



BC Wine Grape Council Newsletter

Volume 2 No 1 - May– June 2008

What has been happening

By Hans Buchler, Chair

As I write this report, it seems like spring has finally sprung. Never in the 25 years I have been growing grapes in the south Okanagan, have I seen bud break at such a late date. In some regards this may have been a blessing in disguise, since some night time temperatures have been a bit below freezing late in April. On the other hand one wonders what this will mean for this year's harvest – will the plants be able to catch up on the lost time, or will this delay carry over all the way to harvest?

While I most certainly cannot predict the future, meteorologists have a number of different hypotheses as to what might be going on. The most common explanation is that we are presently in a La Niña cycle (cooler tropical pacific ocean water temperatures) as opposed to El Niño, which was partly responsible for the warmer than usual climate in the past few years. This system oscillates between warm (El Niño) to neutral (or cold La Niña) conditions on average every 3-4 years.

Another relatively recent explanation, the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) is a longer term Pacific Ocean water temperature cycle that might affect the frequency of El Niño or La Niña events. If the PDO is in the cool phase for a long period of time then there will likely be a decrease in El Niño events, while La Niña would be more common. Anyway, according to NASA'S Jet Propulsion Lab, the PDO appears to have shifted into the "cool" phase. Most of the past two decades have seen the PDO in the "warm" phase.

A third cycle with shorter-term effects is the Arctic Oscillation, a shift in higher atmosphere pressure, affecting the jet stream. Right now we seem to be in a negative Arctic Oscillation – high upper level atmospheric pressure over the Arctic forcing cool arctic air further south than would normally be the case.

Given the fact that we are already at least two weeks behind normal, we might be well advised to do all we can to avoid delayed maturity at harvest time through careful management of water, soil fertility, crop load, and vigour.

Federal Pull Out and Strategic Initiatives

The *Federal pull out and strategic initiatives funding agreement* has still not been signed by the Federal and Provincial counterparts. We have however been assured that any plantings removed after the middle of October 2007 will be eligible for funding.

Government has rejected the proposed revision of PST exemptions for farms; the current system of list-based exemptions will continue for the time being.

Family Farm Truck Emblem Program

As of February 20th a *Family Farm Truck Emblem* is no longer required to purchase coloured fuel. All that is needed is a farm plate which is easily obtained by showing a Farmer Identity Card or a recent Property Assessment Notice. Corporate structure and farm equity are no longer an issue.

Sustainable Practices Certification Program

The BC Wine Grape Council is considering developing a *Sustainable Practices Certification Program* for vineyards and wineries. In this context we have organized a panel discussion at our yearly Enology & Viticulture Conference on July 21-22. Please make sure to attend – the full list of presentations and workshops is on our web site at www.bcwgc.org. ❖

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Canada's First Co-Op Ends in Disaster

By Tony Aspler

Canada's first venture into a co-operative winery has ended in financial disaster for 19 grape growers in the Niagara Peninsula. Niagara Vintners Inc, and its winery, called 20 Bees, was an association of 19 long-time grape growers in the Niagara Peninsula, together with winemaker Sue Ann Staff. The winery is now in receivership after only one year of operation.

In a written statement to the St Catharine's Standard, the local newspaper for the wine region, David Wiley, one of the share-holding growers, said Niagara Vintners was started 'with the best of intentions.'

The 'committed group of growers' behind it, he said, recognized that they could do something to change what he called 'the precariousness of the grape industry'. 'This attempted change came in the form of starting a winery. The winery created was a successful brand. The winery has failed financially.'

Collectively, the group farmed 1,780ha (4,400 acres), about 25% of the Niagara Peninsula's total vineyard area. In its first year of operations 20 Bees produced 30,000 cases of wine in an attempt to compete with Vincor and Andres, the two giants of the Ontario wine industry.

Unlike these large commercial concerns they tried to do it by producing only VQA wines made from 100% locally-grown grapes. Industry observers say the problem for the company is that it expanded too quickly. It invested in a CAN\$40m winery facility that was expected to be completed in 2009 and had projected to employ 100 people. The plans called for a bottling plant, warehouse, retail outlet and a space for hospitality.

