



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

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Stable Fly Management

**Companion Guide to the 2026 Amendments
to the Biosecurity and Agriculture
Management (Stable Fly) Management Plan
2007. Excerpt for vegetable growers**



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Purpose

This guide provides

- FAQs of stakeholder legal obligations and responsibilities for stakeholders of their legal responsibilities to actively reduce stable fly breeding
- FAQs about the [gazetted amendments made to the 2019 Stable Fly Management Plan](#), published in the Government Gazette, No 94 on 28 July 2026
- FAQs about the prescribed control measures in the amended [2019 Stable Fly Management Plan](#) ('the Plan').

Tip - how to use this guide

Type key word/s into the search box at the top of this PDF document (see example below)



More information

Visit www.dpird.wa.gov.au/stablefly for more information about stable fly, including practical advice about prevention and managing stable fly.

For enquiries, contact stablefly@dpird.wa.gov.au

Acknowledgements

The development of the prescribed control measures (PCMs) in the Plan is informed by the work of Dr David Cook, stable fly subject matter expert. Dr Cook undertook over 6 years of research to identify stable fly breeding sources and, through scientific trials, developed the PCMs based on integrated pest management principles.¹



Dr David Cook, DPIRD

Important Disclaimer

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¹ In the context of stable fly management, a systematic approach to pest control that integrates biological, cultural, physical, and chemical tools to mitigate damage caused by stable fly while reducing risks to people, the environment, and non-target species.

What are Prescribed Control Measures (PCMs) and who must use them?

PCMs outline the actions required to prevent and minimise stable fly breeding.

These measures are:

- Scientifically validated Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies that reduce stable fly breeding while minimising reliance on chemical controls.
- Based on more than 6 years of research into stable fly biology, breeding requirements and life cycle, together with the environmental conditions of the Swan Coastal Plain, including its Mediterranean climate, sandy soils and common organic waste sources.
- Mandatory for all landholders, including owners, occupiers and other persons responsible for managing land where stable fly is a declared pest and where organic waste is generated from:
 - keeping poultry or livestock
 - vegetable production
 - olive processing that produces olive pomace.

By managing organic waste in accordance with these prescribed measures, landholders can significantly reduce stable fly breeding and help protect neighbouring communities and livestock industries.

Frequently asked questions

Are there offences and penalties under the BAM Act relating to the Plan?

Yes - in areas where stable fly is a declared pest, section 30 (2) and (3) of the BAM Act states that landholders and owners are responsible for, and have a duty to control, stable fly if it has infested, or is likely to infest anything on their land, and must be controlled by using the PCMs in the Plan.

This means that all landholders in the declared area must use the PCMs in the Plan to manage all organic waste.



Failure to comply may result in a fine of \$20,000.

Additionally, if stable fly is found, or suspected to be on a property, an Inspector appointed under the BAM Act can issue a Pest Control Notice. This requires the person responsible for the land to follow the control measures set out in the Plan.

Failure to comply may result in a fine of \$50,000.

Why does stable fly have such strong legal implications?

Unlike pests that directly damage vegetable crops, stable fly breeding does not impact production, so some growers may see it as a lower priority and be less likely to follow the Plan.



Have new definitions been added to the Plan?

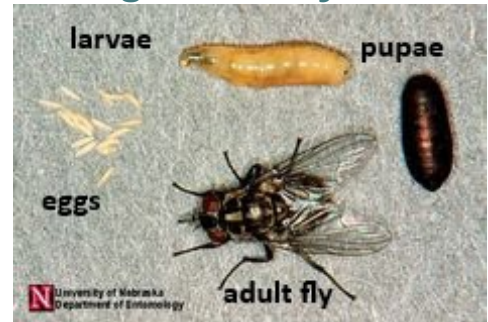
The following definitions have been added to 'Terms used'

- **poultry** means domesticated birds kept for eggs or meat;
- **rain event** means a single occurrence of rainfall exceeding 15mm that occurs between 1 October and 30 April.

Why is early prevention important to controlling stable fly populations?

Do not wait until adult stable flies are present - stopping the development of the life cycle is essential and easier to control stable fly populations.

1. The female stable fly is attracted to rotting organic material to lay eggs – remove or treat organic waste before it begins to rot.
2. Eggs and larvae must have moisture to survive – keep organic waste dry:
 - turn off water to the area
 - mulch waste on and below the soil surface
 - leave mulched waste and allow to desiccate.
3. When pupae turn dark red, adult flies are about to emerge — this is the final opportunity to stop the lifecycle using an **approved pesticide is now required**.



Stable fly life cycle

Do I have to check if there are signs of stable fly breeding and how do I check?

Yes, all landholders where stable fly is a declared pest must check all areas for evidence of stable fly breeding where there is rotting organic waste on a weekly basis.

The presence of the stable fly life cycle may be used as evidence that the PCMs are not being adequately implemented and may result in a fine of up to \$20,000.

How often do I need to use the PCMs?

