



THE SFAG RAG

NEWSLETTER OF

THE STABLE FLY ACTION GROUP INC

DECEMBER 2005



In the October 2005 edition of THE SFAG RAG we reported that your Executive Committee had met with Hon Kim Chance MLC, Minister for Agriculture & Forestry; MidWest and Wheatbelt, to bring to his attention the stable fly problem in our district. The SFAG received a very good hearing from the Minister, and he has committed to resolving the problem. He will be meeting with the Director of Environmental Health, Mr Jim Dodds, on 20 December to discuss changing the regulations that manage the current use of raw poultry manure. He will then formally meet with representatives of the Vegetable Growers Association and advise the SFAG of the outcomes. His intent is to progress the matter as quickly as possible, and hopefully the next edition of THE SFAG RAG, early in 2006, will contain some good news on this front.

In the meantime the SFAG Committee has written to the Shadow Ministers for Agriculture, Health and Environment to keep them up to date with the Ministers progress, and asking for their support for any changes to the legislation that will alleviate the situation. Hon Gary Snook, Member for Moore and our Member of Parliament, is taking a keen interest in the stable fly issue and has asked to be kept in the loop and up to date with developments, as has the Shadow Minister for Health, Katie Hodson-Thomas. This is being done on a regular basis.

The Committee has also written to the Minister for Planning & Infrastructure, Alannah MacTiernan MLA, asking her when a decision will be made regarding the Poultry Litter Power Station at Muchea. At its October meeting, the SFAG Committee formally resolved to remain impartial and not to enter into the politics of the power station debate, and not to favour one method of disposing of raw poultry manure over another. However it was decided it would be useful to know the Ministers decision on this matter as soon as possible.

Even though we are now experiencing the closed season for the use of raw poultry manure, stable flies are still around and making a nuisance of themselves in some places. The SFAG Committee requests that any incidences of use of raw poultry manure be reported to the Shire of Gingin immediately. The Shire has dedicated officers who will attend to any reports in the appropriate manner.

The SFAG is pleased to report that the Group has a financial membership of 56 and its growing all the time. Thank you all for your support. Membership forms are available from the Secretary on 9655 3024, or email kildare1@bigpond.com

In the next few editions of THE SFAG RAG we intend to introduce to you the members of the SFAG INC Committee for 2005/06. This edition features SFAG Chairman Bob Wilson.

MEET THE SFAG INC COMMITTEE!

Bob and Anne have been farming in the Lancelin area since 1978. They lease the property, Tagasaste Farm, on Mimegarra Road, from the Mazza family in Perth. They began growing tagasaste (tree lucerne) in 1985 and have been associated with the development of this new grazing system in Western Australia. They presently run over 2000 cattle on the property during the May to December months.

As well as being at the helm of SFAG Inc, Bob is currently chairman of the Grain & Graze Project for the Northern Agricultural Region, and is a member and past Vice President of the Evergreen Farming Committee. Previous positions he has held are West Midlands Fodder Shrub Improvement (WMFSI) Group founding member; Sustainable Grazing Systems (SGS) WA Chairman 2001-02 and Committee member 1998-2002; and a contributor to development of the new national Enrich (fodder shrubs) project.

Bob has worked closely with researchers and advisers over a 20 year period to develop more sustainable farming systems based on the fodder shrub tagasaste. He has been a contract tagasaste seeder and cutter since 1987, sowing tagasaste on approximately 20,000 ha, or a minimum of 20,000,000 shrubs! He is an adviser to many other farmers on the role and management of tagasaste through his business. He has also worked to develop a range of other perennial pasture, agroforestry, grazing management, animal production and animal supply chain systems with researchers, advisers and agribusiness, hosting numerous field days, and given talks at other field days and conferences.

Bob and Anne have two children, Mark and Jackie, who both attended Gingin Primary School before going to high school in Perth.

Anne and Jackie are passionate about dressage, and Anne dabbles with breeding warmblood horses.



SFAG CHAIRMAN BOB WILSON

Did you know ...

The Life Cycle and Description of the Stable Fly (*Stomoxys calcitrans*)

The complete life cycle of the stable fly, from egg to adult, is about 13 to 18 days in temperatures ranging from 24 to 30 degrees C. The female lays her eggs on fermenting organic matter or animal manure in association with other organic matter. The eggs are white and similar to housefly eggs and are laid in groups of 25 to 50 after a blood meal. Adult females, which live about 25 days, lay an average of 800 eggs, generally in material containing much vegetative matter.

Eggs hatch in 1 to 2 days and the larvae are white maggots. The larvae develop for 6 to 8 days, and the pupal stage, chestnut brown, lasts 6 to 8 days. In warmer areas the stable fly may breed all year and in lower temperatures, 10 degrees C, development from egg to adult takes 3 to 5 months.

The adult stable fly is about the same size as the house fly, but differs in having a broader abdomen and a checkerboard of dark spots on the back of the abdomen. The main distinguishing feature is its mouthparts.

The stable fly has a stout black proboscis that is used to pierce the skin and imbibe blood.

(Jan Dadour, Entomologist, Extract from Dept of Agriculture Farmnote 101/94)

Sources of Stable Fly Breeding

The major cause of the stable fly problem is the use of poultry manure in crop production, principally in vegetable, turf and strawberry production. Other sources of stable fly breeding are associated with the disposal of unharvested and unmarketable crop waste from mainly vegetable, but also from turf production, which have potential to cause significant, but less frequent, outbreaks. Vegetable wastes fed to livestock can also provide a significant source of stable fly breeding. Feeding, (including silage manufacture), and manure disposal in intensive animal production, as well as a wide range of activities including all forms of organic waste disposal, urban and rural gardens, poultry sheds (including domestic) piggery treatment ponds, biosolids and any site where organic materials can accumulate and break down. Stable fly breeding has not been found in association with wetlands and with livestock manure in dry paddocks.

(Extract from the Stable Fly Management Project Report, p 40).



OFFICE BEARERS OF SFAG FOR 2005/06

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Don't Forget! Contact the Shire of Gingin if you see any evidence of raw poultry manure being stored, transported or used during the banned period from 1 September to 30 April. Thank you!