There is some talk that the building might be used as a custom crush facility, similar to the Napa Wine Company in Oakland, California. ❖

New Regulations for Employees Who Work Alone

By Terri Holizki, WorkSafeBC Industry & Labour Services Manager, Small Business, WorkSafe BC

Do you or one of your employees work alone at least some of the time? If so, do you have a plan for what to do in an emergency? If a lone worker is injured or an emergency occurs, how does the worker get help?

What if the worker is unconscious?

Growing concern over employees who work alone has led to amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation. If you have employees who work alone or in isolation, for example, working in the vineyard, applying pesticides, inspecting vats, or working in the retail shop, you should be aware of these amendments, which took effect February 1, 2008.

If you have employees who work alone, you need to:

- Identify hazards that may cause injury in situations where assistance is not readily available
- Tell workers about the hazards
- Eliminate or minimize the hazards where possible
- Develop and implement a written procedure for checking on the wellbeing of your workers (*a person-check procedure*)
- Train workers in the person-check procedure
- Review written procedures at least annually

Person-check procedures must include:

1. Name of person who will be responsible for ensuring contact, either to make contact or to receive contact from lone worker
2. How contact will be made, for example, in person, by phone, by radio, by text message, etc.
3. When and how often contact will be made, for example:
 - At beginning of shift, then every two hours, and at the end of shift (*intervals for contact must be predetermined based on the hazards and risks for injury as well as discussions with the worker*)
 - Additional checks before and after predetermined high-risk activities such as operating mobile equipment
4. Specific procedures in the event that predetermined contact is not made as scheduled, for example, the number of subsequent attempts to contact, contacting neighbouring businesses or client, sending someone out to check on them, and when to call 9-1-1.

For more information, visit www.WorkSafeBC.com or email questions to smallbiz@WorkSafeBC.com. ❖

Is Your Winery Benefiting From Tax Incentive Programs?

By Geoff McIntyre, CA, Meyers Norris Penny LLP

Running your own winery can be a dream come true for many wine lovers. The thought of enjoying the fruits of your labour at the end of the day, while gazing up at an immaculate sunset can be rewarding both personally and professionally.

While working in the wine business presents a great deal of opportunities, with those rewards come a number of challenges as well. The work involved in running a winery is demanding and understanding the business of wine can be a full-time job. Do you tend to your business plan and tax situation as much as your winery? Are you taking advantage of tax incentive programs for your winery?

Key benefits of the SR&ED program

Electronic moisture probes to monitor soil, weather stations linked to websites, sap-flow monitors that measure vines' water intake and innovative bottling techniques designed to streamline processes. These are just a few of the new technologies used by some of today's profitable wineries and growers.

Taking steps towards developing these technologies may seem cost-prohibitive or a task best left to government-funded research groups. However, with the aid of government tax incentives, research and development (R&D) is not solely in the arena of those with deep pockets.

The *Scientific Research and Experimental Development* (SR&ED) program is a federal tax incentive program available to all Canadian taxpayers. This program allows even emerging wineries and growers to make R&D a regular part of their business operations.

Often, companies fail to make SR&ED claims because they don't believe their activities are "high-tech" enough to qualify. In fact, a wide range of activities may be eligible for full or partial SR&ED credits. These activities may involve:

- ♦ Developing a new process.
- ♦ Improving an existing process to make it faster, more efficient, more precise, more economical or more environmentally friendly.
- ♦ Creating a new product or enhancing an existing product by resolving a technical challenge common to your industry.

Typical projects that apply to the wine and tree fruits industry can include new or improved bottling techniques; yeast development; advancements in storage and

reduced spoilage; sorting techniques; handling and harvesting technology; and pest control.

Wineries and growers routinely encounter and overcome challenges during daily operations. Innovative solutions to these everyday problems may qualify as SR&ED without you ever knowing. The SR&ED program supports any attempts to improve your business operations, even if they do not prove successful.

