

# Protect your community and stop stable flies before they bite



**Stable flies** (*Stomoxys calcitrans*) are an aggressive, biting, blood sucking fly that attack livestock, domestic pets and humans in search of a blood meal.



The repeated painful bites cause considerable suffering and distress to animals and in some cases, cause death.

## Where and when do stable flies breed?

Stable flies breed prolifically from October to April in rotting organic matter such as:

- waste vegetable material
- soiled hay and animal bedding
- reject produce fed out to livestock
- lawn clippings (if continually wet)
- aged animal manure
- olive pomace.

## Simple ways to protect your community if you grow vegetables, keep chickens or grazing animals

Reducing stable fly breeding sites through simple waste management is the single most effective way to protect your community from the effects of stable fly.

Even small amounts of rotting material can produce thousands of biting flies throughout warmer weather — so every effort counts!

### Treat all organic material immediately by:

- ✓ **Mulching** (chopping into smaller pieces) and **desiccation** (spreading material thinly in the sun to dry out)  
or
- ✓ **Solarisation** (sealing with black plastic and leaving in full sun to kills eggs, larvae and pupae)  
or
- ✓ **Burial** to a depth of at least 1 metre  
or
- ✓ Using an **approved pesticide** to kill eggs, larvae and pupae and leave undisturbed to allow any emerging flies to contact the chemical residue/barrier (search [apvma.gov.au](http://apvma.gov.au)).

## Do you grow vegetables?

### After harvest (October to April):

- **Turn off irrigation immediately.**
- If there are large pieces of waste plant material (e.g. celery stumps) – bring the material to the surface with a rotary hoe, then **mulch** at high speed into smaller pieces **and then**
- **desiccate** small pieces of waste plant material in the sun **or**
- **bury** to at least 1 metre deep.

### Weekly:

Inspect the soil and waste for eggs, larvae or pupae.

- Use an **approved pesticide** if eggs, larvae or pupae are found.

## Are you using untreated chicken manure as fertiliser?

- **Seek approval** from neighbours and your local government authority (LGA) before applying untreated poultry manure.
- Spread **immediately** and only onto **non-irrigated land**.
- Apply thinly and evenly with a:
  - maximum particle size of **20 mm** and
  - maximum application rate of **10 tonnes/ha (dry weight)**.
- Do not reapply more than **every 6 weeks**.

## Do you keep grazing animals?

### For all supplementary feed:

- Where possible, use a **feed trough or hay ring** or place on a **concrete base**.
- If feeding on the ground, feed in a **thin line** to minimise food being trampled and defecated upon.

### Weekly hygiene:

- Remove all organic material including trampled feed, manure and bedding.
- Treat material by burial, solarisation, composting or use an approved pesticide if eggs, larvae or pupae are present.

### ⚠ Important note about hay

Desiccating soiled hay containing larvae **will not kill larvae**. If hay is fed out during summer, becomes wet or mixes with soil, urine or faeces, it can become a future breeding site for stable flies.

### To prevent breeding in soiled hay:

- Bury hay (at least 1 metre deep), **or**
- solarise with black plastic, **or**
- spray with an approved pesticide.

## Inspect all breeding areas weekly for eggs, larvae and pupae

Early detection of eggs and larvae makes control much easier but immediate treatment of organic material is the best option.



Stable fly lifecycle



Treat pupae with an approved pesticide



Treat larvae with an approved pesticide

If you are experiencing stable fly issues, **report to your local government authority (LGA)** [local government authority](#).

[dpird.wa.gov.au/stablefly](http://dpird.wa.gov.au/stablefly)

### Important Disclaimer

The Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the State of Western Australia accept no liability whatsoever by reason of negligence or otherwise arising from the use or release of this information or any part of it. Copyright © State of Western Australia (Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development) 2026