

Washington State Grape Society
March 2005 Newsletter
Editor: Jack Watson

Getting By With Less Water

The severity of drought conditions in a short water year will depend on numerous factors that are specific to individual vineyards. Timing of water delivery; amount of water available; timing, intensity, and duration of hot spells during the summer; soil depth and method of irrigation will determine a grower's ability to reduce severe water stress in vineyards.

Grapevine Water Use

Given a deep soil profile, grapevines will produce an extensive root system; vines are excellent foragers for water. Concord or labrusca type vines have somewhat smaller root systems than wine grape varieties. Under all but the most extreme drought situations, vine survival is probable, although crop quality and yield may be low.

Extreme water stress in vines can be most damaging during late spring and early summer, when shoots grow rapidly and cell division occurs in the berries. Poor berry set and smaller berries result from severe stress in late spring and early summer, when cell expansion takes place in the berry. Severe water stress during this late summer ripening stage can reduce berry size and may delay, or under very severe conditions, prevent fruit maturation.

Culture Practices under Water Deficit

Until grape growers know the extent and nature of water rationing, consider the following cultural practices to provide the most efficient use of water.

*Fertilize and prune vines to produce moderate growth and yields.

*Keep cover crops mown; plan to spray them out if drought conditions become severe.

*Thin heavy crops to more moderate levels.

Irrigation Practices

Drought conditions may require using water with utmost efficiency. Growers should constantly monitor soil moisture and apply water only when needed or at strategic times during the delivery period.

Improve irrigation systems so water is applied as efficiently as possible. Scientific irrigation scheduling will increase water savings and avoid over watering. Other supplemental drought advisories are available at Extension

offices to help growers with soil moisture monitoring, improving irrigation efficiency, and irrigation scheduling.

The timing of water delivery will determine how growers should use available water. Drip irrigation would be the best system to use if low levels of water are available for an extensive part of the growing season. If 100% of normal supply is available for short periods, rill or sprinkler irrigation systems would allow application of large quantities of water over a short period of time.

Use early irrigation, as soon as water is available, to fill the soil profile if winter precipitation has not been adequate. Avoid over irrigation, which can result in inadequate iron and zinc uptake and leaf chlorosis. Be sure the soil moisture level is high at the irrigation cutoff date.

Other Considerations

Consider alternate sources of water. These would include wells, tailwater, and stream or storage water. The large investment needed to obtain alternate sources of water may be justified, as water reservoirs may be depleted again in future irrigation seasons.

TREE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

TAP provides assistance for eligible trees, bushes, vines and forest land damaged by natural disasters that occurred during the period beginning December 1, 2003, and ending December 31, 2004. This includes diseases if the weather played a role in the losses, provided the loss could not have been prevented through readily available horticultural measures. Sign up began on February 7, and will end in April, 2005.

For this program normal mortality is considered 3%. Applicants must have suffered losses in excess of 15% above normal in order to qualify. Payments are made for site preparation, which includes tree removal replacement of the tree/vines/bush, and planting costs. Cost share of actual cost, not exceeding established national rates will be paid. Programs participating are limited to a \$75,000 per person payments limitation for payments for 2004-2007 crop years.

To be considered and eligible loss, the tree/vine/bush must be visible and obvious. A field visit will be conducted. If physical evidence of the lost tree/vine/bush no longer exists, acceptable evidence must be provided to FSA to determine the loss due to a weather condition.

The replant may be planted on a field that is not the field where the loss originally occurred. Replanted trees/vines/bushes by be different than those damaged as long as they have the same general end use.

Please contact the Farm Service Agency office for an appointment to sign up, or if you have any questions.

SIGN-UP STARTS FOR CROP DISASTER PROGRAM

Sign-up begins in the FSA county office March 14, 2005 for the Crop Disaster Program. CDP reimburses farmers for crop losses or prevented plantings due to damaging weather or related conditions. The damages must be in excess of 35 percent for either the 2003 or 2004 crop for loss of production or 20 percent for quality losses. An end date for the sign-up has not been set.

