

MIA Fruit Fly Campaign Committee Report 2007

The horticultural production areas of the MIA started the 06/07 as “*fruit fly free*” after huge efforts on many fronts to control the outbreaks over the previous six years. Reinstatement for the US market was finally achieved in August following re-access negotiations. This was slower than growers hoped and affected the US export program, but unfortunately these negotiations take time.

The Fruit Fly Team of NSW Department of Primary Industry continued their sterling work in the risk reduction zones to minimise any risk of fruit fly incursions and ensure the area remains free. The team and local councils continued the removal of a number of “feral” trees which posed a continuing threat to area freedom.

The committee continues to work tirelessly, particularly to improve the communications between the regional citrus industry and the Federal and State government departments responsible for the different management aspects of the Fruit Fly Exclusion Zone. I and RC Executive Officer, Peter Morrish attended a NSW DPI Fruit Fly Project Managers in December 06 to discuss opportunities for closer working options.

Community Awareness

A component to improve the awareness of the Fruit Fly Exclusion Zone (FFEZ) was through advertising in local tourist guides, including Griffith, Leeton, Narrandera, the Kidman Way and the Newell, and has continued as well as publications such as Caravanning Australia etc. The FFEZ is also marked on tourist maps, and also publicised in McCafferty’s Greyhound magazines, “Traveltime” etc. A number of editorials and press releases have also been printed in many regions, along with Travel Warning Notices in Youth Hostel Associations etc. and also on a number of relevant web sites.

The community service announcement regarding backyard fruit trees continued to be broadcast this year during the peak risk times of Christmas and Easter, reminding residents within the FFEZ to “*bare*” their fruit trees, “*bag*” the unwanted fruit, “*bake*” in the sun for 3-5 days and dispose of it in the “*bin*”.

The new Travelers’ Community Announcement developed last year was again run on WINTV and radio in Albury/Wodonga, Mildura, Shepparton, Bendigo, Wangaratta, Loxton, Moree and ABC Riverland.

A new initiative of the Committee is the production of a car air freshener with the fruit fly “message” about not bringing fruit and vegetables into the Fruit Fly Exclusion Zone. These will be distributed at field days, visitor tourist centres and by NSW DPI at random roadblocks.

TriState Fruit Fly Committee

This committee continues to operate, albeit under difficult circumstances. It has long been the opinion of the Committee that fruit fly is a national problem and should be addressed by a national body. Plant Health Australia is currently investigating the possibility of a National Fruit Fly body being set up under its charter. With an estimated \$35million spent annual on fruit fly management in Australia it will be excellent to get this all under one steering body. We look forward to this progressing to fruition.

The public relations company Porter Novelli continues their contracted role continuing the Community Awareness program on behalf of the committee and have established and launched the www.fruitfly.net.au website to assist travelers' with easy to get information on the Tri-state fruit fly exclusion zone.

The public relations program has been secured with matching funding from Horticulture Australia under their voluntary contribution programs with the three state southern citrus boards.

Retirement and Sincere Thanks

After nearly 18 years in the Role, Nell Snaidero retired from the MIAFFC secretary role. Nell has been a strong advocate for public awareness and representation of the region on fruit fly issues. We wish Nell all the best in her retirement. I'm sure we will continue to have her input into this important issue. Riverina Quality Management took over as secretariat from the AGM in October. They have got significant shoes to fill.

Again, the Committee thanks everyone who has contributed to getting the MIA "fruit fly free" at last and we hope to keep it that way in the future. However, we need to continue with the effort. Everyone from growers, townspeople, retailers, wholesalers, other farmers, travelers and DPI personnel must work together to keep the dreaded "Queensland Fruit Fly" out of the MIA.

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Chairperson

MIA Fruit Fly Campaign Committee