial Reports as presented. The motion was seconded by Ed Meyer and passed unanimously.**

#### **Decreasing Costs by Reducing Share of Cost for Support Staff**

The Branch is reviewing the share of cost and the duties that support staff conduct related to the VPCRAC. The emphasis is to insure that funds are used to maintain the main goals of the Committee.

#### **Decreasing Costs by Reducing the Number of Committee Meetings**

The Committee was presented the option to move to one meeting per year and save approximately \$3,000 annually. The Committee decided to maintain two meetings per year to insure that pertinent information is regularly shared with the Committee. The Committee would also like to move meetings to areas that need the most attention.

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP: CONSIDERATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF NEW MEMBERS

#### **Discuss Candidates for Vacant Position**

Board Member Ellen Des Jardins-Hirth has officially retired from the Committee as of the October 5, 2011 meeting. An individual from the row crop industry is still needed to take her place as a representative on the Committee.

**University of California Cooperative Extensions (CE) Specialist Position - Dr Robert Timm**

Dr. Robert Timm let the Committee know that applications are being taken for a CE Specialist Position at the University of California.

AGENCY UPDATES

**Department of Pesticide Regulation – Ann Hanger**

Ms. Hornbaker gave a short update for Ann Hanger.

**Second Generation Anticoagulants**

In July 2011, the Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) requested that DPR designate all 2nd generation anticoagulant rodenticides as California restricted materials due to concerns about nontarget wildlife. DPR has recently completed its assessment of available data to characterize the potential & actual risk to non-target wildlife from 2nd generation anticoagulant rodenticides. DPR will be conducting meetings with other state agencies and stakeholders, take comments on their assessment, seek review by an independent scientific review panel and consider mitigation measures.

**Aluminum Phosphide**

In 2010, U.S. EPA expanded restrictions and required clearer label directions and precautions for rodent burrow fumigation products:

Products must not be applied within 100 feet of a building that is or may be occupied by people or domestic animals (increase from 15 feet).

Other requirements such as posting and fumigant management plans were also included on the revised labels.

Recently, U.S EPA approved labels with modified language, allowing use on larger properties containing residences:

“For burrowing rodent applications: The use of this product is strictly prohibited within 100 feet of any building where humans and/or domestic animals do or may reside on single and multi-family residential properties and nursing homes, schools (except athletic fields), daycare facilities and hospitals.” DPR has yet to receive any revised labels with this language.

For all aluminum phosphide burrowing rodent control products currently registered in California, all but 3 labels have revised to include the 2010 U.S. EPA language; 1 product will not be renewed for 2013, revised labels will be submitted for the other 2 products.

EPA’s registration review process for aluminum phosphide and other fumigants is expected to begin late 2013.

**USDA Wildlife Service’s – Dennis Orthmeyer**

Dennis Orthmeyer gave the Committee an update on USDA Wildlife Services.

## **Funding**

The National Disease Monitoring Program has taken samples for coyotes and pigs. They test farrell swine for many diseases. The program is continuing even though the program has been cut in funding. Sampling has continued with the swine program. The new fiscal year has started and funding for the rabies program has been cut. Delays have occurred with license issuance because different offices are handling billings and not communication with the office issuing the license.

## **Legislation**

Bill 1784 for mountain lion research was passed. They will be putting in for funding for training of dogs for protection against mountain lions and other predators.

## **Impacts of Media and Animal Welfare Interests**

Any depredations in the state from wolf attacks on live stock have not been recorded but they will get called if that occurs. There is no depredation permit as of yet for getting rid of bears, mountain lions, and other predators. They have 13 wildlife biologists who monitor the airports for bird strikes. He stated that EPA is looking at eliminating the use of gas cartridge in areas near endangered species habitat. .

## **Environmental Protection Agency – Victoria Hornbaker Pending FIFRA legislation**

Ms. Hornbaker stated that this legislation is still pending.

## **California Department of Fish and Game – David Kratville Trap identification tags**

Mr. Kratville reported on some regulations on trap identification. If using on ones own property, the requirement is reduced to only the name and phone number on trap. If traps are not labeled, they will be confiscated.

## CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE REGISTRATION ISSUES

### **Zinc Phosphide Alternate Confidential Statement of Formula**

An additional Confidential Statement of Formula for Zinc Phosphide treated grain bait was created to allow the manufacturing counties to utilize unused technical Zinc Phosphide originally intended for treating artichoke bracts.