Tax credits for your business

The overall goal of the SR&ED program is to help your winery take potential technical risks that lead to improvements in your industry. In British Columbia, the SR&ED program offers Canadian controlled private corporations (CCPCs) a maximum of \$564 (after tax) of investment tax credits for every \$1,000 spent on wages. A non-CCPC would receive \$319 (after tax) ITCs in the same scenario. This translates into real savings for companies willing to invest in R&D.

How you can learn more

Meyers Norris Penny Chartered Accountants and Business Advisors is hosting a complimentary workshop aimed at helping you build a better business and tax strategy for your winery. Held during the 9th Annual Enology & Viticulture Conference, July 21-22, the workshop will cover a wide range of topics including:

- ♦ SR&ED - Determining which of your projects may qualify
- ♦ Financial fluency - Building your understanding of how your business creates profit
- ♦ Measuring for performance – How to focus on your business profit drivers
- ♦ Understanding your cost of production
- ♦ Taxation of vineyard and winery profits

Don't miss this opportunity to learn new ways to enhance your winery business so you can focus on making outstanding wine. ❖

Geoff McIntyre, CA, is with Meyers Norris Penny LLP in Kelowna and specializes in advising wineries and fruit growers. Geoff can be reached at 250-763-8919 or geoff.mcintyre@mnp.ca.

Research Updates

Insecticide efficacy – In collaboration with Karen Bedford (AAFC Minor Use Program), several insecticides have been evaluated for the control of leafhoppers and cutworm, including Petro Canada Superfine summer oil, neem (Aza-Direct), and rynaxypyr (Altacor). For 2008, the OMRI-approved formulation of spinosad (Entrust) is being evaluated for cutworm control at a commercial vineyard site, while carbaryl (Sevin XLR) will be assessed at PARC. For leafhoppers, neem and the insect growth regulator Applaud will be investigated. Laboratory bioassays are being conducted in order to establish susceptibilities of the three major cutworm pests in colony at PARC to a large number of insecticides. This research, which is being conducted jointly with Dr. Mike Smirle, AAFC PARC, will help identify insecticides and spray concentrations that would effectively control these pests.

Study of cover crops for the suppression of cutworm damage to grapes – Large research plots were established in four commercial vineyards in the fall of 2007. Based on correlations of reduced feeding damage with the presence of winter annual mustards in the vine rows, treatments include vine rows that are sprayed prior to bud break or rows with mixtures of shepherd's purse and *Draba verna*. Some treatments with and without winter annual mustards will also have white clover sown in the drive rows. Included in this study will be an assessment of vine physiology, nutrient status, and collection of micro-environmental data. The biology and feeding preferences of *Abagrotis orbis*, *A. nefascia*, and *A. reedi*, which are the three major species attacking grapes in British Columbia, are being studied in the laboratory. Identification of climbing cutworms attacking grapes in British Columbia will be completed this spring.

Leafhopper and Phytoplasma Monitoring Program
The CFIA-mandated post-entry monitoring of leafhoppers for grapevines imported to Canada in 2006 is in its final year. Sweep net samples, sticky traps and visual observations will again be used to monitor leafhoppers in Okanagan and Similkameen vineyards. For 2008, monitoring is scheduled to begin in the middle of May in order to better evaluate numbers of overwintering adults. Associated with this program, grapevines are also being sampled for the presence of phytoplasma diseases as part of a collaborative national study.

Crown gall – Via a grower's survey and personal communication with vineyard managers, we have located a small number of sites with crown gall. Numerous samples have been collected and isolates were processed for DNA sequence characterization using 16S ribosomal

DNA. Sequence data has identified only three potentially tumorigenic isolates belonging to two *Agrobacterium* species: *A. rhizogenes* and *A. tumefaciens*. Inoculations using these isolate and control strains have produced typical galls on indicator plants. To date, we have been unable to isolate any *A. vitis*, the common cause of crown gall, from symptomatic grape plants. Researchers in Spain however, have published similar results (*Plant Path.* 57(2), 367) to those we have described above.

