THE HYACINTH CONTROL SOCIETY

AQUATIC WEED CONTROL REPORT

Aquatic weed science and subsequent control has become a mature industry. Long a universal problem, though often not recognized as such, it has been getting more attention in recent years.

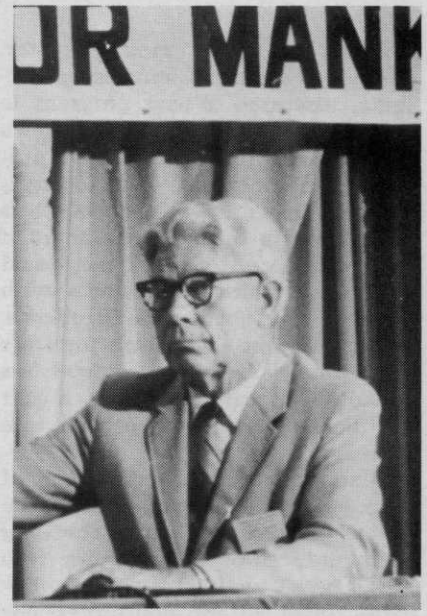
A good example is the 11th annual meeting of the Hyacinth Control Society, composed of a group of scientists and aquatic weed specialists dedicated to control of all noxious aquatic weeds.

The group, representing several foreign countries and almost half the states of the union, but mostly from southeastern section of the country, met four days last month at Tampa, Fla., with a registration of 180. Last year's session was held at Huntsville, Ala., with emphasis on the Tennessee Valley Authority lake weed control programs.

At the Tampa sessions, more than 70 papers were presented. They included much on chemical control, and the use of chemicals with limited or no toxicity to fish and wildlife, and also to people. More in evidence at the '71 session were papers on mechanical and biological controls. Much is being done in these latter areas, but practical solutions at this time are far from adequate to do the control job.

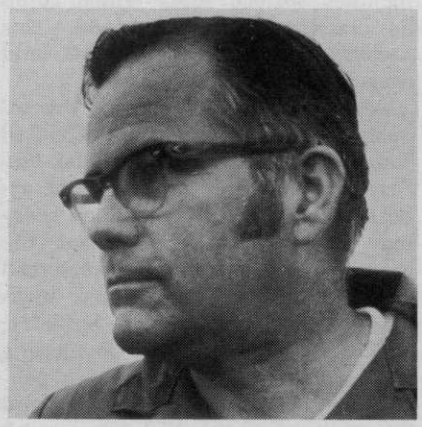
President of the Society, Stanley Abramson, in opening the yearly conference said that the theme for this '71 session — Environmental Management for Mankind — was especially appropos in light of the fact that the nation has become acutely conscious of the environment, and that action must be initiated immediately to upgrade its ecology.

The Society's concern with waterways and what to do about the aquatic weed problem, Abramson said, was first recognized in Florida. During the past 10 years, he continued, aquatic weeds have multiplied faster than means of eradication can be found. Herbicides, Abramson pointed out, still remain the most important tool available for aquatic weed control. He stressed that this tool must be handled properly by trained personnel and not used promiscuously by untrained people, or the general public. He maintained that the public needs to be kept fully informed of all objectives pertaining to weed control operations.



Outgoing president Stanley C. Abramson.

Newly elected president of the Society, Robert J. Gates, center, at field presentation.

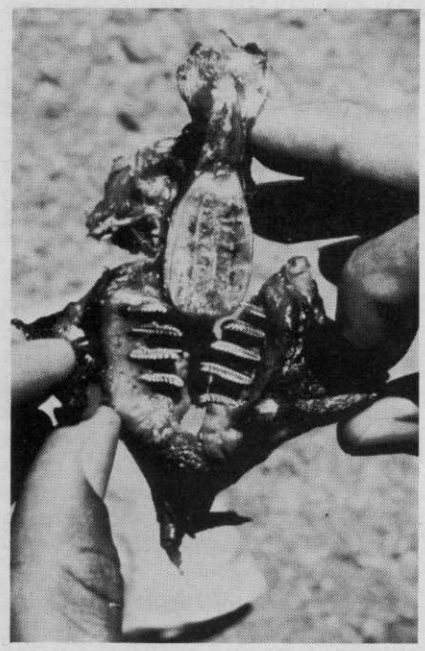


C. T. Brown, Jr., Medical Park Clinical Laboratories, Inc., Tampa, has been working with Eron foam generator.

Airboat operator Russell Lee, Southwest Florida Water Management District, at field demonstration.