### **Use of Anticoagulants for Ground Squirrel Control on Water Containment Structures**

Reports have been received that several Counties are encountering issues with Fish and Game biologists. The biologists are question the use of anticoagulants for control of ground burrowing rodents in and around levees and other water containment structures. They specifically do not want bait left in the bait stations and have questioned what constitutes an active infestation. The labels do contain language that supports the use site and the treatment method. This might evolve into a much larger issue in the future and the Committee will need to monitor it closely.

## **Anticoagulant Issues with Illegal Marijuana Farms**

Non-profit organizations are working to get grants to clean up marijuana growing sites where illegal pesticide applications (including second generation rodenticides) are harming wildlife. According to the The Sierra Nevada Adaptive Management Plan - Fisher Team several fishers (wolverines/ weasels) were found with secondary exposure from second generation rodenticides.

## **Clarification of Baits Used in Landscaped Areas near Homes**

Ms. Hornbaker and Mr. Kratville promised to look into the rules of changing the labels to include Home Owners Association landscaped areas as a use site, but they thought since CDFA bait is meant for use in agricultural/field settings that DPR will not allow the amendment. There are alternate products on the market that are labeled for that use.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE / QUALITY CONTROL PROGRAM – DAVID KRATVILLE

Mr. Kratville reported the results on the tests done on several counties baits. The baits were collected and split with half going to each of two labs for testing. The tests supported the results from the CDFA lab and showed that the product analysis as within the certified limits for the products.

## FUTURE OF VPCRAC AND MAINTAINING CDFA PRODUCT REGISTRATIONS

The topic of raising the surcharge by \$0.05 or \$0.10 was discussed. The Committee decided to table the discussion until more members would be in attendance, giving all members a chance discuss the issue of increasing the surcharge. The Committee decided to conduct a conference call at a later date to put the issue on raising the surcharge in front of the entire committee.

## RESEARCH UPDATES

### **National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC)**

Dr. Katherine Horak was traveling out of country so she will be giving updates on the following projects at the next meeting:

**“IN-vitro Inhibition of Chlorophacinone Metabolism in Resistant Meadow Voles using FIFRA 25b Inert Ingredients,”**

**“Increasing Acceptance of Zinc Phosphide Baits,” and**

**“Dietary Toxicity of Bioincorporated Chlorophacinone to Kestrels.”**

Ms. Hornbaker provided a short update to the Committee on Dr. Stephanie Shwiff project, **“Estimating Job and Revenue Savings from using a Variety of Pest Control Techniques to Protect Crops from Bird and Rodent Damage in California.”** Project is on track and data is being analyzed. Press releases and hand outs are ready.

### **University of California**

On October 11<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Peter Newman updated the Committee on the following projects:

**“Development and Evaluation of the VPCRAC Website for Vertebrate Pest Research Information”**, Mr. Newman was not able to continue the process for a



new contract for this project due to CDFA contracts issues. Some suggestions were that Peter might work as a subcontractor under Dr. Terry Salmon. This would allow him to continue working on the Website. The Committee was concerned about losing the expertise that Peter brings to the table. The idea of using the in house CDFA information technology staff was not well received by the Committee. A suggestion was made that David Kratville work with Peter to learn how to do updates and maintain the website.

**“Vertebrate pest control – education and certification using the internet and touch screen devices”**, Mr. Newman updated the committee on the kiosk being developed for county offices. Kiosks will have four pests sections with videos, images and reference websites for control methods for these pests. There have been four more pests added to the site and coming up will be a practice test to help people get ready for the applicator test. All material is being reviewed.

Dr. Roger Baldwin updated the Committee on the following projects:  
**“Reregistration of CDFA Baits for Control of Norway and Roof Rats in Agricultural Fields”**, Dr. Baldwin gave his final report for this project. Two indexing methods to monitor rat activity within orchards were tested: wax blocks monitoring chewing activity and baited game cameras. Wax blocks worked well for attracting rats but did not show much chewing activity. Four almond fields were separated into four 10-acre plots where bait trials were performed. After 17 days of baiting plots were again indexed post-treatment to determine efficacy of baits. Diphacinone grain worked exceptionally well for deer mice and was very effective against roof rats. It does not appear that CDFA needs to pursue adding either species to diphacinone wax block label. Chlorophacinone grain was not effective against roof rats, and was less consistent than diphacinone grain for deer mice.

