

## SFAG CHAIRMANS REPORT - 2013

In my 2012 Chairman's Report I concluded with the sentence.....

*"Here's hoping that 2013 sees all the promises that have been made actually come to fruition..... and that the coming "fly season" isn't as horrific as the last one."*

Well, as we know, for many people the 2012/13 summer was indeed as bad as the previous season and for some it was their worst fly season on record! (We had notification of new outbreaks at Muchea, Bullsbrook, Beermulla and Jurien Bay, while once again much of Gingin was hit with the Caraban/Woodridge area suffering one of its worst seasons on record.)

However as far as the promises coming to fruition, then at least we have had some genuine progress, which I will discuss as I give you a snapshot of your committee's activities over the previous year.

As you know, the SFAG's power comes from two things.... Our professional lobbying efforts and our professional letter writing. This is indeed a team effort, as we continue to meet every month to plan our strategies, and most of the key letters are drafted with input from at least 3 of our team and sometimes by all our committee.

Following our AGM last year the then Minister for Agriculture, Terry Redman held a press conference at Bogdanich's Farm to officially announced the Declaration of Stable Flies as a Pest (category 3) under the BAM Act.

This was followed a month later by the formation of a RRG (Regulations Reference Group) made up of all the key stakeholders whose job it was to formulate the original Stable Fly Management Plan. Following two meetings, numerous emails and the very capable work of DAFWA's Megan Hevron, this was completed in June this year in time for the end of SF in the Health Act and the commencement of SF coming under the BAM Act.

In April we met with Don Telfer, CEO of the Moora DAFWA office, who had been appointed to coordinate the Implementation phase of the new SF Management Plan (Don will give an outline of his work so far).

The SFAG will continue to work positively with DAFWA to help getting the implementation stage of the MP to be as successful as possible.

On the political front we look forward to the continued support that we have received from many politicians. Some special mentions go to

1. The outgoing Greens member of the upper house, Alison Xamon for her support over the years.
2. Ken Travers and Darren West (ALP) who we met with to make sure that the opposition would continue to support any political moves that involved SF
3. Frank Alban (LIB) for his support over a number of years.
4. Shane Love (NP), also for his support over a period of time now and especially since he successfully retained the seat of Moore for the Nationals. Special thanks for helping organise a meeting with the new Minister for Agriculture's principal policy officer Vern Ferdinands
5. We also look forward to continued support from our local Gingin lad Martin Aldridge who is now a National Party member of the Upper House in state parliament.

While all the planning around the BAM act has been going on some areas of the state have been suffering terrible outbreaks of SF. The residents of the area around

Carabanand Woodridge organised a letter and petition to be sent to both the Coles and Woolworths supermarket chains informing them of the effects that poor vegetable waste management practices had in the breeding of SF's and requesting that these companies include vegetable waste management in their QA programs.

The response by both companies to this request has been extremely positive, with the Coles team quite quickly organising a meeting with some locals to discuss the problem. We look forward to seeing if the pressure that these major purchasers can exert will have an effect in reducing fly numbers.

Although the SFAG committee have been involved in this process we acknowledge the excellent initiative of "the Caraban Crew" for making this happen. Well Done!

Also during the year we have had regular updates from Dr David Cook as to how the research program has been progressing and I look forward to another overview tonight.... I thank David for his diligence with this research but also for his often 'out of hours' work with identifying sources of SF breeding around the zone.

It is to be hoped that Dave has been able to adequately train a number of rangers and DAFWA inspectors so that the pressure can be taken off his own broad shoulders...

I would also like to conclude with 3 issues that give the SFAG cause for concern....

1. The potential establishment of a huge (350,000 bird) "free range" egg farm in the heart of SF country on Cowalla Rd. We do not know whether the RPM produced by this facility will cause any SF breeding but we were dismayed to learn that the EPA was not even going to conduct an official assessment of the project. We certainly hope that the Shire will enact and enforce a stringent Environmental Management Plan.
2. Around the time of the changeover from the Health Act to the BAM Act it appears some transport contractors took it upon themselves to deliver RPM to vegetable farmers with the excuse that they thought the total ban had come to an end!! Fortunately in one case the City of Swan acted decisively and insisted that the transporter load and cart the offending material away. (We wonder how many other deliveries took place during that period that weren't discovered.....)
3. It was interesting and also distressing to be contacted via our SFAG website by a researcher in Brazil who sent videos of some of their cattle being tormented by SF. (There has been some discussion about who will volunteer to travel to Brazil to advise them how to establish a SFAG!! Unfortunately I don't think we will get a government grant from the new gov't for that one.....)

Finally I would like to acknowledge, again, the diligence, enthusiasm and professionalism of the whole SFAG committee, especially our secretary Jo Ottaway, our web mistress Anne Sibbel, and our Newsletter design guru Kate Goh.

The administrative processes are now in place, let's hope they will now make a difference to the on-ground fly breeding.....

And finally, I cannot let the opportunity go by to pass on our very best wishes to Ian McPharlin, the father of one of the leaders of the Fremantle Football Team. Please convey our support to the lads as they go about securing their first AFL Flag.....  
**GO DOCKERS!!**