Eligibility for the program includes crops federally insured as well as those that are uninsured or covered under the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). Prices used to calculate disaster payments for crops insured will be the crop insurance established market price. For crops not insured, five-year average market prices will be used.

Payments will be for 2003 or 2004 losses, based on which year had the greatest loss. Farmers who had crop insurance or those raising non-insurable crops will receive 65 percent of the established price. Those for whom crop insurance was available but chose not to obtain it will only get 60 percent of the established price. CDP payments will be capped at 95 percent of the value of the remaining crop plus all insurance and disaster program payments. The program has an \$80,000 payment limitation per person.

Any farmer who did not purchase Federal crop insurance or NAP coverage for the year CDP payments will be issued must do so for 2006 crops as a requirement of receiving CDP benefits.

For more information, or to apply for CDP assistance, farmers should contact the Farm Service Agency (FSA) office, or for additional information go to the FSA's website at: www.fsa.usda.gov .



Annual Meeting News

2004 Memorial Scholarship Winner: Winner:-Catherine Hinken

Catherine Hinken was awarded Washington State Grape Society's 2004 Memorial Scholarship of \$500 at the Annual Meeting in November, 2004. Catherine is currently a junior at WSU; President of the WSU Viticulture & Onology Club and a member of the Horticulture Club. Last summer, Catherine was a viticulture intern for Canandaigua Wine Company. Congratulations Catherine!

Lloyd H. Porter, "Grower of the Year" Award for 2004 Winner – Keith Oliver

This 2004 Grower of the Year winner came from California over two decades ago. He is a graduate of UC-Davis with a Bachelor of Science degree. Keith Oliver has been employed by Olsen Bros. Ranches Inc. (a large diversified farming operation north of Prosser) for approximately 20 years. As general manager, Keith oversees just less than 2,000 acres. He has been married for 18 years to his wife, Marco; they have three children: Amanda, 6 and twins 22 months old. WSGS congratulates Keith on a job well done.

Walter Clore Award for 2004 Dr. Robert Wample

Dr. Wample was born and raised on the East Coast. He began showing animals for 4-H at the tender age of 8. He received his BS from the University of Idaho and his PhD from the University of Calgary in Alberta Canada. He met his wife of 38 years in junior high and they began going "steady" in 1959. Bob served in our military forces for four years as a Marine security guard. This Clore Award winner was employed at WSU-IAREC, Prosser for 13.5 years and has received numerous awards for a distinguished researcher in his field. In May of 2000, Bob was appointed Julio Gallo Chair & Director Viticulture & Enology Research Center. He and his wife Pam have two sons, Robert II and Jeff; one grandson Christian, who is 11 yrs. old. Washington State Grape Society was honored to present the 2004 Walter Clore Award to Dr. Bob Wample.

Ag & Forestry Leadership Program Seeks Applicants

Are you looking to sharpen your leadership and communication skills? Then the Washington Agriculture and Forestry Leadership Program is for you. This two-year program offers intensive study and travel for leaders in our agriculture, forestry, fishing and rural community. This program is currently seeking qualified candidates for Class XXVII. Application deadline is fast approaching. For more information phone 509.926.9113 or www.agforestry.org

Fieldman's Breakfast

The first Thursday of every month, Jack Watson hosts the Fieldman's breakfast. Beginning at 7:15 a.m. at the Barn Restaurant in Prosser, growers, scientists, fieldmen and others meet to discuss grape issues currently facing the industry. Everyone is welcome. Come and take advantage of these informative meetings.

WSGS Scholarship Applications

Every year, the Washington State Grape Society offers a scholarship to a deserving person who plans to engage in a field of study relating to the growing of grapes. *This year, the WSGS Board has opened the doors to any student enrolled in a college or university within the state of Washington who is enrolled in viticulture/enology course work.* The scholarship is targeted towards graduate students, but undergraduates may also apply. The deadline for receiving applications is to June 15th. We would like to encourage those students attending today apply for this scholarship in Spring of 2005 and may do so by downloading the application form from our website: www.grapesociety.org or contacting a professor in the viticulture-enology program.

