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Chairman's Message

Thomas G Davenport, Welch's National Grape Cooperative

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As the end of my term as chair of NGWI's board draws near, I want to take this opportunity to thank the board members and the many others who have so greatly contributed to building consensus around our key initiatives. I have always believed that in our global environment, we must be low-cost producers of both the highest quality grapes and the products derived from those grapes.

Our focus on defining the viticulture research needs critical to becoming low-cost producers coupled with effective educational outreach has truly been successfully initiated. Bringing together wine, table-grape, raisin and juice industries across the U.S. to develop research and educational outreach priorities was our critical first step.

Now we are embarking on initiatives to seek funding resources essential to these priorities. Along the way, we developed a strong partnership with land-grant and non land-grant institutions, as well as USDA Agriculture Research Service administration and research scientists, and USDA Cooperative State Research and Extension Education Service.

During our journey, we were asked by industry producers how this initiative would help them on their farms, in their wineries and their other grape-related businesses. The simple answer is, "The results will enable each segment of our industry to improve profitability. If we don't continue to focus on efficiency and quality, some other countries will and they will put us out of business."

We started NGWI looking at the Australian model. The Australians clearly defined their objective – capture a significant share of the world wine market. They then developed specific research strategies to support that objective. Their focus on producing high-quality, low-cost wine products that would appeal to consumers palates has proven extremely successful. NGWI chose a similar

model, one that represents our unique grape products and regional diversity. Today, our industry has a total impact of \$162 billion. We want to triple that by the year 2020. To do so, we must incorporate additional industry resources with current federal and state resources. This must be done in a cohesive, cooperative, and sustainable manner that efficiently utilizes all available resources. I am confident that we will be successful because I have witnessed the commitment of our board, government leaders, and industry partners to making it happen.

NGWI 2007 Accomplishments & Activities

by Nancy Irelan, Red Tail Ridge Winery, NGWI Research Committee Chair

USDA-ARS Grape Industry Workshop

The second USDA-ARS Grape Industry Workshop was held in July 2007 in Kennewick, Washington. The objectives of the meeting were to provide an update of ARS accomplishments in grape and wine research, to identify and update critical industry research priorities and to build collaborative relationships for integrated research projects with the grape industry. NGWI research committee chairs presented their key research needs in the areas of production efficiency, crop quality, sustainability, consumers and nutrition and extension outreach. Several break-out sessions were conducted to identify and develop future research directions and strategies. The key outcome of the meeting, improving communication and interaction between ARS grape researchers and the members of the grape and wine industry, will continue to ensure that industry needs are met by ARS research programs, as well as foster the dialogue between ARS and industry for future collaborations. A video was produced which highlights current ARS research on grapes and can be viewed here:

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/video/vnr/grapes.htm>

NGWI 2007 Accomplishments & Activities...

National Clean Stock Network

High quality, pest and disease free propagating materials are the foundation of the modern US grape industry and one of our key competitive advantages. Members of the NGWI have worked closely with organizers at the USDA-CSREES, as well as the representatives from many other key specialty crop commodities, to lay the initial ground work for a National Clean Stock Network. The goal of the National Clean Stock Network is to provide national funding for the establishment and maintenance of regional centers which will provide clean germplasm to both nurseries and growers of horticultural crops. NGWI representatives attended a meeting in Maryland in May, 2007, to outline how to move forward with a program to best serve the grape industry. The plan includes additional federal support for Foundation Plant Services, UC Davis, as well as the development of other regional clean stock facilities in key production areas.

