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NATIONAL  
GRAPE &  
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**National Grape & Wine Initiative Announces  
Major Research Grant to Combat Trunk Diseases**

***Distinguished Research Team Mobilizing to Help Alleviate  
Diseases that Costs Vineyards \$200 Million Annually***

**SACRAMENTO, Calif. (Oct. 5, 2012)** – With trunk diseases devastating grape vineyards and other crops throughout the nation, \$1.8 million in federal research funding has been secured in what is viewed as a major step to rid agriculture of this costly epidemic, the National Grape & Wine Initiative (NGWI) announced today.

“Trunk diseases are the single biggest reason for removal of American vineyards,” said Vicky Scharlau, Chairman of NGWI, which played a central role in obtaining the funding. “These resources will open the door for a distinguished research team to develop innovative approaches that we hope will contribute to treat diseases that robs the wine and grape industry of \$200 million every year.”

The project, “New Detection, Research, and Extension Tools for Managing Wood-Canker Diseases of Fruit and Nut Crops” is the first multi-crop project which will tackle trunk diseases. In addition to grapes, trunk diseases also ravage the pistachio and almond industries, which are also backing the effort, funded under a two-year Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) grant.

Dr. Kendra Baumgartner of the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) led the winning grant team in concert with NGWI. Joining her on the trans-disciplinary team will be ARS colleague Dr. Themis Michailides, as well as Dr. Grant Cramer of the University of Nevada, Reno. The team will pioneer innovative diagnostic tools, and hopes to include a mobile device application to aid in vineyard diagnoses of trunk diseases including *Eutypa* and *Botryosphaeria*.

“We will seek methods to detect disease symptoms in grape leaves and shoots, which would allow growers to know earlier whether their vines were infected,” said Dr. Baumgartner. “Our work will use state-of-the-art tools like special CT scans from Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, to understand how these diseases affect vines at the molecular level, which will help lead to more effective treatment regimes.”

Acknowledging that trunk diseases are one the most critical challenges facing grape growers and producers, NGWI members are donating their own land as real-life laboratories for the experiments. This will include table grapes from two different regions, and wine grapes from five. NGWI members will also provide ongoing input as participants on the project's advisory board.

"We are excited about this project not just because of its practical implications for the grape industry," said NGWI's Scharlau. "It also underscores the value of a system that allows agriculture to identify the needs and priorities so that innovative research can focus on solutions that will have the maximum impact."

She said that these efforts to combat trunk diseases are a prime example of how SCRI was intended to work pursuant to the 2008 Farm Bill.

Said Scharlau, "This grant should serve as a reminder to Congress about the need to ensure a vibrant SCRI program for the future."

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*The National Grape and Wine Initiative focuses on research and extension to strengthen the US grape and grape product industries in partnership with academics and government. Grapes are the nation's leading specialty crop and all industry segments including raisin, juice, fresh grape and wine created the NGWI coalition to drive research for maximum productivity, sustainability and competitiveness.*