THE SFAG RAG

NEWSLETTER OF THE STABLE FLY ACTION GROUP INC

MARCH 2006

From the SFAG DESK ...

On 20 December 2005 The Minister for Agriculture, Kim Chance, met with representatives of the Health Department to discuss solutions to the stable fly problem. In January he met with representatives of the Vegetable Growers Association, and requested that the vegetable industry develop a set of protocols for the industry to abide by to prevent the breeding of stable flies in raw poultry manure. He has given the industry until the end of March to develop a set of "minimum standards", which are to be presented to the Minister for his perusal and response.

During December the Shire of Gingin invited the SFAG Inc Committee to submit a Projected Budget for the Group's estimated income and expenditure for the remainder of this financial year, and for the next two years. The SFAG Inc Committee prepared the Budget, it was passed at the January meeting of the Committee, and then forwarded to the Shire of Gingin. The Committee hopes to be able to pay running costs, such as stationery, postage, newsletters and meeting room hire from your membership fees. However, the cost of the highly successful 1st Edition of the Publicity Package containing video footage, photos and supporting text produced by SFAG Deputy Chairman Rod Withnell, at his own expense, was almost $1300, and the Committee was very appreciative to be given the opportunity by the Council to apply for some financial assistance with this item of expenditure.

It is hoped that SFAG Inc membership fees can remain low, in order to encourage as many people as possible to become financial members and join the stable fly fight. However, this matter can be reassessed by the members at the SFAG Inc AGM in September, when the audited financial statement for the Group for the 12 months will be presented. The Group now has 61 financial members, and we thank you all for your continuing support.

The SFAG Committee holds its monthly committee meetings at the CWA Rooms in Gingin on the 4th (not necessarily the last) Tuesday each month at 7.30 pm with a supper afterwards. Meetings are always formally conducted by the Chairman and minutes recorded by the Secretary. If any members wish to receive minutes, please contact The Secretary on 9655 3024 or email kildare1@bigpond.com and they can be sent to you.

The SFAG RAG Newsletter is sent to all financial members, all the community associations within the Shire of Gingin, appropriate government ministers, shadow ministers and MPs, and other interested people, to get the message out there about who SFAG Inc is and what the Group aims to achieve. A few extras are printed to display at the two Shire Offices, Gingin and Lancelin, for the general public.

The Committee has been advised that Mr Keith Pardoe, Shire of Gingin Pest Control Officer, has left the position to pursue other interests. The Committee thanks Keith for all his efforts pertaining to the stable fly problem in the Shire and wish him well for the future. We understand a replacement officer will be employed as soon as possible. In the meantime Council Environmental Health Officer Wayne Harris is acting in the position. Thanks, Wayne!

As promised, we continue our profile on the SFAG Inc Committee. Meet Deputy Chairman, Publicity Officer and March pin up, Rod Withnell!

Continued over ...

MEET THE SFAG COMMITTEE!

Deputy Chairman Rod Withnell

Rod has owned grazing land in the Shire of Gingin for some 38 years and during this time he had commercial interests in Guilderton. In conjunction with this he worked in the earth moving industry as an independent supervisor on projects such as the Ord River Dam, Telfer gold mine and in the iron ore industry, King Bay, Tom Price and other areas. In contrast, Rod spent two years as an engineer/crewman on a prawning catcher-freezer boat on season, off-season with the Fisheries Department's search for new fishing grounds (Carnarvon to Darwin, Melville Island, Bathurst Island and return). In addition he rode a pushbike (solo) from Perth to Sydney, and a motorbike through the Great Sandy Desert to Alice Springs.

Rod and a business partner then established a sound earthmoving company working on North West iron ore contracts and the oil industry in the Canning Basin.

Now, as time is becoming more available for his own priorities, which have been "simmering on the back burner", these personal projects can receive greater attention.

Rod's ongoing contribution as Deputy Chairman and Publicity Officer for the Stable Fly Action Group has been fantastic, and greatly appreciated by the Group.