**“Development of an Integrated Pest Management Program for Vole Control in Artichokes”**, Dr. Baldwin gave an update for this project. The use of wax blocks as a chewing index was developed as an effective method for indexing vole populations in artichokes. Secondly the effectiveness of cultural practices and fumigation for controlling vole populations was assessed. Thirdly the efficacy of various types of vole enclosures in addition to trapping were assessed. Pen trials were conducted with 10 voles for 14 days resulted in only one vole inside the enclosure and no radio collared voles were located within the enclosure areas. Recommendations for enclosures: aluminum flashing was cheaper, easier, and more practical to use; black plastic mesh would work well for areas surrounded by bare soil; fencing can be effective. Fourth determine efficacy of chlorophacinone treated bracts, zinc phosphide treated bracts, chlorophacinone pellets, and cholecalciferol pellets at controlling voles in artichokes during different seasons. Finally combine methods to develop an integrated approach for controlling voles in artichokes.

### **Joint University of California and National Wildlife Research Center**

Dr. Roger Baldwin updated the Committee on the following projects:  
**“Efficacy of Cholecalciferol + Diphacinone(C+D) for California Vole Control”**, Dr. Baldwin gave a final report on this project. The first goal of the

project was to determine the efficacy of the Cholecalciferol +Diphacinone and then test the palatability of the C+D to determine which carrier would most likely be successful in field applications. Voles were captured and transported to the lab at the National Wildlife Research Center in Colorado to start a breeding colony. Bait trails were conducted; no-choice and two choice trails, pelleted bait, and various concentrations of artichoke bract baits were tested. Test voles started dying after four days. White nodules suggested calcium deposits on organs. Hence voles first impacted by cholecalciferol. Both pelleted and artichoke bracts were highly effective. Cage trials suggested a test of field efficacy is warranted.

**“Development of a Management Program to Control Voles in Seed Alfalfa”**, Dr. Baldwin stated that work has not started with this project because there are no voles available to start project.

#### RESEARCH PROPOSALS PENDING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ms. Hornbaker gave updates on the following projects:

**“Techniques and Methods for Controlling California Ground Squirrels in Almonds and Other Specialty Crops in San Joaquin Antelope Squirrel Territory”**, by Valerie Mellano, UC Cooperative Extension. This project was contingent on funding if the other half was paid by the Specialty Crop Block Grant. The grant was not awarded so the project was unable to be funded under these conditions at this time.

**“Food Safety and Rodent Control in Leafy Green Crops Supplemental – Spanish Version”**, by Valerie Mellano, UC Cooperative Extension. This project is still awaiting the results of the pier review and then it can be voted on for funding for the Spanish version.

#### NEW RESEARCH PROPOSALS

**Motions:** Dennis Bray moved that the Committee fund the research proposal from Dr. Gary Witmer, National Wildlife Research Center, and Dr. Roger Baldwin, UC IPM entitled, “Field Efficacy Trial of Artichoke Bract treated with Cholecalciferol + Diphacinone bait for California vole control” in the amount of \$41,326. The motion was seconded by Art Foster and passed unanimously.

These two projects were voted on at the scheduled conference call on Nov. 1, 2012.

**Motions:** Mark Novak moved that the Committee fund the research proposal from Alan Muchlinski, California State University, Los Angeles, entitled, “Introduced Species of Tree Squirrels: Impact on Agriculture in California” in the amount of \$61,426. The motion was seconded by Art Foster and was defeated by a dead lock vote of three Yea and three Nay votes.

**Motions:** Dennis Bray moved that the Committee fund the first year of the three year research proposal from Scott Werner, National Wildlife Research Center, and Dr. Roger Baldwin, UC IPM entitled, “Evaluation and Development of Bird-Repellent Rodenticide Baits

**for California Rodents” in the amount of \$33,127. The Committee will vote to extend the grant to include additional project years pending the outcome of preliminary data of the bait acceptance. The motion was seconded by Dale Huss and passed unanimously.**

Closed Executive Session of the VPCRAC Pursuant to Government Code Section 1126  
(If deemed necessary)

NEXT MEETING

April 24, 2013 in Stockton, CA

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David Kratville – Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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NEXT MEETING

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