Shrivel berry – We have found good evidence that shrivel berry, a disorder that arrests berry development before harvest maturity, can result from vine stresses including over-cropping and shading of leaves on individual shoots. Last year (2007) was to be the final research year for this project and a detailed experiment, designed to elucidate physiological factors involved in shrivel berry, was initiated in a commercial Pinot Gris block that has exhibited substantial shrivel berry each year for the last five years. However, the block did not produce any fruit with shrivel berry symptoms last year so the experiment will be conducted this year.

Small-lot winery – The small lot winery at PARC currently has 34 50-L jacketed tanks and a glycol system, mostly donated by Viking Refrigeration, with temperature-control ports for 16 tanks. Wine temperatures can be individually computer controlled and monitored. In this final year of the project, the PARC team plans to add 16 additional ports to the glycol system, which will bring the principal small-lot facility to capacity. For enology research, larger (i.e. barrel-sized) tanks will be installed in an adjacent room, effectively expanding the facility. There is also room for larger tanks to conduct scale-up work in the pilot plant. Wines were made in the facility in 2006 and 2007 from Merlot fruit harvested from vineyard sites all having Osoyoos (soil series) loamy sand but with climatic differences that affect growing degree day (GDD) accumulation and mature-harvest dates. The wines were made in duplicate and the 2006 wines have been subjected to sensory evaluation. The 2007 wines will be evaluated this spring.

Grapevine hot water treatment (HWT) – A study was initiated last spring (2007) in which Chardonnay and Merlot grapevine transplants imported from France were subjected to a number of HWT regimes that included pre- and post-HWT acclimation and hydration treatments. The vines were planted at the PARC Virus Orchard and were evaluated for budbreak timing, growth and development over the growing season. Carry over effects of the treatments on winter survival, budbreak and early shoot

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Aerial Photos for Vineyard Monitoring

By Karl Kliparchuk, M.Sc., GISP - McElhanney Consulting Services Ltd

A vineyard operator wants to know if their vines are doing well, or are too stressed. One way to monitor the vineyard is to walk/drive through the vineyard and look at the condition of the vines. Sometimes stresses in the vines may not be detectable by looking at the vegetation. Stresses in vines do show up sooner if we are able to see into the near-infrared part of the spectrum. These are the wavelengths of light, slightly longer than red light wavelengths.

Colour infrared cameras record the amount of light reflected from vegetation in the green, red, and near-infrared wavelengths. Healthy vegetation appears green to us as it reflects more green wavelengths and less red and blue wavelengths. Healthy vegetation absorbs in the red wavelength for photosynthesis, and reflects more than double the amount of photographic near infrared light compared to green wavelengths (*Figure 1*). Near-infrared wavelengths are not absorbed by any pigments within a plant and travel through most of the leaf, interacting with the spongy mesophyll cells. This interaction causes about half of the near-infrared energy to be reflected and the other half to be transmitted through the leaf. In plants with turgid and healthy mesophyll cell walls, more near-infrared energy will be reflected and less transmitted. The cell wall/air space interaction within these cells causes healthy vegetation to look very bright in the near-infrared portion of the spectrum.

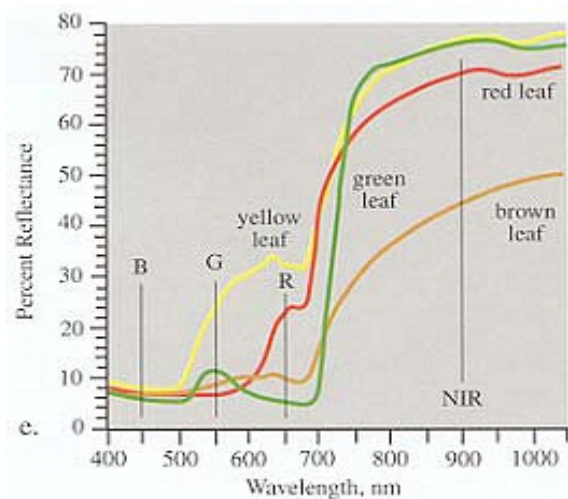


Fig. 1. Reflectance of healthy green leaves, and stressed/senescent leaves in different parts of the spectrum. (Jensen, John R. *Remote Sensing of the Environment: An Earth Resource Perspective*. Prentice-Hall, New Jersey.)

