



SFAG RAG

NEWSLETTER OF

THE STABLE FLY ACTION GROUP INC.

MAY 2010, ISSUE 13



PREMIER'S VISIT TO GINGIN 5 FEBRUARY 2010

On Friday 5 February 2010, the Premier of Western Australia, Hon Colin Barnett MLA, attended a Forum at Gingin organised by the Gingin Branch of the Liberal Party. The Forum was well attended by members of the community, including SFAG Chairman Bob Wilson, Deputy Chairman Anne Sibbel and Secretary Jo Ottaway. After a short address, the Premier responded to questions from the floor on a wide variety of issues of concern.

Your Committee had prepared two Questions on Notice, which had been sent to the Premiers Office during the previous week. The Questions were :

1. Will the Premier guarantee that the September 2011 total ban on the use of raw poultry manure in horticulture will be implemented on time, as promised by the current Minister for Agriculture on 21 April 2009?
2. Will the Premier, as a matter of urgency, commit to putting in place substantially increased penalties for fly breeding within the existing Poultry Manure and Fly Breeding Regulations that will be sufficient to deter offenders?

Attached to the Questions on Notice was a copy of the Executive Summary of the SFMSG Report, which gave the background of the stable fly problem and the key findings and recommendations of the Steering Group, so the Premier was properly informed.



The Premier responded very favourably at the Forum to Question 1, stating unequivocally that the 2011 total ban would take place on time,

and acknowledging that there are difficulties regarding which government department will be responsible for its implementation, and also for the upgrading of the Regulations. If these difficulties cannot be resolved, he stated that a new Act of Parliament will need to be written to solve the problem.

Despite follow up correspondence between the Committee and the Premier, and the Head of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the committee remains frustrated as to how these measures will be implemented. In view of this, steps have been taken to have specific questions asked in State Parliament. Copies of the letters received and questions asked in parliament can be found on the SFAG website www.stableflyactiongroup.org.au.

Time is of the essence, as 2010 is nearly half over, and these reforms need to be urgently put in place to be ready for the September 2011 deadline.

DEPUTATION TO SHIRE OF GINGIN

On 20 April SFAG Chairman, along with forensic entomologist from UWA Dr Cook and his colleague from UWA Professor Ian Dadour, made a deputation to the Shire of Gingin Council for Dr Cook to be employed as a visiting specialist consultant for 4 – 8 days during the month of May while Shire PCO Mike Kokir is on annual leave. Acting CEO David Burt attended the Committee's 27 April meeting, at which he advised this had been approved by the Council, and the Committee expressed their appreciation for the support received from the Shire.

It was also requested at the deputation that Dr Cook be contracted to assist Shire staff during the three months of November, December and January – for a trial – when the PCO is called to attend other ranger duties during the holiday season.



DR DAVID COOK CONSULTANCY SHIRE OF GINGIN

During February, the Shire of Gingin approved money from the stable fly budget for Dr David Cook to do several days stable fly field consultancy work for the Shire. Dr Cook started on 24 February, and was accompanied by SFAG Chairman Bob Wilson, PCO M Kokir, and independent consultant M Guthrie. The work involved planning, gathering information, systematic search of properties and creating a database.

The scientific results of Dr Cook's initial work reveal unequivocally that there is clearly an issue with crop residues. Dr Cook wrote in *The Biter*, Issue 6 :

“Stable flies were the ONLY fly species developing from rotting eggplant, pig manure and sand mix, and rotting lawn clippings, and were by far the most prevalent fly species developing from rotting rockmelons, lettuce and capsicums.”

Copy of *The Biter*, produced by the Centre for Forensic Science at UWA, is attached for your interest, or can be downloaded from the SFAG web site.

During May Dr Cook has been employed by the Shire to do stable fly inspection while PCO/Ranger M Kokir is on annual leave.



THANKS BERNIE!

At the April meeting, the Committee accepted the resignation of inaugural SFAG Committee member Bernard McCarthy. The dedicated commitment to the stable fly effort that Bernie has made on behalf of the community is acknowledged, and greatly appreciated.

The SFAG COMMITTEE is...