ARS Research Planning Process

Several NGWI research committee members were invited to participate in USDA-ARS planning sessions for key national programs in crop production and mechanization. Participation in these planning efforts is critical in order to have the research needs of the grape industry addressed by USDA programs and researchers. In particular, the areas of production efficiency and mechanization – are critical areas to all segments of the US grape industry. NGWI representatives discussed the need for production research which would reduce the cost of production while maintaining product quality, including methods to improve the efficiency of inputs such as labor, water and fertilizers in grape production. Advanced mechanization methods – including the use of artificial intelligence for vine pruning and mechanization of cultural practices including canopy and irrigation management – were proposed as topics for future research. Research is also needed to reduce the impact of grape production on the environment, with technology solutions for reducing spray drift and processing waste water as top priorities.

Grape Phytonutrient Meeting

In May 2007, NGWI members representing all aspects of the grape industry – wine, juice, raisin and table grapes – gathered for a phytonutrient summit in San Francisco. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the ongoing research efforts of each industry segment regarding the health benefits of grapes and grape products, as well as how these efforts could be coordinated to improve their efficiency and effectiveness. Participants were updated on recently completed and ongoing chemical characterization and clinical trials to improve our understanding of the potential physiological mechanisms mediated by grape constituents. Federal policy and regulatory requirements necessary to make food health claims were also reviewed. Several key steps for the future of this work were outlined, including methods to secure additional funding as well as forming a scientific body to advise and guide future collaborative studies. The group also discussed the need for a national education and outreach program to consumers, as well as hosting an international symposium on the potential health benefits of grapes and grape products sometime in 2008.



NGWI 2007 Accomplishments & Activities...

Sustainability

The NGWI Sustainability Committee has been busy overseeing the development of a nation-wide outreach and education program on best practices for winery sustainability. The project deliverable – an extension education course and workbook on best practices for managing winery waste water and other environmental impacts – will be completed by the end of the year and unveiled at the Unified Grape and Wine Symposium in January of 2008. Program materials will include planning and self-assessment guidelines, working templates and resource information with economic models to determine best practice for a variety of situations.

National Grape Registry

Earmarked funding provided by the NGWI helped to facilitate the successful development and launch of a National Grape Registry Website. Constructed and designed by researcher scientists at Foundation Plant Services, UC Davis, and the USDA-ARS Germplasm Repository, Davis, the objective of the registry is to provide industry with the availability and key cultural profiles for all grape materials found in the US – including wine, juice, raisin and table grape varieties. Plant materials are currently accessible at the variety level with extensive synonym lists, and include listings from the five major public collections, as well as 64 commercial grape nurseries in the US. The site contains user-friendly search features for finding over 600 different varieties and references. The website can be accessed at www.ngr.ucdavis.edu.

Extension Education and Outreach

A major objective for NGWI is to provide support and coordination for national grape and wine extension education efforts. Effective, high quality extension education is critical to delivering the latest research results and information to the grower and processor community. Prior to the establishment of the NGWI, the grape and wine extension community in the US did not have a national forum for discussion and interaction. Under the leadership of its Extension Education and Outreach Committee, NGWI has organized and sponsored a nation-wide conference for grape and wine extension educators for the past two years. The objective of the meeting is to foster interaction among grape and wine extension professionals in the US, as well as provide a platform for the development of national programs and educational materials. Major efforts of this group include the development of a national, web-based tool for the diagnosis of grape pests and diseases, distance learning and video conferencing tools for continuing education, as well as the improved recruitment and training of young extension professionals.

2008 Extension Leadership Conference

by Ed Hellman, Texas A & M University, NGWI Board Member

NGWI's Extension and Outreach Education Committee is sponsoring the third annual Extension Viticulture and Enology Leadership Conference April 2-3, 2008 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. One of the major objectives of this meeting is to review and revise extension and outreach education priorities and strategies for the National Grape & Wine Initiative. Other agenda items include progress reports from working groups and discussion of potential new collaborative projects or activities to pursue.

The 2007 Conference was attended by 28 professionals representing 18 states. Working groups were created to investigate licensing opportunities for distance education classes, prepare an inventory of educational resources for new producers, and to examine possibilities for a national repository system for sharing electronic resources. The following outreach education priorities were identified: create and fund a position of national coordinator for extension viticulture and enology; encourage career development of outreach educators; develop a national viticulture and enology distance education certificate program; and increase and improve vineyard and winery workforce expertise. For more information about the 2008 conference contact Ed Hellman at 806-746-6101, ewhellman@ag.tamu.edu.

