

SFAG CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – 2007

I feel that 2007 has been a year of consolidation for the SFAG. Some of the hard work and background pressure has finally started to bear fruit.

Firstly, we have seen May taken out of the allowable period for the spreading of Raw Poultry Manure in the relevant Shires.

And, we only have four more seasons before RPM will be totally banned from use.

Secondly, we have seen the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management (BAM) Bill move closer to adoption by the parliament. As we have discussed before, this bill has very important ramifications for the Stable Fly problem.

Our initial request was that Stable Fly be listed as a Declared Pest. However, following explanation by Richard Walker and Bob Paulin from DAFWA, we accepted a revised position that SF be controlled using a Code of Practice that would be put forward by the Vegetable Industry, and that would be regulated and enforced under the BAM bill regulations. Our main emphasis this coming year will be to make sure that the Bill will include enough 'teeth' to enforce the Code of Practice.

Richard will explain this position in more detail later this evening.

The year 2007 did not start in a positive manner though, with three outbreaks of SF occurring. One in the South of the Shire, one in the North and the other in the middle. On both outbreaks on the west of the shire the problem was found to be caused by rotting vegetable material, rather than the use of RPM. (The cause of the third outbreak is unsure). The concern for nearby ratepayers was that the Vege Farmers in the south of the shire had thought that their hygiene practices were sound enough to not allow breeding of SF, but it was found that they weren't.

In the North of the shire however, this vege farmer was blatantly using practices that were known to cause the breeding of SF, but still persisted. It was only the combination of the aerial surveillance by the Gingin Shire and the persistence of the Health Officer from the Dandaragan Shire that led to this practice being uncovered and halted.

Unfortunately, due to the current regulations, this producer was not able to be given a fine, although he was issued with an infringement notice, which means that any future infraction by this business can incur an immediate penalty.

The season of 2007 also saw the partially composted product Formula 90 being banned from use until it was improved enough to prevent SF breeding in it. This was disappointing for both the Vege Growers and the SFAG, as we had hoped that this product would provide a cheap alternative to the use of RPM..... But it wasn't to be.

The SFAG committee and some of our members manned a display at the Gingin Horticultural EXPO, which was a very successful undertaking. Thanks go to those helpers.

The SFAG also joined with Mr Dave Peckitt in presenting the SF issues to the Dandaragan Shire, and we thank Dave for his efforts. As mentioned in our Newsletter, we hope to carry out a similar presentation to the Swan Shire in the coming year.

We had some notable guests to various meetings during the year, including:

- Mr Shane Clifton, to discuss and display graphic photos of SF breeding in Vegetable waste.
- Dr Dirk Boelsenbroek to discuss the animal welfare ramifications of SF Breeding in the Gingin Shire.
- Mr David Lloyd to discuss the alliance of the SFAG and the Horse Council of WA to help overcome the SF menace.
- Mr John Chamberlain to present the potential of his new product "Cocky Smart" as a way to alleviate the suffering of animals from SF.
- Mr Bob Paulin and Mr Richard Walker from DAFWA to discuss the BAM bill.

We also continued to lobby, and receive support from a number of State politicians. These include Mr Kim Chance MLC and Mr Gary Snook MLA, who continue to support our efforts to keep the Stable Fly issue in the political arena.

We have recently received a letter from The Chief of Staff of the Min for Planning and Infrastructure that brings us up to date with the position of the Chicken Litter Power generation proposal at Muchea. Basically, there has still been no decision made, but there are moves to investigate alternative means of disposal of the litter. This could still involve some form of power generation, as well as the production of a product called 'Agrichar'. No doubt we will hear more of this in the year to come.

We also acknowledge the support we receive from a small group of effected ratepayers in the Swan Shire, and we hope that we can continue to assist them in the future.

I'm sure all members of the SFAG would join me in sending our best wishes to Reg Beale for the sad loss of his wife just a couple of months ago.

And (nearly) finally, a thankyou to the Shire of Gingin, and especially Mr Wayne Harris for your support during the year. Keep up the good work.....

But of course I couldn't let this opportunity go by without a special thanks to our hard working and professional secretary, Mrs Jo Ottaway, and a huge thankyou also to the dedicated members of our Committee. Your dedication to duty has been tremendous, and on behalf of all the members of the SFAG, we salute you.

Bob Wilson
President