

Flying-fox management in NSW has been a long ongoing concern for NSW Horticulturists. The NSW Farmers Association ('the Association') welcomes the recent announcement by the NSW Government that the licensing scheme for the culling of flying-foxes in orchards will remain in place until a suitable alternative can be found.

The Association's Members believe that the culling of Flying-foxes is the most effective and affordable management approach currently available.

The current licensing arrangements allowing orchardists to cull Flying-foxes in NSW orchards for crop protection are being reviewed by the Department of Environment and Climate Change.

Removing current licensing arrangements in NSW will have negative implications on the management of Flying-foxes, as there is currently no effective and affordable alternative management approach available.

The united Orchardists and Conservation groups through the Flying-fox Consultative Committee has provided a strong voice for recommendations designed for the Government to consider for future management of Flying-fox crop damage in NSW.

An Independent Review Panel for Licensed Culling in NSW completed its deliberations in May 2009. Following this the report was keenly sort after by horticulturalists, animal welfare organisations, and other stakeholders with a direct interest in the management of Flying-foxes.

The Review Panel found that full exclusion netting is the most effective method for protecting commercial fruit crops from damage by Flying-foxes. Both horticulturalists and animal welfare organisations are fully aware of the costs - and in some cases logistics - of adopting alternative crop protection methods.

The Association has lobbied extensively on behalf of members. These efforts have included

Letters written to – 10 since January 2009

- NSW Minister for Climate Change and the Environment
- NSW Minister for Primary Industries
- NSW Department of Industry and Investment Director General
- NSW Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability
- NSW Shadow Minister of Industry
- Federal Treasurer requesting treasury consider providing orchardists taxation incentives to make the option of exclusion netting more affordable to growers
- Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW regarding the relocation of flying fox camps from the Royal Botanical Gardens Sydney
- Appointment of a representative to the Ministers Independent Review Panel for licensing arrangements
- NSW RSPCA CEO in regards to concerns with the Humane Society International report

Meetings held – 13 Since January 2009

- Attended two Flying Fox Consultative Committee meetings together with representatives from Government, conservation groups and orchard growers.
- Meeting with NSW DII Sydney Basin district horticulturists and Research staff
- Telephone conference with Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water Threatened Species manager clarifying the independent panel review of culling licensing arrangements
- Five Elected member meetings held with State Government MP's
- Meeting held with The Hon Duncan Gay MLC Shadow Minister for Industry
- Meeting held with Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability The Hon Catherine Cusack MLC
- Meeting with Policy Advisors from the office of Minister Carmel Tebbutt MP to discuss the culling of the grey headed flying fox
- Meeting with District Members in Dural April 2009

Ensuring the detailed economic study and standard operating procedure being developed by NSW Government meets the needs of members is a major task for the Association currently.

The Association will continue to work with Orchardists and Conservation groups through the Flying-Fox Consultative Committee to provide the best outcomes for Orchardists managing the impact of Flying-foxes to orchards.