

# final thoughts...

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



Issue  
17

# sfag rag



Newsletter of the Stable Fly Action Group, November 2012

## Local Council

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2012 >>>

## The SFAG Committee

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Friday 26 October 2012 will long be remembered in SFAG circles as the day Hon Terry Redman MLA, Minister for Agriculture & Food, announced stable flies as a Declared Pest under the BioSecurity & Agricultural Management (BAM) Act, thus setting the stage for tighter controls on stable fly breeding and creating an opportunity for higher penalties for offenders against the legislation, providing a deterrent.

Mr Redman made the public announcement at Bogdanich Farms, cnr Cowalla Rd and Gingin Brook Rd in the company of state politicians, local government staff, the VWA, growers, SFAG members and community representatives. SFAG Chairman Bob Wilson invited Mrs Maureen Dobra president of VWA to give an introductory address. Following her positive statements, Bob then thanked the Minister for honouring the promise he made at the public meeting at Woodridge to do something about the stable fly problem. He also mentioned that this was the culmination of over 20 years of lobbying by many people who have been affected by this scourge for many years.

Stable Flies as a Declared Pest under the BAM Legislation will come under Category C : Management. This means eradication of the declared pest from an area or part of an area for which it is declared is not feasible but that management of the pest should occur, and that a Management Plan will be developed in

consultation with all stakeholders. To this end, a Regulatory Reference Group (RRG) has been set up by the Department of Agriculture & Food (DAFWA) and two representatives from the SFAG Committee have been invited to form part of the Group. SFAG Chairman Bob Wilson will be on the RRG with Secretary Jo Ottaway and Committee member Anne Sibbel sharing the second position.

**The first meeting of the RRG took place on 13 November at the Department's headquarters in South Perth. Attendees went through the first draft of the Management Plan, and although there are a lot of issues to work through and reach agreement on, the spirit of this first meeting was very positive.**

The area to which the Declaration and Management Plan will apply is the 12 local government areas covered by the current Health Regulations. The practices to be followed under the Plan concern horticulture, intensive animal industries and commercial and domestic composting.

Having stable flies declared under the BAM Act is regarded by the SFAG Committee as a major achievement, and is the result of seven years of lobbying politicians for legislative reform. The Group is committed to continuing to work together with all stakeholders likely to be affected.



From left to right  
Ian Rotheram, Hon Grant Woodhams MLA,  
Maureen Dobra (President VWA), Ian  
McPharlin (DAFWA), Hon Terry Redman  
MLA, Mike Aspinall (Gingin Shire  
President), Dr David Cook (UWA).

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

Don't forget to visit our new look website for updated information, press releases, Dr Cook's scientific reports, new membership forms, membership renewal forms for 2012/13, etc.



## A reminder...

Green membership renewal form is attached for those members who have not renewed their membership for 2012/13. Your membership is valued and important. Forms can also be downloaded from the SFAG website [www.stableflyactiongroup.org.au](http://www.stableflyactiongroup.org.au) . Please remember if you pay by direct deposit to the SFAG's bank account, use your name as a reference.

## New Research Project

The Department of Food & Agriculture (DAFWA) are looking at a new and novel approach to stable fly control thanks to a new project funded by Horticulture Australia, which provides matching funds to the financial support provided by 8 local government shires mostly affected by this fly, as well as the vegetable industry (vegetablesWA).

Project leader Dr Ian McPharlin (Horticultural Development Officer, DAFWA) together with entomologist Dr David Cook (UWA) have embarked on a new approach to minimise stable fly breeding in rotting vegetable crop residues.

One of the keys to stable fly management in vegetable crop residues is getting the organic matter (OM) broken down as quickly as possible to both a) reduce the potential for stable flies to develop in the material, and b) decrease the time to next planting. Enhanced biodegradation of vegetable crop residue after harvest will be tested using OM bio-accelerants applied to vegetable crop residues (leaves, stalks, roots and heads) left after harvest is complete. This will be compared with current best management practices where unharvested residues are mulched, sprayed with insecticide, left to dry on the soil surface, and then incorporated into the soil.

Two commercial products that accelerate OM breakdown show further promise in their application as they may alter the microbial populations that breakdown rotting crop residues in

such a way that stable flies are either: (i) not attracted to lay eggs on this material, or (ii) unable to develop their larvae or maggots on this material. These products boost the numbers of beneficial microorganisms (bacteria and fungi) in soil, many of which are deleterious to the growth and survival of fly larvae.

In simple terms, this project is looking at manipulating the microbial environment within rotting vegetable crop residues in such a way that stable flies won't utilize them to continue their life cycle. In addition, the crop residues will be broken down more rapidly with the use of these bioaccelerants that will boost the beneficial microbes in the soil, suppress root diseases and soil pathogens, as well as improve nutrient recycling and soil structure.

This represents a new and exciting method of significantly reducing this pest fly using products that are highly beneficial to the health of our soils and represent a potential win-win situation for vegetable growers and those who continue to be affected by the stable fly. Large scale field trials have commenced this November to determine the impact these bioaccelerants have on stable fly development and the rate of VM breakdown in rotting crop residues.



Figure 1. Large amounts of leaves, stalks and reject produce are left after harvesting brassica crops (LHS), which allow stable flies to develop in the rotting material. Bio-accelerants of organic matter breakdown both speed up and alter the microbial environment in rotting vegetable matter such as Silverbeet (RHS), which may provide a way to suppress stable fly development.

## Merry Christmas

*From all of us at SFAG...  
we wish you a safe, happy and fly free Christmas and New Year.*

