

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS - A YEAR TO REMEMBER. Jerry Doll, Extension Weed Scientist, Department of Agronomy, University of Wisconsin, 1575 Linden Dr., Madison, WI 53706.

2004 was a memorable year for the NCWSS in many ways and the same is certainly true for me as well. The Society represents nearly as many family as professional dimensions for me and this was never more true than during the past year. It felt like a family because the excellent cooperation of fellow officers, directors and committee chairs made the activities of the year flow smoothly and kept the Society fully alive in all our important areas. And it was again professionally rewarding as our summer and fall events are highlights of the year for me. Thanks to all who gave of their time and energy to make this a reality. I've appreciated the opportunity to work with, be stimulated by, and learn from all of you. Let me thank a few people by name as they represent why this was a "Year to Remember" for me.

The event that took us into new waters in 2004 was having the Summer Contest hosted by the University of Minnesota - the first time we have ever held the weed contest at a university site. Bev Durgan and her colleagues did an outstanding job of continuing the tradition of this event being one of the highlights of the year for those who participate, both for students and for all who work to set up and run the contest. Christie Sprague, chair of the Resident Education committee, collaborated with the students and others to review the contents and activities of the Summer Contest and worked diligently with her vice-chairs to see that all the contests functioned smoothly and I and the Society thank her and the entire Resident Education committee and its subcommittees for a job extremely well done.

Bill Johnson, our Communication Editor, and Glenn Nice are to be commended for continually working to improve the NCWSS newsletter and web site and for establishing the list serve feature that allows us to easily communicate to our members and among the leadership groups of the Society. I have no doubt that this will become an even more valuable tool for us in the year ahead. Glenn also gives excellent service to the Society by chairing the Electronic Communications committee which will soon become a standing committee of the NCWSS. Glenn and his committee ensure that the presentations at our sessions are seamless and I have no doubt that they will succeed once again in accomplishing this feat in Columbus.

Michael DeFelice also deserves recognition by the Society. Mike launched the new version of the Interactive Encyclopedia of North American Weeds and, while this is a project of the Southern Weed Science Society, he and the SWSS invited the NCWSS to promote and sell the DVD with a generous portion of the proceeds remaining with our Society. This excellent product will show our commitment to weed science education and also improves our bottom line!

The biggest challenge the Society continues to face is declining membership and participation at our annual conference. We are not alone in this and indeed all the weed science societies are in some stage of reassessing their mission and plans for the future. I commend Duane Rathmann (chair of our Long Range Planning Committee; and Bryan Young, Kassim Al-Khatib, Wayne Fithian and Tom Peters for their efforts in leading us into a strategic planning process coordinated by the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology. The CAST project of "Shared Leadership" is a wonderful way for us to participate in a constructive and guided process to determine who we want to be as a Society and setting plans to take us there. You will see the initial efforts in this regard during our annual meeting and 2005 will be one of much activity in this area. All members are encouraged (and will be invited) to let the Board of Directors know your thoughts and ideas about the future of our Society and our activities. As I reviewed older proceedings of our Society, I was intrigued by how little the purpose of the society has changed. In nearly 60 years of existence, the original purpose has changed

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only by a few words! Indeed it's time to review, revise and modernize our mission and be proactive in planning.

Tom Peter's, our Program Chair, has convened an excellent set of presentations for our general session that will help us think creatively and critically about our future. He and the Mark Loux, Local Arrangements Chair, are to be commended for working diligently to ensure a successful and smoothly conducted annual meeting in Columbus.

As we look to the future, we should review our past as well. We have an excellent resource to do this in the 1989 publication, "The North Central Weed Control Conference: Origin and Evolution" edited by Bob Anderson. It covers all the years from the beginning of our Society in 1944 until we changed our name to the North Central Weed Science Society in 1988. I reviewed parts of our history prior to this meeting and encourage you to do the same. Some of the questions we ask today regarding our discipline in general and our Society in particular have been with us for many years! Next year will be our 60th anniversary. We may want to celebrate in a special way our past as we venture into new areas in the future.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as president of the NCWSS. It has truly been a year to remember. The Society has effectively served our discipline and members for many years. I have no doubt that it will continue to fulfill a useful role for years to come. With Tom Peters, Steve Miller and Adrian Moses in the leadership chain and numerous dedicated Board and committee members in our Society, we have proven leaders who will serve us well and ensured that we will have many more "years to remember."