California Raisins

by Rick Stark, Sun-Maid, NGWI Board Member

2007 Raisin Harvest – There are three elements that are crucial to the development of a good raisin: 1) a clean, high quality grape; 2) hot, dry weather from mid-August through mid-October; and, 3) the ability to get the crop harvested either by hand or mechanically. Grapes in 2007 were very clean with little or no insect or disease damage and high sugar by mid-August, which allowed growers to begin harvest earlier than normal. Those growers who were able to harvest early took advantage of triple-digit-heat, which accelerated the drying process. There were a couple of rain scares on August 30th and September 22nd, but ideal conditions followed both and harvest continued. It now appears that the majority of the crop will dry with only minor damage experienced.

Methods of Harvesting – There are three methods utilized to harvest raisins: 1) Conventional; 2) Machine; and, 3) Dried on the Vine (DOV).

Conventional harvesting is where a worker places approximately 20 pounds of grapes on a paper tray (it takes roughly 4½ pounds of grapes to make one pound of raisins) and leaves them in the sun to dry for between 14 to 21 days where temperatures on the trays can reach 140 degrees. This method has been in place for nearly a hundred years and today is utilized by approximately 50% of the industry.



Machine harvesting onto continuous tray is when fruit canes are cut between the crown and the fruit and left a minimum of ten days, making them easier to remove without damage. They are then mechanically shaken from the vine and placed on a long roll of paper to dry for seven to ten days.

Dried on the Vine raisins have the fruit cane cut and dry on the vine for five to eight weeks before being machine harvested. These raisins are never placed on paper trays, and it is estimated that about 20% of the crop is now harvested by DOV. The longer harvest season and the conversion of 50% of the industry to mechanical harvesting improved the timeliness of harvest.



NGWI 2008 Planned Activities

Quality Committee

The Quality Committee will be assembling a workgroup of research and industry stakeholders to identify key research needs and associated work plans to accomplish those needs. This workshop will most likely take place at the Unified Symposium in January 2008.

Sustainability Activities

The Sustainability Committee will be active in four main areas for 2008. The first project is focused on reduction of fixed dissolved solids (salts) in winery process waste water through reformulation of cleaning chemicals to reduce and/or eliminate the salt creating component of the material. Development and outreach education efforts relating to management of winery waste water and other environmental impacts will also continue in 2008. The Sustainability Committee would also like to work with the ARS Environmental Assessment Group to begin integrating grape-based projects into their current activities and work plans with other crops. Work on carbon sequestration will also be initiated in the coming year.

Extension and Outreach

The Extension and Outreach Committee will concentrate efforts on four key areas in the coming year. They will be working on the development of a National Distance Education Viticulture and Enology Certification Program and the creation of a National V&E Extension Website. The Committee will also continue their efforts to extend peer-reviewed research to popular industry media and to obtain support for the 2008 National Viticulture and Enology Extension Leadership Conference (page 3).

Consumer Insights

Based on the discussions from the NGWI Consumer Insights Industry Leadership Team and the USDA – ARS Grape Industry Workshop, it was agreed that the industry will focus on the most relevant health research initiatives related to grape. In order to determine the research strategy and influence the research direction, an international scientific symposium or consensus conference on grapes / grape products and health will be hosted in a strategic location in 2008. This symposium will provide the information needed to conduct a gap analysis of research done to date and determine the direction of future research initiatives. An integrated group of reputable health researchers will be invited to participate in this grape and grape products “think tank” review of research and determination of next steps.

