



Henley Brook winemaker Alf Edgecombe put a bit of passion into his newest wine creation, which he has made for this year's Swan Valley Midsummer Feast. Full story page 11. Picture: Matthew Poon d272414

A BULLSBROOK vet has warned local horse owners that their animals are in for a nuisance of a time because there is little they can do to relieve them from being bitten by stable flies.

Fiona Lacey, a specialist equine veterinarian who has been working in the area for several years, has backed up locals' claims that this year's stable fly outbreak is one of

the worst. She said horse owners who had not experienced the pest before were now having trouble with the flies.

Last week the *Advocate* reported residents' calls for the City of Swan to take a more pro-active approach to dealing with the flies, saying their animals were suffering.

Allegations that gardeners have illegally carted and used raw poultry manure, which is banned at this time of the year because it is used by stable flies to breed, are still to be

proved. Ms Lacey, who runs as many as 50 horses at one time, said she was one of the horse owners in West Bullsbrook experiencing fly problems for the first time.

"Stable flies are a major irritant and can cause some real problems. They can cause a lot of superficial skin wounds from the horses constantly scratching for relief," she said.

She said the horses also stop eating and lose weight because they get pre-occupied with the flies.

"Stable flies have significant ramifications on horse welfare," Ms Lacey said.

"There is little that vets or horse owners can do.

"I am yet to find any fly spray that works efficiently. Lightweight sheets can offer horses some relief by protecting their bodies, but they still get bitten on the legs.

"If the flies are extremely bad, stable shelter can help but other than that there is not much you can do for them, it is very difficult."