

"Do it with Dung"

FROM THE MOUNTAINS
TO THE MURRAY

NEWSLETTER

Issue 3: May 2009

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Bubas bison on the move

The species *Bubas bison* has been trapped around the region. From results received, beetles have been trapped at:

6/4/09	Wooragee (1)
12/4/09	Springhurst (1)
14/4/09	Corowa (1)
14/4/09	Lucyvale (3)
15/4/09	Tallangatta Valley (3)
15/4/09	Chiltern Valley (9)
17/4/09	Oxley (1)
20/4/09	Byawatha (7)
27/4/09	Kergunyah (12)
28/4/09	Bowmans Forest (1)
28/4/09	Meadow Creek (6)



Bubas bison - male
Length: 13 – 20mm
2 horns on head
Shoulder horn
Shiny black

It is great to see this species become active in mid-Autumn. *Bubas bison* is a deep tunnelling beetle. When in the paddock look for soil casts around dung pads and tunnels (holes) under dung pads.



Bubas bison holes under dung pad 6/5/09 - Kergunyah

This photo was taken in early May. The dung was deposited on a very compacted cattle track. When the dung pad was lifted, 19 tunnels (holes) were evident. These tunnels will significantly improve water infiltration in an area which would normally be subject to surface ponding and run off (and that's just one pad!). When in sufficient numbers, *Bubas bison* beetles can bury a dung pad in less than 24 hours. This is what we would like to see happening across the region.

Next major release – *Bubas bison*

Whilst there are many areas recording *B. bison* activity, there are just as many areas and properties (if not more), returning nil trap results. These areas will be the focus of the next major release of beetles. We are expecting to receive *B. bison* colonies in the next month or so.

2008 - 09 *Geotrupes spiniger* trials

In 2008, the Lucyvale Better Beef Group ran several trials to determine the suitability and activity period of *Geotrupes spiniger*. In March 2008, 100 *G. spiniger* beetles sourced from Tasmania were placed in shade-cloth tents and fed dung. They were active from March to late August. The first beetles of the next generation emerged between late December and late January. A total of 652 beetles were recovered from the tent. This was a very pleasing result.

Numerous soil core trials were also established in the field. This consists of digging a hole (approx 2 - 3 feet deep) and placing a mesh bag in the hole. The excavated soil is placed into the bag, with the top of the bag at ground level. Five pairs of *G. spiniger* beetles were placed at the top of the bag with some dung, and the bag was then tied off



Soil core bag after it has been dug out of the soil. Note the root activity throughout the profile.

Bags were excavated and their contents examined. A bag opened in October 2008 revealed over 80 larvae developing in brood balls. A bag opened in Jan '09 showed that over 95% of *G. spiniger* larvae had developed successfully into adults. These results are extremely encouraging and indicate that this species can breed successfully in our area.

In March 2009, a shade-cloth tent with 45 *G. spiniger* beetles was set up in the Tallangatta area. We look forward to reporting the trial results.

WORKSHOPS & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Efarmer training

Efarmer is a web-based mapping program which will enable you to directly upload your monitoring results. It is also a great farm planning tool which gives you access to numerous data layers including aerial photography, property boundaries, public land areas and environmental data.

Upcoming training sessions:

Benambra Neighbourhood House
Wednesday 13th May, 9.00am – 3.00pm

Tallangatta – “Just us Computers”
Friday 15th May, 9.30am – 3.30pm

Wangaratta Library
Monday 18th May, 9.30am – 3.30pm

Corryong CEC - Refresher
Friday 22nd May, time to be advised

Lunch will be provided at all full day sessions

Bookings are essential, as personalised logins and passwords need to be established prior to the workshops.

To secure your place, please contact Belinda on 02 6027 5294 or email abanas@bigpond.com at least three working days prior to the workshop date.

Need help with Efarmer?

Suzanne is more than happy to help with any questions or difficulties you may have using the program. Suzanne can be contacted by:

Phone: 02 6024 9104 or

Email: suzanne.johnstone@necma.vic.gov.au

There is also an opportunity for some refresher sessions to be run across the region. Please let Suzanne know if you would be interested in attending a refresher session.

“SOILS ALIVE” WORKSHOPS

Belinda will present a short session on the benefits of dung beetles at the following “Soils Alive” workshops:

Tallangatta Valley: Tuesday 19th May

Walwa Golf Club: Wednesday 20th May

Whorouly: Thursday 21st May

All workshops will run from 9.00am – 5.00pm

Cathy Botta (DPI Healthy Soils) will speak about understanding soil organic matter and Dr Damian Bougoure, (molecular microbial ecologist) will look at the roles and functions of soil biology.

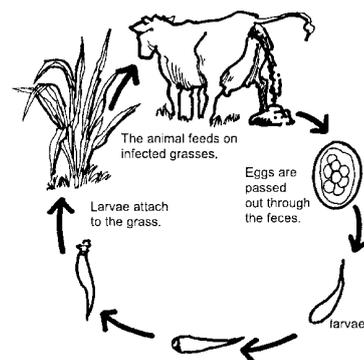
For more information or to book your place please contact Kristy Youman:

Phone: 02 6043 7968

Email: kristy.youman@dpi.vic.gov.au

Parasite Management Workshop “Know your Parasite Enemy”

This is an opportunity to learn about worm lifecycles and how faecal egg counting (FEC) can be a useful tool in developing effective worm management strategies in sheep, cattle & horses.



Treating animals unnecessarily can be costly and can contribute to the selection of worms for drench resistance. Some treatments can have a negative impact on beneficial species such as dung beetles and earthworms.

The presenter is **Dr Grant Richards**. Grant is a veterinarian with many years experience dealing with parasites. He operates a parasite diagnostic laboratory which provides egg counting and culturing services.

Yackandandah Public Hall
Thursday 21st May, 7.30 – 9.30pm

Moyhu Hall
Thursday 28th May, 7.30 – 9.30pm

Tallangatta Hall
Thursday 4th June, 7.30 – 9.30pm

To secure your place, please contact Belinda on 02 6027 5294 or email abanas@bigpond.com at least two working days prior to the workshop date.

Reminder: Steering Committee Meeting

The next meeting will be held on:

Friday 3rd July

10.00am – 11.30am (followed by lunch)
North East CMA Office, Footmark Court Wodonga
For catering purposes could you please RSVP to Belinda by Wednesday 1st July

Upcoming monitoring weeks

Weeks commencing:



Sunday 10th May

Sunday 24th May

Sunday 8th June

Monitoring weeks commence on the second and fourth Sunday of each month.



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY

The “Do it with Dung – from the Mountains to the Murray” Project is funded by “Caring for our Country”, managed by Kiewa Catchment Landcare Group and supported by

regional Landcare Groups, DPI and NECMA. The project also receives direction from a voluntary steering committee.