Winery Equipment Auction

La Rochelle Winery in San Jose, CA has a large inventory of equipment to be auctioned off on April 6th. Check out their equipment inventory by going online to www.bidspotter.com

Proposed Budget Cuts - Deep for Agriculture

Early February, President Bush announced his proposed federal budget for 2006. Anticipated are huge cuts in agricultural programs including in-house research (USDA-ARS) and funding sources relied upon by our Land Grant partners at Washington State and other universities. This budget, if approved, will affect all research programs in Corvallis, OR; Prosser, WA; and Parma, ID. Included in these cuts are grant programs under the NW Center for Small Fruits and NW Plant Improvement Initiative. Programs in both berry crops and viticulture will be directly and severely reshaped. The President's budget consistently has reduced funds for agricultural research each year since 1996, but concern is heightened this year because the extent and magnitude of proposed cuts are so large that important domestic programs may not be reinstated by Congressional budget committees during this summer's meetings. In the past, our grape and wine industry partners have very effectively conveyed the importance to Washington State and the Pacific Northwest economy of reversing the President's proposed budget cuts. Under the current proposal, we will lose many of the research capabilities that have been developed in the Pacific Northwest to serve the grape and wine industry. Additional questions should be directed to:

Dr. Robert R Martin
Acting Research Leader
USDA-ARS-HCRL
3420 NW Orchard Ave.
Corvallis, OR 97330
Phone: (541)738-4041
martinrr@science.oregonstate.edu

or

Dr. Dwayne R. Buxton
Area Director, USDA-ARS-PWA
Room 2030
800 Buchanan Street
Albany, CA 94710-1105
Phone: (510)559-6060
dbuxton@pw.ars.usda.gov

Mt. St. Helens Tour

AgForestry Graduates, Class Members, Board Members, Contributors and their families are invited to register for this insightful tour.

Limited to the first 80 persons to sign up!

When: June 24 & 25, 2005

Where: Mt. St. Helens and vicinity; Meals, program & lodging – Kelso, WA

Why: To provide an educational experience and social opportunity for members of the **AgForestry** network.

Additional information can be obtained at: www.agforestry.org

Watch for future YVCC – Grape & Wine Education Center Fund Raising Benefits for Renovation

The YVCC Grape & Wine Education Center's \$1 million dollar building renovation is seeking funds by contributions and fund raising benefit events. YVCC needs to raise \$140,000 to reach its \$500,000 goal to receive a \$500,000 matching grant from the State Board for Community and Technical College. The Grape and Wine Education Center will occupy 8,000 square feet in the renovated Safeway building located on the YVCC – Grandview campus. It is strategically

located in the heart of the Yakima Valley American Viticulture Area (AVA) and is also in close proximity to the Red Mountain, Columbia Valley and Columbia Gorge AVA's which produce over 90% of Washington's premium wine varieties. The GWEC will support regional economic development by training the local and regional workforce for the juice and wine grape allied industries. The state-of-the-art facility will include a winery, processing and fermentation areas, wine storage, a bottling area, a quality control laboratory, tasting room, and seminar room. Additional information may be obtained by contacting: Ellen M Bentley, Interim Coordinator - Grape & Wine Education Center, Yakima Valley Community College-Grandview, 500 W Main St., Grandview, WA 98930-1284, [509-882-7064](tel:509-882-7064), [509-882-7012](tel:509-882-7012) (fax), ebentley@yvcc.edu

Grape Refresher

64-oz. bottle Concord 100% grape juice, chilled. 1 ½ cups ginger ale, chilled. Twist of lemon or wedge of lemon or wedge of lime, optional. In a pitcher, mix 100% Concord juice and ginger ale thoroughly. Serve over ice in tall glasses. Add a twist of lemon or a wedge of lime. Serves 5. Enjoy!

Washington State Grape Society

PO Box 267

Grandview, WA 98930

Phone: 509.786.7888

Fax: 509.786.7880

Email: deb@grapesociety.com

Web: www.grapesociety.org