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STABLE FLIES AND DISEASE TRANSMISSION

by Dr David Cook

Stable flies can potentially transmit a number of diseases to livestock and to a lesser extent humans as well as being the intermediate hosts of several species of nematode worms, which affect cattle and horses. Stable flies are persistent biters, feeding on animals several times a day. The stable fly bite causes a sharp pain as it quickly draws blood and engorges itself in a few minutes. The fly often punctures the skin several times before drawing blood. They feed and take a blood meal that is estimated to be up to 3 times the body weight of the fly. Because animals react to their annoying bite, their feeding is often interrupted, hence there is an increased chance that the flies will move and feed on another animal, and hence have the opportunity to transmit pathogens. The flies have two distinct peaks of biting activity in the warmer months, one in the morning and one in the late afternoon.

Stable flies and houseflies have been implicated in the transmission of a range of diseases, which affect humans and livestock. The table opposite lists diseases of humans and livestock that have been linked with stable flies in either field or laboratory experiments (those diseases that occur in Australia are indicated with an asterisk). Disease organisms can either be transmitted (i) mechanically by disease particles adhering to the flies mouthparts after feeding and/or their cuticle (outer hard skeleton) and many hairs, or (ii) by remaining viable in the flies crop (pre-stomach) and gut where the organism is regurgitated in subsequent feeding bouts. Some diseases can remain in the fly for a considerable period of time and be capable of being transmitted to uninfected hosts. For example, a strain of Streptococcal bacteria can be transmitted by the stable fly for up to 14 days following an infective meal. Certain diseases can persist in the larval stage of the fly, through the dormant pupal phase and still remain infective in feeding by the emerging adult fly. On the other hand some disease organisms only have a short period of survival (only 3 hours in the case of Potomac horse

fever), in particular when they are adhered to the mouthparts of the fly itself as opposed to being ingested into the crop of the fly.

Table 1.

Known diseases of humans and livestock that have been transmitted by either stable flies or house flies in either field or laboratory experiments (those diseases that occur in Australia are indicated with an asterisk)¹.

LIVESTOCK	SF	HF
Eperythrozoonosis (swine) *	✓	
Equine Infectious Anemia *	✓	
Pink Eye*	✓	
Pasteurellosis*	✓	✓
Brucellosis*	✓	✓
Bovine Mastitis*		✓
Anthrax*		✓
Arbovirus	✓	
African Horse Sickness	✓	
Surra	✓	
Rinderpest	✓	✓
Swine Fever	✓	✓
Lumpy Skin Disease	✓	
Campylobacteriosis		✓
C. Pseudotuberculosis	✓ ?	✓
HUMANS	SF	HF
Streptococcal*	✓	✓
Enterobacter*	✓	
Tuberculosis*		✓
Amoebic Dysentery*		✓
Helminths*	✓	✓
HIV*	✓	
Anthrax*	✓	✓
Leprosy	✓	✓
Recurrent Fever	✓	✓
Yaws		✓

¹For copies of relevant articles please contact Dr David Cook via email david.cook@uwa.edu.au



BULLSBROOK FAIR & GINGIN EXPO

The Committee once again conducted a display at both the Bullsbrook Fair and Gingin Expo, and Committee member Reg Beale represented the SFAG at the Chittering Expo. The SFAG was very pleased with the support offered by Hon Judi Moylan, Federal Member for Pearce.



DR DAVID COOK (MAGGOT MAN!) JOINS COMMITTEE



At the April meeting, at the invitation of the Committee members, Dr David Cook was co-opted onto the SFAG Committee. David has had a very long association with the stable fly problem, being one of the professional team involved in the initial scientific study of stable fly breeding in Western Australia, the results of which were used in the compilation of the SFMSG Report in 1998. His present work of identifying breeding grounds, and educating and encouraging growers in best practice, is immensely valuable to the stable fly effort. The Committee is most appreciative of his efforts, as well as his great sense of humour!

BAM ACT NO LONGER AN OPTION

On 11 March Committee member Reg Beale attended a workshop at Moora for community input into the BAM Act. Despite his best efforts, Reg was unsuccessful in persuading DAFWA of the importance of the stable fly issue and its relevance to the BAM Act and Regulations.

The Committee has since been advised by the Chairman of the Interdepartmental Working Group, Eric Wright, that resolving the issues causing the stable fly problem will remain the responsibility of the Department of Health.

ASAMETHIPHOS TRIALS

At the February meeting the Committee decided not to trial the chemical Asamethiphos, as it was a surface spray, rather than one that could be applied directly to animals, and was intended to be used in indoor situations, such as stables, barns, etc. which was not appropriate for Australian livestock management conditions.

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.

Download the complaints form from the SFAG website www.stableflyactiongroup.org.au

Shire Contact details

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