

The Advocate

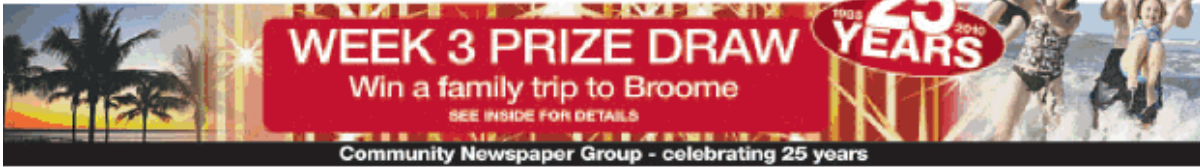
Community

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WEDNESDAY, October 20, 2010

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No flies on new hand

Expert to help swat region's blood-sucking fly epidemic

By JULIAN WRIGHT

THE Shire of Gingin is buzzing with the arrival this month of forensic entomologist David Cook, who is in town until May next year to help drastically reduce the stable fly problem.

Dr Cook, from the University of WA, will spend two days a week for eight months in the area to monitor, inform and educate commercial vegetable growers, livestock owners, farmers and residents about how to reduce the breeding of the blood-sucking flies.

Visits he made earlier this year, in which he discovered a few breeding sites and educated farmers about how to reduce fly numbers, have already made a difference, according to Stable Fly Action Group chairman Bob Wilson.

"I have spoken to farmers close to town and they have indicated, following some work Dr Cook did earlier this year, that there has been a reduction in stable flies," he said.

"I have also noticed a reduction - in October last year I had to lock the animals away in fly-proof cages, but I haven't had to yet."

He said farmers were under-educated about the problem.

"The actions to reduce stable



Fly-control: David Cook has been brought in by the Gingin Shire to help combat the region's stable fly problem. Picture: Martin Kennedy

flies are also voluntary, with no one out there to follow up or implement them," he said.

Dr Cook said the ban of the use of raw poultry manure, which would take effect next year, would make it easier to swat the problem.

"We are not going to eliminate the problem, but I think we will make a huge difference," he said.

He described the stable flies in shires north of Perth as "epidemic".

"This biting fly continues to

have a major impact on livestock production and welfare, health and wellbeing of the residents in the shires of Gingin and cities of Swan and Wanneroo," he said.

"The movement of horticultural industries into traditionally

livestock-based regions has produced an unfortunate combination that favours stable fly breeding throughout most of the year."

Mr Wilson said the group was hoping to get funding to expand Dr Cook's work.

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