

### **The Director's desk**

## Berryman Institute addresses feral hog problems

BRUCE D. LEOPOLD, Co-Director, Jack H. Berryman Institute (East), Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Mississippi State University, Box 9690, Mississippi State, MS 39762, USA

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Dr. Conover for such a great inaugural issue of our journal!! I have received nothing but very positive accolades about the quality of our first issue. Mike and our managing editor, Phil Parisi, have done a fantastic job!! This second issue is equally as prominent as the first. This issue deals with a subject that is growing in importance throughout the southeastern United States: feral hogs. Being in Mississippi, I am all too familiar with the importance (and negative impact) of this invasive species. Berryman East has consistently funded numerous research projects on this subject. We also have funded a comprehensive publication (more like a landowner's guide) about this animal that should be available next year. Also, the shift in crops to corn for biofuels will greatly enhance our feral hog populations. In Mississippi alone it is believed that at least 70% of the fields in soybeans, cotton, etc. last year will be in corn this year. Thus, this issue of *Human–Wildlife Conflicts* could not have been more timely.

I am certain that you are aware of the problems we had with funding this past year. Berryman Institute got caught up in the earmark debacle, and our funding was not "released" by USDA/APHIS. Thus, we had to suspend our research grants program, support for students and biologists to attend the Wildlife Damage Workshop in Texas, and many other critical programs. Fortunately, through Wildlife Services administration, with the help of state directors, we received some base funding that kept all staff employed, this journal published,



Bruce D. Leopold

and our outreach program fully functional. We all owe Bill Clay, his administrative staff, and all state directors thanks for continuing to invest in Berryman.

We plan to work hard in the following months to restore our full funding and get back to having active research and outreach programs. The Berryman Institute's Board of Directors plans to meet late this fall in Logan, Utah, to develop a plan of action to keep Berryman Institute fully functional so that we can meet the diverse needs of our citizenry concerning human–wildlife conflicts. The partnership that we have (2 land grant universities and a federal agency) is indeed unique and serves a vital role not addressed by any other entity.

I hope that you enjoy this special issue of our journal. \*