Production Efficiency

Based on the discussions from the USDA-ARS Grape Industry Workshop, it was agreed that an increased research focus should be given to the areas of soil and water quality in viticulture. The focus of this work should be the development of best management practices for maintaining fruit yield and quality in regions where either soil or water quality parameters are considered poor and may impact regional best management practices for irrigation. The goal is to optimize water use in order to maintain the highest possible yield and quality. It is anticipated that this issue will increase in importance as the amounts of water available for irrigation decline – from both surface and underground sources – and the levels of potentially toxic elements in soil and water increase. An integrated research team, including viticulturists, plant physiologists, soil and water scientists, plant breeders, food chemists and engineers will be assembled to undertake the project.

NGWI Officers and Directors

Officers

- Chairman —Thomas Davenport, National Grape Cooperative Association/Welch's—New York
- Chairman Elect—Mary Wagner, E&J Gallo Winery—California
- Past President—Jerry Lohr, J. Lohr Winery—California
- Secretary/Treasurer—Kathleen Nave, California Table Grape Commission—California

Directors

- James Ballard, James Arthur Vineyards, NE
- Mark Chien, Penn State Cooperative Extension - PA
- E.B. "Pete" Downs, Kendall-Jackson Wine Estates - CA
- Ted Farthing, Oregon Winegrowers Association - OR
- Jim Finkle, Constellation Brands - NY
- Ernest J. Gallo, E & J Gallo Winery - CA
- Ann Heidig, Lake Anna Winery - VA
- Ed Hellman, Texas A&M University - TX
- Hal Huffsmith, American Vineyard Foundation - CA
- Nancy Irelan, Red Tail Ridge Winery - NY
- Steve Kupina, Centerra - NY
- Dan Martinez, Martinez Orchards - CA
- John Martini, Anthony Road Vineyards - NY
- Sally Murphy, The Wine Institute - DC
- Bill Nelson, WineAmerica - Washington, DC
- Cliff Ohmart, Lodi-Woodbridge Wine Commission - CA
- Karen Ross, California Association of Winegrape Growers - CA
- Vicky Scharlau, Washington Association of Wine Grape Growers - WA
- Rich Smith, Paraiso Vineyards, CA
- Rick Stark, Sun-Maid Growers of California - CA
- Keith Striegler, Institute for Continental Climate Viticulture & Enology -MO
- Jim Trezise, New York Wine and Grape Foundation - NY
- Al Wiederkehr, Wiederkehr Wine Cellars, Inc. - AK
- Tedd Wildman, Stone Tree Vineyards - WA

Calendar of Events

December 5-6, 2007
Columbia, MO

Understanding & Preventing Freeze Damage In Vineyards—Workshop
<http://icvve.missouri.edu/>

January 29-31, 2008
Sacramento, CA

Unified Wine & Grape Symposium
<http://www.unifiedsymposium.org/>

January 29, 2008
Sacramento, CA

NGWI Lunch Mixer, Unified Symposium, 11:30 –1:30 p.m.

January 29, 2008
Sacramento, CA

Wine Business Monthly Dinner, Unified Symposium

January 31, 2008
Sacramento, CA

NGWI Board Meeting, 5-8 p.m.
<http://www.ngwi.org>

February 1, 2008
Sacramento, CA

ASEV Phenolics Substances in Grapes & Wines Symposium
<http://www.asev.org/>

February 6-8, 2008
Kennewick, WA

Washington Association of Wine Grape Growers Annual Meeting
<http://www.wavgg.org/index.php?page>

April 2-3, 2008
Albuquerque, NM

Extension Viticulture and Enology Leadership Conference

June 17-20, 2008
Portland, OR

American Society for Enology and Viticulture Annual Meeting
<http://www.asev.org>

POST YOUR EVENT

Does your organization have an upcoming event or readers want to know of? Please send information on any upcoming wine/grape events to Ken Melban via e-mail kenmelban@sbcglobal.net. Please be sure to include the website or registration information for your event. We are happy to include this information on our website and in our newsletter.