

# **CWSS Presidential Address**

## **The World Is Run By Those Who Show Up!**

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Good afternoon and welcome to the Fifty-First Annual Conference of the California Weed Science Society. I want to thank CWSS Vice President Steve Wright and his Program Committee for developing an excellent program. I want to thank Past President Ron Vargas for giving me advice and calming my nerves when things got confusing. I want to thank the other CWSS officers, directors and committee members for all their hard work that makes CWSS such a successful organization. And, of course, I wish to thank our Business Manager, Wanda Graves, for keeping all of us on track.

I would like to share some thought with you about what I believe will be important parts of “Tomorrow Land for Weed Control”. At first it was hard to come up with something that hadn’t been said here before. I asked my predecessor, Ron Vargas, what I should talk about. His answer was simple — “Anything you want to talk about!” That really narrowed it down for me.

I consider myself a weed scientist, but not a researcher. So, I won’t discuss technical weed science developments today. Ron discussed much of what is coming “tomorrow” for weed science in his Presidential address last year. I won’t repeat that.

Using a technique that has served me well in the past, I looked at this year’s CWSS Conference program for inspiration. We will have presentations from fifty-four different speakers. They include eighteen speakers in the historical topics of weed control in food and fiber crops — a number very consistent with the Conference’s average over the past twenty years. Nine are on turf and ornamental topics. One is strictly on industrial vegetation management and two are on aquatic topics. Nine are related to range and wildland issues, including noxious and invasive weeds — a number that indicates a high interest level in this growing problem. That adds up to thirty-nine presentations on actual vegetation management.

There also three adjuvant talks and two photography presentations that span all weed control areas. Now we are at forty-four speakers.

What is different about this program? The answer is that there are ten presentations on public policy issues. What is also different is that they are spread throughout the program. They are not just in the general session or the Laws and Regulations session. They include three talks on public perceptions related to pesticides, four talks on food safety or the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), Two on the Endangered Species Act, and one talk on Surface water issues related to the Clean Water Act. That means that almost one-fifth of the Conference is essentially devoted to learning how to deal with situations imposed on us by other people.

This significant element of the Conference helped me decide on the message I want to leave with you. By necessity it is a very personal message, but I am positive that I am not the only person who could (or would) give you the message. It is quite simple — SHOW UP!

There is a scene in an old Woody Allen movie where two men are talking. One man is complaining about how badly life has treated him. The government is making his life miserable, his business is bad, and he feels as if he had no control over his life. The other man in the scene simply says, “The world is run by those who show up.” I don’t remember who told me that story, but I have taken it to heart as one of the guiding principles in my life. I make a decent living in this industry and I feel an obligation to give something back. I do that by showing up. I show up at industry meetings. I show up at legislative and regulatory hearings. I show up at conferences like this. I was scared at first and I thought that no one would listen to me. I realized after a while, though, that I didn’t die when I showed up. That was good. Eventually people in charge started asking me my opinion. Eventually I started giving them my opinion. They even took my advice.

We have a new governor in Sacramento. Things will be different than they have been the past sixteen years. Laws and regulations that we are familiar with may now be interpreted differently by new administrators in the California Environmental Protection Agency, the Resources Agency, and the Department of Food and Agriculture. Since the Governor and the majority of the legislature are of the same party, vetoes are less likely than in the past. Is this bad? Maybe it is. Is this good? Possibly. Whatever your point of view is, please SHOW UP. Take the time to learn the issues and act on them when they affect you, your business, and California agriculture.

What has this got to do with “Tomorrow Land for Weed Control”? The answer is that, just like our CWSS Conference program, we will be spending more and more time in the future dealing with laws, regulations, and public perceptions we may not totally agree with. If you show up, you can become involved in drafting the public policies of the future. If you don’t show up, someone else will — someone who may not have your best interests at heart. If you truly can’t show up, then support those who show up for you. Write letters, make phone calls, and send e-mails. Your representatives and regulators do listen. You just have to take the time to give your input. I promise you your efforts will pay off.

Thank you for coming to this year’s Conference. I’m sure you will find the speakers both educational and entertaining. Steve Wright got the program accredited for 26 hours of Continuing Education, including an unprecedented 3.5 hours of Laws and Regulations. That’s a great benefit for all of you who have pesticide licenses or certificates. I only ask that if you want to claim all 26 of those hours, please SHOW UP!