

Talking to wine makers. A root canal is more fun!

PENNSSTATE



Cooperative Extension
College of Agricultural Sciences

Surveys. Ick!

Going to meetings. It's the same old stuff

12 Things Growers Hate to do but Should

VGWC Annual Seminar

June 18, 2013

Data. Yuck!

Trade Associations. Blah!!

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<http://pawinegrape.com/>

Reading trade and research journals. I'd rather die!

I'D MUCH RATHER BE FARMING !!

Tasting wines. Not my job.

What Growers Dislike: who has the time?

- Collecting data
- Filling our forms and surveys
- Going to meetings
- Here's why we do it:
 - For the greater and collective good
 - To create a historical record and develop baseline data
 - To use as a tool to get goodies (like legislative funding)
- The stuff you don't like to do is still important

Vineyard Data Worth Collecting

- Meso and micro climate data
- Pruning weights (trouble spots and rootstock effect)
- Phenology data for each variety (or clone)
- Soil and vine nutrition status
- Yield data (lbs per vine and tons per acre)
- Grape prices
- Fruit chemistry (brix, pH and TA)

#1. Balance Prune your Vines

- Why growers don't like to do it: because if the vines are out of balance they have to do something about it.
- All the design decisions have been made, by the fifth or so year you can see if you were right
- If not, make adjustments based on pruning weights and Smart Golden Rules
 - Vinifera 5-10:1
 - Hybrids 14-18:1 (Reynolds)
- Are the vines just right? Or do they need to be pushed or pulled?
- Balanced vines produce better wines!



#2. Calibrate Sprayers Properly

- Why growers don't like to do it: because it's tedious and takes time.
- Be honest: do you really know how to calibrate?
- Numbers on paper vs. reality: how are you checking your calibration?
- Use Andrew Landers' *Effective Vineyard Spraying*
- Checking tractor speed and pressure at the nozzle
- For the ultimate verification: use a spray collector and-or patternator
- If in doubt, ask someone (but someone who knows)

Penn State Pest Ed sprayer calibrator



Marty Keen and his spray patternator

#3. Shoot Thin and Position

- Why growers don't like it: it calls for judgment, takes a lot of time and it's expensive.
- Thin for a reason, towards better balance
- Improves the light and air environment in the canopy
- Shoot thinning to proper shoots per foot
- Timing is critical to effective and efficient thinning and positioning
- Comb high wire canopies at 18-24" and 36"

#4. Take Petiole Tests

- Why growers don't like: it's a tedious task that needs to be done at a busy time in the vineyard
- It's your opportunity to check the nutritional health of the vineyard.
- Have someone smart interpret the numbers for you and make sound recommendations
- Make specific adjustments based on vine needs
- It's often just as important to do nothing!



PLANT TISSUE ANALYSIS FOR:				ADDITIONAL COPY TO:			
Jane J. Doe Doe Farms R.R.#2 Box 14 Wysox PA 18854							
KIT ID	LAB ID	FIELD NAME	HOUSE	BENCH	RECEIVED	COMPLETED	COUNTY
12345	PK00001	1			01/05/2000	01/10/2000	Bradford

Crop: Blueberries Variety: Any



*Sulfur analysis is available upon request.

FERTILIZER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following recommendations are based on the above leaf element concentrations and the best information currently available. If there are any questions regarding these recommendations, please consult the county extension agent in your area.

NITROGEN: Value is LOW (Normal is 1.70 - 2.10)
Low nitrogen. Increase rate of nitrogen application by 10% for each 0.1% that sample is below desired level. If soil pH is above 5.0,

#5. Do Crop Estimates

- Why growers don't like it: it's busy work in a hot, humid and buggy canopy and we don't like dropping fruit!
- The drive by estimating system only works for growers with at least 100 years of grape growing experience
- Crop management, like its canopy cousin, can have more impact on fruit quality in a vintage than any other practice(s)
- Especially important for high quality-value wines and especially for red wines
- THV Pinot Noir example
- Use lag phase crop estimation system
- Each thinning pass after veraison has less effect

#6. Talk to Winemakers

- Why growers don't like it: most wine makers are grumpy, know-it-all prima donnas, and we don't want them telling us what to do
- Reality: They aren't as mean as you think and you are growing the grapes for them, they have to make (and sell) the wine
- A clear understanding of the winery needs and goals will help the grower to provide the best possible fruit
- The wine maker should be in the vineyard for frequent visits as harvest approaches
- There are exceptions such as long term relationships

#7. Use Grape Contracts!

