



# SFAG RAG

## NEWSLETTER OF

# THE STABLE FLY ACTION GROUP INC.

MAY 2009, ISSUE 11



### MEETING WITH MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, HON T REDMAN MLA

On 21 April the Minister for Agriculture, Hon Terry Redman MLA and his Principal Policy Adviser Dr Steve Thomas met with the SFAG Committee at the Shire of Gingin Council Chambers. Also invited to attend and have input into the discussion were Shire President Cr Wayne Fewster; CEO Simon Fraser; PEHO Wayne Harris; City of Wanneroo Co-ordinator of Health Services Suha Ali; Jim Dodds, Director of Environmental Health, DOH; Shannon Farmer from Caraban; and long time stalwarts Bob Paulin (DAFWA) and Dave Peckitt (DOH).

### Video presentation and Handout

A 10 minute video presentation of the graphic impact of stable fly infestation of livestock, wildlife and humans, and examples of fly breeding in RPM and vegetable crop waste, which was shown after the introductions had taken place was prepared for the meeting. This short video can now be viewed on the SFAG website.

The Committee also produced a new Info Sheet with updated graphic colour photographs of stable fly effects on animals and examples of breeding grounds, which formed part of the agenda package for each attendee.

### Total RPM Ban by 2011

Minister Redman assured the gathering that the State Government was still committed to the total ban on the use of RPM on land by December 2011. This assurance is a positive statement, however the matter of safe disposal of 200,000 tonnes of raw poultry manure created by the poultry industry annually remains a vexing issue, and solutions have yet to be found.

The Health Department representatives advised that the Health Act is being revised and its emphasis will be on human health. The stable fly problem is seen as an agricultural and/or environmental issue. The present fly eradication and poultry manure regulations, which are under the Health Act, are outdated and new updated legislation and regulations, including increased penalties, are required to adequately address stable fly breeding.

Shire of Gingin representatives CEO Simon Fraser and PEHO Wayne Harris actively participated in the meeting, recommending various strategies to make implementation of the regulations more efficient for Shire Officers. They confirmed the Shire's commitment to 'good governance' on behalf of its residents and would continue to commit time and resources to the stable fly effort.

Suhi Ali, the City of Wanneroo representative, spoke of the difficulties in obtaining successful prosecutions for offenders as proof was very difficult to obtain.

Outcomes of the meeting were

-  Confirmation from the government for the total ban of RPM in 2011
-  Strengthening of the VWA Good Practice Management of Manures and Vegetable Crops Residue and legislating to make it enforceable
-  Updating of the Regulations pertaining to use of rpm and fly breeding
-  determining which government department will be taking responsibility for the stable fly issue into the future

The SFAG Executive will be meeting with Dr Thomas as soon as can be arranged to further discussions on how these outcomes can be implemented.

Closing the meeting, SFAG Chairman Bob Wilson extended a special vote of thanks to the Shire of Gingin for offering the use of the Council Chamber, providing the excellent lunch, and for their longstanding and continuing commitment of time, staff and resources to the stable fly problem.

## **RAW POULTRY MANURE (RPM) – DELIVERY, STORAGE AND OWNERSHIP**

At the request of the SFAG Committee, Rob Kestel, Vice President, WA Broiler Growers Association (WABGA) attended the November 2008 meeting of the Committee to discuss out-of-season delivery and storage of RPM in the Shire of Wanneroo. Rob advised that transport contractors who cart RPM from the poultry sheds, of which there are currently only two, assume ownership of the RPM (mixed with sawdust) when it leaves the sheds. It is the responsibility of the poultry grower to remind their transport contractor that the RPM must be transported only to a licensed outlet during the banned period.

WABGA and the SFAG Committee will to continue to work collaboratively on the related problems of inappropriate disposal of RPM and stable fly breeding.

As a result of these deliveries of RPM during the banned period, The City of Wanneroo initiated legal proceedings against persons found to be illegally storing RPM on properties in their Shire, which are still continuing.

## **RANDOM MONITORING OF HORTICULTURAL PROPERTIES**

### **Increased stable fly activity over the summer**

In December 2008, as a result of greatly increased stable fly activity in a number of localities within the Shire of Gingin, the SFAG Committee wrote to the Shire requesting more time, and money, be allocated to the Shire Pest Control Officer (PCO) for random monitoring of horticultural properties to identify hot spots and

try to prevent outbreaks from occurring. Shire PEHO Wayne Harris attended the January meeting of the Committee, agreed there had been a large increase in infestations over the summer, and acknowledged Shire officers could have been more proactive and should keep up their surveillance whether or not complaints have been received. The Shire has agreed to consider the allocation of more hours for monitoring at their budget meeting in July.