Colour infrared imagery is generally displayed in a format called "false colour", with bright red colours representing healthy vegetation, yellow-greens for stressed vegetation, and blue representing bare soil. Colour infrared imagery shows healthy vegetation versus stressed vegetation in the vineyard in one picture, without you having to travel through each block trying to identify stressed vegetation. The camera is typically flown in an aircraft with the camera in the plane's camera mount. There are both film-based and digital based cameras that can image in both the visible and the near-infrared parts of the spectrum. The aerial-based imagery captures everything at one point in time and does not miss a row or a block. The amount of detail visible in the canopy can be adjusted by changing the flying height of the aircraft. Images with a ground resolution of 10cm are now quite common. By capturing colour infrared imagery over a growing season (e.g. once in June, July and August) a vineyard manager can identify possible problem areas within the vineyard for resolution.

Once the imagery is delivered, the vineyard operator can either view the image as-is, or can bring the imagery into a Geographic Information System (GIS) to overlay their vineyard data for more detailed analysis. There are enhancements that can be made to colour infrared imagery in the GIS to help the vineyard operator detect differences in the vine canopy. The most common enhancement is to divide the near infrared wavelength image by the red wavelength image. This is called a vegetation ratio. Healthy vegetation will have a high ratio value as it would reflect very highly in the near infrared wavelength and much lower in the red wavelength. As a plant is stressed, the near infrared reflectance drops dramatically and the red wavelength reflectance increases. Low ratio values will typically indicate vegetation stress. The image cannot tell you what is causing the stress, just that there is stress. It is still up to the vineyard manager to go into the vineyard to investigate the reason(s) for the stress.

Colour infrared imagery can be a valuable tool for the vineyard manager for the current season, but can also be used to review past seasons, and possibly help to identify changes / management practices for future growing seasons.

For more information contact McElhanney Consulting Services Ltd. Tel: 604-683-8521 Email: kkliparchuk@mcelhanney.com. ❖

Research Updates *(Continued from p. 4)*

growth will be evaluated in 2008. Results of this study will be presented at the Enology & Viticulture Conference.

Irrigation and nitrogen fertilization – All planned experiments to determine interactions between water stress, nitrogen nutrition and canopy management were initiated in 2007 in commercial Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah vineyards. The study is taking a multidisciplinary approach to developing management practices that simultaneously improve fruit quality, especially phenolic profiles, and environmental sustainability, and will continue through 2010.

Development of key flavour and aroma volatiles in Okanagan Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon – Sprawl and VSP canopy management influence light penetration into the vine fruiting zone. We are evaluating the impact of light and temperature on grape aroma and tannin chemistry. Results from the first year showed sprawl canopies had greater open space in the canopy but less cluster exposure and light penetration into the fruiting zone. Fruit produced by vines with sprawled canopies had more tannin in the seed and skin. This difference in fruit tannin content developed pre-veraison and remained consistent to harvest.

Identification and sensory attributes of sulphur compounds in British Columbia's varietal wines – The prevalence of sulphur defects is being measured in BC wines. We have identified 13 sulphur defects (mercaptans and sulphides) after surveying 60 British Columbia wines and are continuing to survey wines for 40 known sulphur defects. In collaboration with Dr. Margaret Cliff, the sensory thresholds and attributes for predominant sulphur defects in different wine varieties are also being investigated. We intend to train judges to detect different types of sulphur faults, and provide education on sensory attributes of sulphur compounds which will be valuable for distinguishing different sulphur problems and how to amend them in the winery.

Aroma, flavour and phenolic development in micro-oxygenated wines – A new project will investigate micro-oxygenation (MOx) application rates and timing during winemaking and its impact on tannin structure, colour stability and aroma including the reduction of vegetative characters and the development of acetaldehyde.