- Why growers don't like it: it implies a lack of trust, it's more paperwork, it's a legal document
- What it really is is a handy reminder about a discussion that (should have) happened months before harvest (varieties, amounts, prices, payment, etc.)
- Things change and sometimes go awry, it's smart to have an agreement on paper
- The best relationships use long-term contracts

WINEGRAPE CONTRACT

VINTAGE:

This agreement made on _____ by and between XYZ Vineyard, hereinafter referred to as Grower, and _____, hereinafter referred to as Winery, who agrees to buy wine grapes at the following prices and subject to the following conditions of sale as set forth below.

Whereas, XYZ Vineyard has xxx acres of varietal wine grapes located at (insert address) it is agreed as follows:

Grower agrees to sell, and Winery agrees to buy the following grape varieties and quantities determined by tonnage or on an acreage basis:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Winery agrees to pay Grower the following prices:

1. _____ Price per acre: _____ Notes:
 variety and clone Total acres: _____
 Max price per ton: _____
 Field: _____
 Row #'s: _____

2. _____ Price per acre: _____ Notes:
 variety and clone Total acres: _____
 Max price per ton: _____
 Field: _____
 Row #'s: _____

3. _____ Tons: _____ Price: _____
 variety and clone
 Quality parameters:

Location:

4. _____ Tons: _____ Price: _____
 variety and clone
 Quality parameters:

Location:

Additional Grapes:

Simple 3 page contract: worked for 16 years and 240 grape deals

It is the intention of the Winery to hold the crop level to about _____ ton(s) per acre. Therefore, Winery has the right to state specific thinning instructions, and Grower will execute those instructions to the best of Grower's ability. To assist in these thinning determinations, Grower will harvest yields by use of lag phase cluster sampling. If crop falls below _____ tons per acre without thinning instructions from Winery and thinning by Grower, special pricing considerations will apply.

The above prices are based upon 5% or less MOG, rot and mildew. If there is more than 5%, Winery has the right to renegotiate the price of grapes. Minimum sugar content is _____ degrees brix. Below _____ degrees brix, Winery has the right to renegotiate the price of grapes. Note: Grower and Winery understand that sugar content is only one of many critical criteria for determining fruit maturity. Grower will cooperate with Winery to harvest grapes at optimal RIPENESS using all maturity indices. Final prices may change contingent upon post-harvest assessments of wine quality and evaluation of the vintage and Grower performance.

Other Conditions of Sale:

1. Transportation: Grower agrees to transport grapes to Winery if Winery is located within the Willamette Valley. Out of state customers must supply their own shipping containers and transportation. Grower will pay Winery up to \$50 per ton if Winery handles pickup and delivery. All Grower grape containers must be returned clean and undamaged.
2. Containers: Unless otherwise stated, Grower will deliver fruit in 4'x4'x2' standard grape bins. Off loading of bins at the winery is the responsibility of the Winery. If there is an unreasonable delay, Grower will charge Winery a waiting fee of \$50 per hour. A charge of \$200 per ton will be added to price of grapes if Winery asks Grower to use 30 pound grape lug boxes. Any special grape containers will be provided by Winery to Grower with the approval of Grower.
3. Determination of Weight: Unless otherwise agreed, Grower will provide Winery with gross and tare weights from a licensed state scale. If delivery is scheduled for after hours or on Sunday, Grower will make closest possible estimate of tare weight based on experience.
4. Determination of juice statistics: The measurement of grape sugars or other parameters of ripeness that may relate to this contract shall be the responsibility of the Grower, unless otherwise agreed upon in writing by Grower and Winery. Sugar readings shall be performed by temperature compensated refractometer.
5. Tonnage Reduction Notice: In the event Grower cannot deliver the tonnage or acreage of grapes requested by the Winery, Grower will notify Winery at the earliest knowledge of such conditions and not be subject to penalty.
6. Vineyard Practices: Grower agrees to follow the highest standard of viticultural practices to produce quality winegrapes for Winery. Grower agrees to keep Winery informed of all use of pesticides and other practices which might affect fruit quality. If Winery requests additional cultural practices (eg. Thinning or leaf pulling) or pesticide applications (eg. Additional fungicide applications) beyond the normal practice of Grower, Winery will be expected to compensate Grower for additional farming expenses incurred by Grower.
7. Harvest: Grower shall inform Winery of all sampling data at harvest. Grower shall allow winery access to grapes for sampling and tasting prior to harvest. Grower and Winery shall cooperate to determine harvest date. Grower shall provide Winery with minimum 24 hours notice prior to picking. Grower retains final right to determine date which grapes will be harvested and delivered to Winery.