Did you know …

Throughout the agricultural sector increased fly numbers represent significant economical problems and health issues, especially related to the stable fly, *stomoxys calcitrans*, and the house fly, *musca domestica*. Excessive fly biting and attempts by livestock to dislodge feeding stable flies can cause fatigue, stress, reduced grazing intake and weight loss. In cattle, reduced weight gain can result from infestations of as few as 20 stable flies per animal (Cook, et al, 1999). High numbers of stable and houseflies can disrupt the efficiency of working animals, such as dogs and horses. Higher human health risks are also associated with increased fly numbers due to the conveyance of disease carrying organisms (Gerozisis & Hadlington, 1995).

Adult flies of both species are strong fliers. The flight range of the stable fly is at least 216 km (Hogsette & Ruff 1985). With these capabilities, it is not surprising that both species can locate desirable breeding sites and develop large populations in a relatively short period (*Ian Dadour & Sasha Voss; Centre for Forensic Science, UWA, 2003/04).*

REPORTING STABLE FLY ISSUES TO THE SHIRE OF GINGIN

If you, or anyone you know, are experiencing stable fly problems, it is vital that the problem is reported, preferably in writing, to the Shire of Gingin Environmental Health Officer, Wayne Harris. The Shire of Gingin keeps monthly records of how many people, and from what locality of the Shire, report stable fly problems to them. It is very important, however, that those who experience stable fly infestations are proactive and continue to report them each month, otherwise the impression can be given that the problem has gone away.

Attached is a **FLY COMPLAINT SHEET** for your convenience when reporting to the Shire. Please photocopy if necessary, and tell your neighbours!!

In addition, if you observe people offending, by using, transporting or storing raw poultry manure in the banned period, please report this to Wayne at the Shire as well.

REMEMBER ! The banned period is from 1 September to 30 April each year until further notice.

OFFICE BEARERS FOR 2005/06

Chairman
Bob Wilson 9655 1055
Deputy Chairman/Publicity
Rod Withnell 9575 2162
Secretary/Treasurer
Jo Ottaway 9655 3024
Committee:
Bernard McCarthy 95752281
Murray Rudd 9655 1323
Reg Beale 9575 7572
Rob Kestel 9575 2395

New Members for the Stable Fly Action Group Inc are always welcome. Numbers Count!
The aim of the Group is to
develop strategies to solve the stable fly problem
MEMBERSHIP FORM FOR 2005/06
Membership Forms are available from The Secretary on 9655 3024; email kildare1@bigpond. com

... from the SFAG DESK continued

SFAG Chairman and Secretary have been regularly attending LCCA (Lower Coastal Community Associations) meetings and reporting on developments with the stable fly issue to residents and ratepayers in the coast towns and residential areas in the southern part of the Shire.

Severe outbreaks of Stable Flies have recently been reported from cattle properties at Caraban, along Cowalla and Mimigarra Roads, and at Beermullah and Ocean Farms. These infestations have been causing severe distress to cattle, horses and their owners. The SFAG Committee requests all those who experience outbreaks to take photographic and video evidence of the stable fly activity and its deleterious effects on their livestock and lifestyle. Photographic and video evidence could be of assistance in helping effect prosecutions of offenders against the Health (Poultry Manure) Regulations & the Fly Eradication Regulations, which form part of the Health Act of Western Australia 1911. In addition, if those who take photographs and video give their consent, the SFAG would appreciate being able to add them to an updated second edition of the Group's Publicity Package, should this become necessary. Copies of photos and video may be delivered to SFAG Deputy Chairman Rod Withnell, at 3 Weld Street, Gingin 6503. Please mark with your name and address and they will be returned to you.

STICKY FLYCATCHER BOARDS

Stable Flies are attracted to white things. In order to trap stable flies, or to do your own fly counts in places where stable flies proliferate, white fly catcher boards can be used. Any white board will suffice. Paint it with Tac-gel ® (available locally in Gingin) and hang from a fence, clothes line, etc. in direct sunlight. Scrape off trapped flies with a paint scraper, or dispose of board responsibly. Set as many traps as you think necessary.

STOP PRESS! The **GINGIN SHIRE COUNCIL**, at their meeting on 7 March, decided unanimously to support the SFAG Inc in their request for financial assistance with the First Edition of the Group's Publicity Package. The SFAG Committee expresses their appreciation to all COUNCILLORS and STAFF.