The research will be conducted at PARC in the small-lot winery which will accommodate MOx application to 32 tanks. ❖

Pesticide Application Certification

Why should you be certified? Pesticides can be valuable tools in producing good crops. They work, however, by affecting living organisms - and you are a living organism. Pesticide certification helps you learn how to protect yourself, the people around you and the environment from the harmful effects of pesticides.

How do you get certified? It is easy! Pesticide Certification study materials are for home-study or for use in classroom training to prepare candidates for Ministry of Environment pesticide applicator certification examinations. The study materials are distributed by the Distribution Centre - Victoria of the BC Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services.

What will you need? Grape growers require the study materials for the *Agriculture-General* certification category.

Study material includes the following items:

- The *Pesticide Applicator Course for Agricultural Producers* manual. Note—The most recent version of the manual was printed in 2005 but older editions can still be used for the certification exams if the reader remembers that the *Integrated Pest Management Act* has now replaced the *Pesticide Control Act* mentioned in the earlier editions.
- Video Tape or DVD (*Doing It Right*)
- Storage Sign
- Laundry Poster
- Emergency Telephone Stickers
- *Study Notes on the BC Crop Production Guides and Practice Exam*. (You should get the February 2007 version.) This item is included in the study material package or it may be ordered separately.

What will it cost? The Pesticide Applicator Course for Agricultural Producers home-study kit is \$90 plus GST and shipping. The exam is \$90 payable with your exam application. An application with instructions for writing the pesticide certification examination will be enclosed with each study kit. It takes approximately 2-3 weeks to receive notification of your marks after you write the exam.

How to order? You can order your study materials by calling 1-800-282-7955. Payment must accompany your order (*cheque, money order, or major credit card*).

How to book an exam? Call 1-866-205-2102 to register and pay using your VISA or MasterCard and make arrangements to write the exam. Exams may be written at any ServiceBC office in British Columbia.

For more information visit www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/ipmp and click on the links to *Pesticide Certification Information*. ❖

What's up at the Council

AGM – The Annual General Meeting will be held Tuesday, July 8 at the Pacific Agriculture Research Centre in Summerland. Notices will be sent closer to the date. Three directorships will be coming to term this year. The information package will be mailed in July and nominations are welcome.

Conference Committee – The 9th Annual Enology & Viticulture Conference and Tradeshow is coming along nicely. The Tradeshow is “Sold Out” with over 93 exhibitors showcasing many services and products. The agenda is sure to have something for everyone. For more information contact Louise Corbeil at bcwgc@telus.net or visit www.bcwgc.org where you can also register on-line.

Health & Safety – The H&S Committee is looking for new members interested in safety issues. Want to know more? Contact Kathy Mercier at grapevine@mtkobau.bc.ca or Louise Corbeil at bcwgc@telus.net.

Plant Certification Team – A new Plant Certifications Committee has recently been created to review the need to identify mother blocks for propagation. Members are M. Watson, P. Bowen, T. Watts, J. Hopper, and T. Lowery. If you would like to be part of this team contact Louise Corbeil at bcwgc@telus.net ❖

Best Practices for Grapes Guide

\$50 for non-members

\$35 for members

plus \$10 shipping/handling and GST

Available from the BC Wine Grape Council
Louise Corbeil (250) 767-2534
or bcwgc@telus.net

OKANAGAN COLLEGE INDUSTRY PROGRAMS

◆ FOODSAFE LEVEL I

FoodSafe Level I identifies the top ten improper practices that cause food borne illness plus the top six job hazards in food preparation and serving. This is a provincial requirement for everyone involved in any type of food services.

PENTICTON	May 10	8:30 – 17:00
	June 14	8:30 – 17:00

◆ FORKLIFT TRUCK OPERATOR

The Operator Training program is designed to take the ‘new operator’ through the safe operation techniques of a forklift truck and make operators aware of the industry standard for safe lift truck operation. The program provides opportunities to work on equipment with the instructor and to be evaluated and certified. The course satisfies the regulatory requirement regarding lift truck training and evaluation that both WCB and Labour Canada have in place.

