

## SFAG CHAIRMANS REPORT – 2017

This report will be relatively short due to the time that everyone has spent already listening to Stable Fly issues at our very successful Symposium. Your committee decided to hold the Symposium to bring to you some of the latest scientific information on SF's from around the world. I hope you have found the presentations of interest, and I once again thank Dr Dave Taylor from the USDA and Dr Dave Cook from DPIRD (and of course Don Telfer from DPIRD for making it all possible).

The 2016/17 season was a particularly frustrating season in many ways

- The promised support from DAFWA with a full time inspector just didn't eventuate as a number of inspectors were employed and subsequently resigned.
- The head of the SF program at DAFWA Don Telfer, as well as the compliance officer Paul Cassidy were seconded off to the Tomato Potato Psyllid outbreak. Obviously this couldn't have been foreseen but it was frustrating nonetheless.
- As the season progressed it became clear that some areas were experiencing SF numbers as bad or worse than ever
- The research carried out by Dr Cook on the potential of the Spalangia Wasp as a biological control agent showed a poor outcome which was very disappointing.
- However, on a positive note for the future, we welcome the recent appointment of Bevan Wooldridge as the new inspector and look forward to working with him.

Over the past year your committee has continued to meet on a regular basis to advance the cause of the control of SF. To this end we arranged, with the help of our local member Shane Love, a meeting with the new Primary Industry minister Alannah McTiernan. Once again your committee has the task of informing and educating a new minister on the details of the SF problem. BTW - The new minister is the 6<sup>th</sup> new Ag minister that we have given a presentation to about SF since the formation of the SFAG.

The Chair and secretary attended an information session held by the Dandaragan Shire Council and presented along with Dr Cook and Don Telfer. This was an interesting and well attended meeting as many councillors and ratepayers are concerned about the numbers of SF increasing in their area with the influx of RPM. Storage issues seemed to be causing the problems.... The council was also concerned about the potential increase of SF if the horticultural industry increased in the shire and was keen to investigate the pros and cons of joining the SF Management Plan under the BAM Act.

Your committee has also commenced working with the science communication unit at UWA to try and get a history of the SF story recorded for future posterity. Three students took on the task of preparing an initial report to SFAG on how this could be achieved. Our collaboration with students under the guidance of Professor Ann Grand will continue and we thank them for their efforts so far.

Your committee continue to publish the Newsletter of the SFAG which showcases to our members the latest research and news concerning SF's. Committee member Peter Jones has taken on the task of editing this publication and we thank him for that. A new computer has been purchased to assist with this task.

We recently paid a second visit to the Composting business of Garden Organics on Aurisch Rd. Your committee is very supportive of the potential for RPM to be added into an excellent compost product and we wish Donovan Farrell and his business well.

Representatives from your committee continue to attend the twice yearly Regulatory Reference Group meetings held at South Perth to push the interests of livestock owners within the SF Management Plan under the BAM Act. The Management Plan has been amended a number of times as more up to date research findings have emerged. To date most of the changes have affected the way the horticultural industry handles their post-harvest waste. However, one issue that is being currently discussed is the relaxation of the use of RPM in non-irrigated pasture and cropping situations within the current banned LGAs.

Although the science has not shown any problems with SF breeding under this scenario, your committee has grave concerns about the storage of the product before it is spread on-farm. We will be pushing for a register of all delivery destination sites so they can be monitored for good practice, or quickly attended by inspectors if there is an outbreak of SF in that area.

As a group we have always said that we will support practices that are supported by good science but we will also scrutinise the whole process to protect our members as best we can.

Your committee appreciates the support that we have enjoyed for many years from the Gingin Shire and thank them for the extra inspectors that have been trained and again acknowledge the excellent SF Brochure that they send out to ratepayers. We are also very appreciative of the ongoing support the shire provides in part-funding our insurance bill. We were somewhat surprised to hear of the resignation of Sam Camillo and wish him well in the future. We look forward to working closely with Lisa Edwards and Bob Kelly in the future.

I'll just quickly take this opportunity to once again thank the committee for the selfless effort they put in to trying to alleviate the suffering of all our animals and ourselves.... Well Done!

Finally, it is with deep regret that we recently learnt of the death of one of our committee stalwarts in John Longman. John has been on our committee for many years promoting the Stable Fly issue across the broader mid-west region. John was originally drawn to our committee because of his concern with potential SF breeding in Biosolids but spread his focus as more reports of SF issues came to light across the Moora and Victoria Plains shires.

It gave our committee great pleasure to be able to present John with (and I quote from the excellent article that appeared in the Northern Valley Newspaper written by none other than our committeeman Peter Jones) "a Certificate of Appreciation from the SFAG in recognition of his outstanding contribution in helping communities affected by stable flies"

As Dr Cook so eloquently said.... John "Biscuits" Longman will be missed by us all.....