### **Vegetable Crop Waste**

Wayne reported that the Shire's recent successful prosecutions regarding RPM appear to be having the desired effect, but poorly managed vegetable crop waste was now the major source of fly breeding in the Shire of Gingin. Over the summer, two properties with discarded watermelons rotting in the sun were the cause of two significant outbreaks, and a large pit of dumped, rotting carrots was responsible for another.

### **Prosecutions**

Prosecution for breach of the Health (Poultry Manure) Regulations is fairly straightforward, but initiation of prosecutions under the Health (Fly Eradication) Regulations is much more difficult, as a notice must firstly be issued, and if the offender complies with the notice, the problem is seen to have been rectified.



### **Pictures;**

*Fly larvae in carrots (top left) and watermelon (top right).  
Fly pupae casings in rotting carrot dump (bottom).*

## CARABOODA – DOWN AMONGST THE VEGETABLE GARDENS

At the invitation of Federal Liberal MP Mal Washer, SFAG Chairman Bob, Secretary Jo, and Committee members Kate and Anne attended a large gathering of market gardeners at a property on Karoborup Road, Carabooda on 24 April. Federal Member for Pearce, Judy Moylan, was also present, along with Murray Nixon (past Upper-house member of State parliament) and Jim Chown (newly elected Upper-house member of State parliament)

The gathering had been convened to discuss the discovery of dangerous levels of nitrates in Carabooda's bore water - which has received widespread publicity recently in the media - and is being caused by RPM being applied or stored on the land and leaching into the groundwater, resulting in potentially serious human health issues.

This was a very interesting afternoon, with 'lively discussion', and SFAG Committee members used the opportunity to meet and network with professional growers and hear their views on RPM use and abuse (including it being used out of season), crop waste management, and ideas for composting.

It was generally acknowledged by the meeting that a minority of growers were doing the wrong thing (ie storing out-of-season, without a hardstand, and spreading out-of-season) that was causing problems in Carabooda for the majority that were doing the right thing.

It was very interesting for us to hear the passion with which some speakers acknowledged that past over-use of RPM had "poisoned their farm"!

The meeting agreed that Mal Washer would coordinate a committee of growers to lobby the government on the issues that are concerning them. We wish him well in his endeavours ...

## Manure 'poisoning bore water'

Article in *The West Australian* 16th March 2009

## CARABAN VISIT - AND ITS OUTCOMES

On 9 January SFAG Chairman Bob Wilson and Committee Member Bernard McCarthy attended Mrs Kay King-Farmer's property at Caraban as a result of her report to the SFAG Committee of a severe stable fly infestation. Cattle and a pet emu (which subsequently died) were being relentlessly affected, and photos and video were taken. Also in attendance were the property owners, and PEHO Wayne Harris and PCO Mike Kokir.

It was resolved at this site meeting to investigate the possibility of removal of Shire planning consent for horticulturalists who consistently fail to comply with the Regulations.

As a result of SFAG Committee discussions with the Shire CEO, Planning Officer and PEHO, and Council deliberations, the Shire of Gingin has agreed that all future Applications for Planning Approval that may be presented to the Shire of Gingin for a proposal that has the potential to breed stable flies should contain an Advice Note, warning applicants of their civic and legal responsibilities under the Poultry Manure and Fly Breeding legislation.

### The SFAG COMMITTEE is...



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# SFAG IS NOW ONLINE!

[www.stableflyactiongroup.org.au](http://www.stableflyactiongroup.org.au)

## BULLSBROOK FAIR

On 28 March the SFAG Committee conducted a display at Pickett Park, Bullsbrook as part of the Bullsbrook Playgroup Community Fair. Your committee has become quite adept at erecting the SFAG tent and flying the SFAG flag at these types of events. As well as signing up new Bullsbrook members, the Fair gave the Committee the opportunity to raise awareness of the stable fly issue with Hon Frank Alban, Member for Swan Hills, and to lobby him to lend his support to the total ban on RPM by 2011, finding solutions to the safe disposal of RPM, and the upgrading of the Regulations to include heavier fines for offenders.



## GINGIN EXPO 09

As we have for the last three years, your Committee once again erected the tent and display at the Gingin Expo on 18 April. Although the weather presented a challenge, with thunderstorms and rain all day, a lot of people came through the tent to look at the display and, as usual, more members were signed up.



## NEW COMPLAINTS FORM

As a result of a suggestion from SFAG member Mike Agnew, the Shire of Gingin Complaints Form has been updated. It now shows more detailed information, such as allowing residents to submit information on long term fly outbreaks on one form. The new form can be found on the SFAG website at [www.stableflyactiongroup.org.au](http://www.stableflyactiongroup.org.au)

Please use this new form when making your complaints regarding stable fly infestations to your local Shire.

## KEEP REPORTING YOUR FLIES!

Also please remember that if you report having stable flies in one month and they are still there next month you need to report them again, otherwise the Shire thinks they have gone, and record that month as being fly free.



## Shire Contact details

### Shire of Gingin



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