Senator Randolph Hodges and Herbert J. Friedman, president, Southern Mill Creek, Tampa.

Group tests Eron foam generator using multi-colored foam at Society field demonstration.



Pharyngeal teeth and pad of the White Amur, a fish being tested for aquatic weed control.

The Society, Abramson said, will continue to be confronted with problems relating to practical aquatic pollution control. He reminded members that the paramount reason for the Society's existence was to coordinate efforts of all members in finding solutions which will be practical and acceptable.

Randolph Hodges, executive director of the Florida Department of Natural Resources, and a former senator, discussed the current Florida role in environmental research and protection. His goal, he stated, is to secure the complete coordination of all agencies and groups concerned with aquatic weed problems. Contracts for control, utilizing $2.8 million which the state legislature has authorized, will be given both to public and private interests. Hopes are that local funds can be raised in many cases to match the state funds, he said.

Senator Hodges in recognizing Society programs, research and activi-

Robert E. Eron, Eron, Inc., with ATV unit readying for test of foam generator.

Byron Stark, Kilgore, Tex., demonstrates gun used on FoamSpray.

FoamSpray in action. Recently acquired from R. L. Wislon Co. by LTV Aerospace Corp., unit handles spray with reduced wind drift and helps hold chemical on foliage for longer periods.

ties, pointed out that his office would be receptive to any suggestions from this as well as other groups. The entire tenor of his presentation appeared to be one offering the complete cooperation of state agencies in working with the many civic and governmental groups in finding acceptable solutions to aquatic weed pollution.

A University of Florida panel of scientists representing several divisions of the University discussed possible research projects relating to aquatic weeds. Dr. Roy Shirley, in the animal science field, offered little hope for use of aquatic weeds, particularly hyacinths, as animal rations. He said research indicated that no more than one-third, and a better guess in his opinion would be 10% to 15%, of a livestock ration could possibly consist of hyacinths (via pellets or in other processed form).

Hyacinths, Shirley continued, vary from time to time in protein content. Range seems to be from 15% protein down to 8%. At times, plants also contain more ash. Processing apparently deteriorates the protein content.

A brighter outlook was given by Dr. Thomas D. Furman, environmental engineer. He said that aquatic weed plants — hyacinths in particular — might serve to extract nitrogen and nitrates from raw sewage prior to dumping it. As a source of nitrogen and nitrate uptake (as well as phosphorus uptake) he believes up to 50% can be extracted.

In a Florida lake, where such studies are being made, he has found that hyacinths under these conditions can double in mass every 12 to 15 days. Growth ponds, he said might well be a method of reducing nutrients going into a lake. Next step, he pointed out, would be to use and sell hyacinths for conversion into paper. His belief appeared to be that the big problem of such a venture would be in harvesting.

The suggestion that hyacinths could be used as paper has merit. Dr. William Nolan, chemist, said there is a great potential of using hyacinth for paper. He showed a number of samples from his own lab. He said that such plants make a strong paper and this method can utilize 50% of the plant. Pith is made into celluose and the fiber into paper.

Robert J. Gates, Southwest Florida Water Management Director, New Port Richey, Fla., was elected president for the coming year. Other officers and directors elected at this session included: Stanley Abramson, Southern Mill Creek Products, Tampa, vice-president; Brandt G. Watson, Naples Mosquito Control, Naples, secretary-treasurer; David L. Sutton, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Ft. Lauderdale, editor; Dr. Alva Burkhalter, Aquatic Plant Research and Control Coordinator, Florida Department of Natural Resources, Tallahassee, director; Ray A. Spirnock, Miami, director; and Robert P. Blakely, Old Plantation Water Control District, Plantation, Fla., director.

In future editions, WTT will carry a number of the technical papers presented at this Society meeting.