



Spring 2010

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The National Grape and Wine Initiative (NGWI) is an industry-driven partnership with academic and government representatives, designed to focus emphasis on research and extension as a means to strengthen the competitiveness of America's grape and grape product industries.

Message from Jean-Mari Peltier, NGWI President

This spring, East and West Coast grape funding interests met to coordinate funding of a variety of pressing research projects – some of those funded included critical components of nationally important projects, such as climate change and irrigation management. At the same time, expert panels convened in Washington DC to evaluate projects submitted under the Specialty Crop Research Initiative – including those supported by the National Grape and Wine Initiative. The grape industry will benefit from strategic alignments of non-federally-funded local projects with larger-scaled national grape research priorities. (For a full outline of NGWI supported research, you may access the NGWI Winter newsletter by [clicking here](#))

We are continuing our plans for a special joint meeting with representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to review, refine and revise our mutual goals for research in grapes – most likely to take place in October of 2010. In an exemplary working relationship, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) regularly coordinates with NGWI participants to target millions of dollars in nationally funded research work on grapes. We are extremely pleased that the President's 2011 Budget for ARS would include funding for breeding work on drought and cold tolerance, as well as funds to address the needs of specialty crops with global climate change strategies. Help from NGWI partners will be needed to assure that Congress agrees with these ARS funding priorities.

Finally, work continues with NGWI's Consumer Insights Technical Working Committee to design an epidemiology study to tap into the broad resources of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) database to examine relationships between consumption of fresh grapes, raisins and grape juice and a variety of health impacts, including an evaluation of factors related to metabolic syndrome. This work follows on NGWI's success in publication of the health benefits of grapes and grape products in a special supplement of the Journal of Nutrition last year.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- National Clean Plant Network, Davis, CA: May 11-13
- USDA Specialty Crop Listening Session, San Antonio, TX: May 25
- USDA Specialty Crop Listening Session, Sacramento, CA: June 9
- NGWI Research & Theme Committees, Seattle, WA: June 17
- NGWI Board of Directors, Seattle, WA: June 18
- Cool Climate Viticulture and Enology Symposium, Seattle, WA: June 20-22
- 61st American Society of Enology & Viticulture National Conference, Seattle, WA: June 23-24

NGWI Invited to Submit Block Grant

NGWI was invited to submit a full application for a California Block Grant on reducing process water volume and salinity in wineries and other processing facilities. Approximately 200 block grant applications were narrowed to a little over 100 – and most likely around two dozen projects will receive funding. NGWI and the Wine Institute are co-applicants on this grant, along with the California League of Food Processors. We have requested nearly \$500,000 over two and a half years to support work to help reduce water use in cleaning operations by 30%, reduce salts in cleaning compounds, and reduce salinity of the process water stream. The final application deadline was submitted by NGWI on April 27 and we will learn about funding in about a month.

NGWI Research Update

The following is a brief update from NGWI, with an emphasis about what is currently happening with agricultural research budgets:

- **NIFA:** At a March 29th meeting of the official National Agricultural Research (NAREEE) Advisory Board in Washington DC, Dr. Molly Jahn, acting Under-Secretary of USDA, outlined the Obama Administration's priorities, and how the budget reflects the shifts in emphasis to global food security, climate change, food safety, sustainable bio-fuels and childhood obesity. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA – formerly CSREES) proposed 2011 budget includes cuts in the base budget. Some cuts threaten the future of important university agricultural research programs including some in food science. In addition, NIFA released a federal register notice which outlined all of the programs proposed for the former National Research Initiative, now known as the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). (Further discussion below.)
- **ARS:** The President's 2011 Budget at USDA also includes several new items for ARS which will positively impact grapes: funding for breeding on drought and cold tolerance, as well as work on global climate change and specialty crops. In addition, we are working to set a joint workshop on research priorities between NGWI and ARS, mostly likely in October of this year.
- **AFRI:** NGWI spoke on behalf of the U.S. grape industry, as well as the Specialty Crop Research Team when the American Society of Plant Biologists hosted a NIFA listening session on April 13th in Washington DC. Along with other speakers, we expressed concern about the elimination of so-called "Section 406 Integrated Funds" (which funded work on soil fumigant alternatives, food safety, water quality, and Regional IPM Centers.) In addition, the NIFA budget appears to eliminate foundational support for many programs important to production agriculture and specialty crops. NGWI pointed out the fact that the USDA supports a unique research portfolio important to continued agricultural productivity -- a portfolio which has not and will not be undertaken by another federal agency.
- **Specialty Crops & Farm Bill:** The House has started drafting some language for omnibus farm legislation and held a listening session in Fresno on May 3rd; according to Betsy Bina (Senate Ag, Minority Staff) the Senate hasn't started yet. Congress will be looking for input on specialty crop and research programs as they develop new language.
- **NAREEE Listening Sessions on Specialty Crop Programs:** The NAREEE Advisory Board will host two official listening sessions on the implementation of both the SCRI and the Block Grant programs – seeking input on both the substance and

processes of the programs. One will be held in San Antonio, Texas May 25th; the other will be in Sacramento, California on June 9th. As a member of the NAREEE Board Specialty Crops Committee, NGWI President Peltier will attend both meetings.

Chair of Newly Created NAREEE Work Group to Evaluate USDA Research: The National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics (NAREEE) Advisory Board has created a new working group to study the evolution of formula, capacity and competitive agricultural research funding at USDA. Peltier has been asked to chair this working group, which will advise the USDA Secretary and members of Congress on broader questions of research funding decisions made within the Department. Over the next several months, the working group will identify major challenges facing producers, the food industry, consumers, families and rural communities and evaluate how current USDA/Research Education and Economic (REE) priorities will help producers to remain competitive in the global economy. In addition, the working group will evaluate how REE priorities are set. We have also been charged to examine the process used in setting up the peer reviews for the competitive grants programs. Finally, we have been asked to review the breakdown of competitive, base and capacity funding, and how shifts in that funding impact agricultural competitiveness – particularly for specialty and energy crops.

NGWI-Supported SCRI Grant Work Underway: Creation of a Grape Community of Practice under eXtension, an NGWI priority project, is underway, with nearly \$500,000 of federal support. We are hoping to officially launch this network by the beginning of 2011.

2010 SCRI Grant Applications Pending: NGWI supported five SCRI projects in 2010. The results of these grant applications will be known within about a month. Projects supported by NGWI are as follows:

1. Developing Sustainable Vineyard Water Management Strategies for Limited and Impaired Water Supplied (Ayars and McElrone)
 2. Intelligent Vineyard Monitoring for Improved Production Management and Product Quality (Bates, Singh and Tarara)
 3. Improved Grape and Wine Quality in a Challenging Environment: An Eastern US Model for Sustainability and Economic Vitality (Wolf)
 4. Pest Management on a Continental Scale: A Unified Approach for Viticulture East of the Rockies (Gadoury)
 5. National Research Planning Initiative for Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions in Vineyards and Other Perennial Crops (Smart, Lakso and others)
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