

Preface

*Richard L. Ridgway*¹

*May N. Inscoe*²

Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, USDA-ARS, Beltsville, MD 20705

Renewed interest in biological pest control is evidenced by a series of events, including assessments of biological pest control and pest management undertaken by the Board on Agriculture, National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences, the Office of Technology Assessment, U.S. Congress, and the Consumers Union. Also, the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government is implementing a strategy designed to reduce pesticide risk that is likely to result in reductions in pesticide use and to increase the need for biological controls. Many groups are attempting to respond to the renewed interest and apparent increased demand for biological controls, including both small and large private companies who are seeking to expand the market for existing biologically based products and to develop new ones.

A preliminary effort was made, through a small informal conference during the annual meeting of the Entomological Society of America at Baltimore, MD, in December of 1992, to examine some of the relationships between the public and private sectors in the development and use of mass-reared natural enemies as biological control agents. Two insect genera, 1 representing egg parasitoids and 1 representing general predators, were selected to serve as “case studies” for discussion. A number of issues raised at this session and in subsequent discussions indicated that there were opportunities to improve communications among those involved in the development and use of multicellular mass-reared natural enemies. The issues of greatest concern were related to quality and efficacy of the mass-reared

¹ Currently with BioManage Services, 2229 Countryside Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20905.

² Retired, current address, 10007 Thornwood Rd., Kensington, MD 20895.