PCMs are required to be applied throughout the year regardless of presence of adult stable flies.

What is considered as successful treatment?

Successful treatment means the eggs, larvae and pupae can no longer continue developing to the next stage of the lifecycle.

Is it important to know the lifecycle of stable fly?

Yes! Understanding the stable fly lifecycle is important to recognise the importance of using the PCMs correctly.

Time from egg to adult fly – ambient temperature determines the length of time development takes from egg to the adult fly emerging.

For example, at temperatures ranging from 24°C to 30°C it takes between 13 to 18 days to complete the lifecycle from egg to adult fly.

At lower temperatures (10°C to 20°C), such as those likely to be experienced over winter, development can be prolonged to 7 weeks or longer.

- Using the PCMs throughout the winter is essential to kill the eggs, larvae and pupae in the soil. A concerted effort to reduce the number of adult flies emerging at the start of the warmer weather will make control throughout the summer achievable.



The lifecycle – where to find and how to kill

- The female fly lays around 90 very small **eggs** in groups of 4 or 5.
- In summer, the eggs develop into larva in as little as 20 hours.
- The **larvae** (are extremely heat-tolerant but must have moisture) feed for up to a week before pupating.
 - Look for larvae in multiple sites where moist rotting organic matter is in contact with the soil. For example, inside rotting vegetable root stumps such as celery, cauliflower, or broccoli, under moist hay, old bedding, or stock food.
 - Larvae are mostly pale yellow to creamy white in colour and shaped like a cigar.
 - When disturbed, the larvae will move away from the light but may feign death for up to 30 seconds before moving.
 - **Turning off irrigation will reduce stable fly breeding by 85%**
- The **pupae** are the size of a grain of rice.
 - The colour darkens from red/brown to black as it matures which can take as little as 5 days at high temperatures, or up to 30 days at lower temperatures.
 - Pupae are found in the drier areas of the organic waste.
 - To find pupae, scrape through the soil to a depth of 5–10 cm and sideways about the same distance.
- After emerging, the **adult flies** disperse, sometimes covering up to 20 kms in search of a host animal.
- The adult flies live for about 3 to 4 weeks in cooler weather but only 2 weeks in warmer weather.



Stable fly larvae in rotting celery

Clause 8 - Harvesting of fruits and vegetables

New definitions

- **fruit or vegetables** includes the edible part of the plant as well as leaves, stalks and root stump material left in the soil.
- **maturity** means the stage of development where a plant or its harvestable part has fully developed and reached the desired size, quality, and physiological development for consumption.



Option 1 – turn off irrigation, mulch plant waste and leave to dry in the sun – note dried lines to the right

Do I have to harvest all crops?

- Yes – within 2 weeks, once most of the crop has reached maturity, the area must be harvested of fruit or vegetables.

What if irrigation continues, or it rains throughout harvesting?

- If irrigation is still running after 6 days from the start of harvest, or there is a rain event, you must apply an approved pesticide until runoff occurs.



Option 2 - compacting the soil using a land roller after deeply incorporating plant waste into the soil

What control measures do I use once harvest is finished or crop has matured?

- Within 2 days of completed harvest, turn off irrigation and then use either of the following **PCMs** to prevent stable fly breeding:

Option 1: Lift, chop and dry it out

1. Bring all stumps and remaining vegetation to the surface.
2. With a mulcher, flail mower or slasher, break it down into small pieces.
3. Leave it on the surface to dry out.
4. Inspect area for stable fly eggs, larvae or pupae after 3 days.
5. If there is evidence of breeding, treat the soil with an approved pesticide.
6. Recheck the area every 7 days for eggs, larvae or pupae.
7. If there is a rain event:
 - apply an approved pesticide within 7 days, and
 - check the area every 7 days for eggs, larvae or pupae.



Turn off irrigation within 2 days of finishing harvesting

Option 2: Work the waste deeply into the soil

Mix the leftover crop waste into the soil using one of the 3 alternatives:

- Rotary hoe the harvested area on 5 consecutive days

- Use a counter rotating rotary hoe (aka a stone burier), prior to compacting the soil using a land roller delivering 2.5 tonnes per m²
- Use a mouldboard plough and compact the soil using a land roller delivering 2.5 tonnes per m².

What if harvesting continues for more than 6 days?

- You must check the harvested area every 7 days for the presence of stable fly eggs, larvae or pupae.
- If you find any, spray the area with an approved pesticide until runoff occurs.

How must reject produce be managed?

Either:

- fed to stock in line with the relevant requirement
- transported to a waste management facility
- deep buried.

When do I have to use an approved pesticide?

Approved pesticide must be used if:

- irrigation continues throughout harvesting
- there is a rain event
- there is evidence of stable fly breeding (eggs, larvae, pupae).

Is it an offence under the BAM Act if I do not adequately use the PCMs for plant waste?

Yes, under section 30(2) and 30(3) of the BAM Act, it is an offence not to use PCMs to adequately manage plant waste.

Failure to comply may result in a fine of \$20,000