

SFAG CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – 2009

Fourth Report:

This is my fourth report as Chair of SFAG, but unlike other reports, this time I finish the year with a fair degree of confidence that the 2011 Ban on the use of RPM in Horticulture, in the designated shires, will definitely go ahead.

However, I have to say, that despite all the great lobbying efforts by the SFAG, in the end it will probably take place because a Federal politician has drawn 'The powers that be's attention to a serious nitrate problem in the Perth watertable. And because the cause of this nitrate leaching seems to be the storage and use of RPM, it looks like the State Government will definitely enforce the 2011 deadline. (There was even talk of this deadline being brought forward to 2010, but with our experience of government and the bureaucracy that surrounds it, I would guess that there is little chance of that occurring).

The Hard Working Committee:

What a sensational committee this one is. Meeting regularly nearly every month, and when extra meetings are needed to produce background documents for the minister for Ag.....no problems!

To give you an idea of the work undertaken by your committee I would like to give an abbreviated look at the last 12 months of SFAG happenings, on top of regular monthly meetings.....

Oct 08:

- Bullsbrook Expo – Display mounted by our Bullsbrook committee members, Anne and Kate.
- SFAG Website up and going – (Thanks Kate)

Nov:

- Notified of deliveries into Wanneroo Shire of RPM. (a number of phone calls with relevant Shire reps, DOH reps and WABGA to follow up)
- WABGA rep (Rob Kestel) attends monthly meeting to discuss issue.

Dec:

- Bad SF outbreaks in three areas of the Shire.

Jan 09:

- Bad SF outbreaks continue.
- SFAG reps meet with GG EHO and Ranger onsite at Caraban (distressing sight of animals being tormented, including pet emu which later dies)
- Ranger discovers fly breeding in rotting watermelons

March:

- GG Shire discovers fly breeding in rotting carrots
- Local GG feedlot causing problems
- Many members of SFAG committee attend Bullsbrook Fair to promote awareness of SF issues in that shire.
- Extra 'Between' monthly meeting attended by Dave Peckitt (DOH) and Simon Frazer (GG Shire CEO) to plan a list of "Desired Outcomes" to be sent to the Min for Ag in the leadup to our meeting with him at Gingin in April.

April (a big month):

- Gingin Expo – attended by all members of committee
- Meeting with Minister for Agriculture (Hon Terry Redman) at GG Shire council chambers. He was shown a 10 minute video of SF torment of Humans and animals. (He reiterated his government's commitment to the 2011 ban on the use of RPM).
- Visit to the GG Abs by Chairman. (They seemed to be making endeavours to overcome the fly issues on site. Which must lead to the question as to why this hadn't happened before now??)
- NITRATES in Carabooda groundwater exposed by Dr Mal Washer MHR.
- SFAG invited by Dr Washer to attend, what was an emotion charged meeting of vegetable growers at Carabooda. (Some growers recognise that their past practices, with over-use of RPM, have led to their water supply being poisoned)

May:

- The Chair and Secretary attended a meeting in Moora of the Biosolids Stakeholder Consultative Forum. Dr David Cook gave a very interesting outline of the work that his team had done, and was intending to do in the future, regarding the monitoring of Fly breeding associated with the Biosolid storage facilities that were being built at Wannamal.

June:

- The SFAG executive team (Anne, Jo and myself) met with Dr Steve Thomas as a follow-up to the GG meeting with the Ag Minister. Dr Thomas informed us that as a consequence of the Nitrate issue in Carabooda the government was definitely going to follow through with the 2011 ban on the use of RPM, and in fact may even bring it about in 2010!!
- An Inter-departmental committee had been formed to discuss the issue (AG / DOH / Environment?)
- Dr Thomas also advised that the strengthening of DoH regulations, with a commensurate increase in penalties, could be a quicker option than the BAM route.....

July:

- Advised of another successful prosecution for fly breeding by the GG Shire (5 out of 5, in the past 18 months)

Aug:

- Advised that the Shire ranger was aware of a number of cases of fly breeding occurring in RPM during the winter period (for the second year running!)
- Advised that Dr Steve Thomas had left the position of advisor to the Min for Ag, and as such, we would have another person to bring up to speed on the SF issue. (an ongoing problem).

Conclusion:

As you can see, it has been another busy year.....

Thanks to our key supporters, the Gingin Shire, with special mention of the endeavours of Mike Kokir in what is a difficult position of Ranger/Health Officer.

Also, during the year the SFAG committee felt it necessary to reward the efforts, above and beyond the call of duty, of Dave Peckitt (DoH).....
We thank you again, and trust you enjoyed your hamper Dave!

And of course, thanks again to the Committee for their enthusiasm for the cause, and as usual, especially to Jo Ottaway, our talented and hardworking secretary.

And finally, thanks to all our members who support us during the year.....Keep those reports of SF's coming in to the Shire!!