#8. Understanding Grape Maturity

- The numbers: brix, pH, titratable acidity
- Have a refractometer, pH meter and titration assembly in the office
- Sensory: tasting the fruit, smelling the vintage, looking for ripeness, feeling it, too.
- Walk the fields and taste with the wine maker, understand what he or she is looking and tasting for in the grapes
- Vinidea berry sensory analysis system -
<http://www.infowine.com/default.asp?scheda=8329&provenienza=114>
- Bruce Zoecklein, Virginia Tech Enology Group, *Vintner's Corner*, Vol. 16, no. 1, J/F 2001

#9. Field Sort Grapes

- Why growers don't like to do it: there's enough work to do at harvest and it's an added expense
- It can dramatically improve wine quality and consistency, especially in poor vintages. (see Burgundy and Bordeaux)
- MOG: unripe or rotten berries or clusters, leaves, stems, and everything else
- Sort on and-or off the vine
- Give explicit instructions and check the work!
- Hopefully the winery will sort again at the crush pad

#10. Hilling up and Taking down

- Why growers don't like it: what a pain in the #@*%
- You need the right equipment
- You need the right skills
- Soil condition must be acceptable: not too many weeds and proper moisture
- Remember 2004!
- Is high grafting an option for cold regions?

#11. Know How Much it Costs to Grow Grapes

- Why growers don't like it: it's too painful, it requires organization, it's better to live in blissful ignorance
- It will help to determine grape prices
- You can figure out where you need to save and where you can spend more
- We are trying to run a sustainable business, how can you do it if you don't know what it costs to do it?

#12. Taste the Wine!

- Why growers don't like it: they don't know anything about wine
- It's the fun part! Learn about it.
- Ask the wine maker to make your wine as a separate lot.
- Taste before it is blended.
- The Adelsheim Chardonnay example

Bonus: Free \$\$\$ (crop insurance)

- Why growers don't do it: It's a total hassle and, well, it's not that much money after all.
- Why, in a frost and winter injury prone region would you not carry crop insurance?

Disclaimer!

- I am telling you what and why to do, but not how to do it. Learn from the right people, books, etc. then practice!
- Measure twice, cut once. No shortcuts.
- It is critically important that you learn the principles and practices, proper methods, evaluation and impact, and effects on grapevines, fruit and wine
- Whenever possible, measure results! Establish a simple experimental design and leave a check or control. If you have questions, ask Terry Bradshaw.



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About PWGN

The purpose of this website is to give commercial wine growers in Pennsylvania and the non-western wine states access to current and relevant viticulture news, information, and events that will enable them to grow high quality wine grapes. It will be a source of locally produced materials but also a portal to the amazing wealth of viticulture information available on the internet. The resources that reside on this site are carefully selected by the viticulture educator. It is central to our extension mission to discover and transfer practical research-based knowledge to the grape growing industry, but we also seek the best new ideas and technologies from innovative grower/practitioners. We hope you will find it useful and we welcome your comments and feedback. Thank you for visiting and please return often for more news and information.

I welcome your comments and suggestions about this website. Please send your ideas for future topics and how cooperative extension can help you and your vineyard to [✉ mlc12@psu.edu](mailto:mlc12@psu.edu).

A brief summary of the

Spotlight



The Finger Lakes is on a roll. I had not been to this lovely wine region for a couple of years and a recent visit reminded me what great white wines can be made here. As

fine as the wines are, the people are even more remarkable. I tried to summarize my visit in my [Finger Lakes Notes](#).

It's meeting season, a time to learn about new ideas, practices and technologies in viticulture and enology, and to network and meet with friends. To decide where and when to go, browse through the 2012 [EVENTS CALENDAR](#) and [access meeting registration materials and information](#).

I try to explain the complex relationship between [Vine Size and Balance](#). This is a goal that is achieved in all great vineyards and wines. You cannot properly develop or prune a vineyard without understand these principles.

Features

Featured Article(s):

[Notes from Long Island](#): a January visit to [Shinn Estate Vineyard](#); a vineyard tour and grower discussions with Alice Wise; and from the Long Island Ag Forum excellent information about botrytis, sour rot and other grape diseases from Dr. Wayne Wilcox and Dr. Wendy McFadden-Smith. Dr. Tim Martinson reported on the affects of vineyard nitrogen on yeast assimilable nitrogen in juice and wine, and its affect on botrytis ([article](#)).

Featured Web Site(s): Cornell University's viticulture and enology program is a leader in the East in research and extension education. It's no surprise that the [Cornell Fruit: Grapes](#) website is chock full of great information. It's well worth a visit and some time browsing through topics like production, IPM, enology, labor and others.

Denise Gardner, Penn State extension [enology website](#)

Previous featured websites: [Linden Vineyards](#) (see vintage summaries and article archives), [Texas Winegrape Network](#), [Cornell Research Vineyard](#)