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## Introductory Remarks

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## Introductory remarks

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This meeting was concerned with pests whose control remains a matter of international concern, illustrated both by a new upsurge of the Desert Locust since the meeting and, almost at the same time, by serious infestations of African armyworm in every country from South Africa to Yemen (in several of them the heaviest on record); both these developments have indeed contributed unavoidably to the delay in the appearance of these proceedings.

Each of the pests discussed at the meeting has a human importance beyond its purely economic significance; each presents problems so daunting in magnitude that any attempt at control must, as was said, have an element of audacity; and perhaps no one who has been involved in such attempts is ever quite the same again. The effective deployment of applied science within such subjective constraints has involved a long history of invaluable international meetings with administrative and logistic objectives for which a consensus of technical opinion has been essential. But in each case knowledge and understanding are still sufficiently incomplete to leave scope – and need – for sharp differences of informed opinion, often on points of major practical importance. At the start of the present meeting it was emphasized that no collective recommendations would be attempted; that there would be no drafting committee; but that the objective was to use the forum provided by the Society to get on record a really comprehensive presentation of the range of informed opinion on these various points of disagreement: because these are the growing-points for new knowledge. Written comments and afterthoughts were accordingly invited, and have been used to supplement the taped record of the discussions.

There was however evidence of at least one unforeseen collective conclusion, formulated independently and authoritatively by two of our francophone guest speakers: explicit recognition of the need for a much more integrated approach than at present to the common problems and technologies (physical as well as biological) of the different major pests (medical as well as agricultural; vertebrate as well as invertebrate) of a single region. We commend the point to those responsible, in academic institutions as well as in government service.

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