PENTICTON	June 7	8:30 – 17:00
	June 21	8:30 – 17:00

◆ OCCUPATIONAL FIRST AID – LEVEL I

Occupational First Aid Level I provides training in basic first aid, documentation and CPR. A *WorkSafe BC* certificate will be issued upon successful completion.

PENTICTON	May 24	8:30 – 17:00
	June 14	8:30 – 17:00

◆ WORKPLACE HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INFORMATION SYSTEMS (WHMIS)

To comply with regulations, companies which use or store controlled products are required by the Workers’ Compensation Board to ensure all staff receive appropriate training on WHMIS, including interpretation of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), labeling, procedures for safe handling, use and storage and emergency procedures for specific hazardous products.

PENTICTON	May 6	17:30 – 21:30
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◆ TRANSPORTATION OF DANGEROUS GOODS (TDG)

This course is intended for individuals involved in the transportation of dangerous goods. A certificate is provided upon successful completion of the course.

PENTICTON	May 13	17:30 -21:30
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◆ CUSTOMIZED TRAINING

One of the fastest growing educational components at Okanagan College is customized training. Customized training can be arranged for individuals or groups either at the College or on site at your facility. Course content can be tailored to suit individual business needs or it can remain standardized so that it meets the requirements for certification. With customized training the possibilities are unlimited.

For further information contact Linda Kirbyson, Program Coordinator,
Email: LKirbyson@okanagan.bc.ca Tel: (250) 492-4305 Ext. 3402. ❖

Hot!

News & Views

FARSHA Hires Spanish Speaking Summer Employee - Fluent in Spanish, Gregorio (Greg) Lopez, will assist employers with their Spanish speaking workers in all areas of occupational health and safety. This appointment is a five-month full-time term position (May 1-Oct 1). Greg will perform health and safety related activities on site, such as new worker orientation, and basic health and safety awareness and training. Greg will also assist our Agricultural Health and Safety Specialist with more in-depth training, such as forklift. He can also assist with the many Spanish health and safety resources FARSHA has available, now. To arrange for orientations and training, contact FARSHA at 604-881-6078 or toll free at 1-877-533-1789 or Carol Reid in Kelowna at 250-765-7025

New Website: Integration of Renewable Energy on Farms – A new website dedicated to the application of renewable energy for the agricultural community was launched by Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) and The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA). The new *Integration of Renewable Energy on Farms* (IReF) website provides information, resources, and a discussion forum. It was designed to help farmers make their operations more sustainable both environmentally and economically. The ultimate goal is to provide information and tools to assist farmers in developing and implementing their own renewable energy projects. Visit www.farm-energy.ca. ❖

Send your news or views to Louise Corbeil at bcwgc@telus.net

2008 AgriStability Interim Applications Now Available

The 2008 AgriStability Interim Application is now available on the AgriStability website at www.agr.gc.ca/agristability or by calling our toll free line at 1-866-367-8506. Once your application is received, the goal is to process it within 30 days.

Interim Payments provide producers with earlier access to AgriStability program payments. Participants may be eligible if their estimated 2008 margin declines by 15% or more relative to their reference margin.

Applications are available to producers in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Yukon Territory. The deadline to submit an application is March 31, 2009.

The 2008 AgriStability Interim Calculator

A 2008 Interim calculator is available to help producers of single farming operations estimate their 2008 AgriStability interim benefit. Look for the AgriStability Interim Calculator in the Calculators and Tools section of the AgriStability website.

For more information, visit the program website at www.agr.gc.ca/agristability or call 1-866-367-8506. ❖

Science Opportunities Fund

Genome BC recently announced a new funding program entitled *Science Opportunities Fund* (SOF). The program is expected to support modest endeavours typically in the range of \$25,000 to \$200,000, up to a maximum of \$400,000.

It provides one-time funding for projects that cannot be funded in whole or in part through traditional mechanisms. Requests for funding by BC researchers may include: proof-of-concept for cutting edge research applicable to the genome sciences that may be outside the mainstream of thinking; training; as well as new areas of integrated social science and humanities research applied to the genome sciences which require seed funding for workshops and increased social awareness.

The deadline for applications is July 11, 2008, 5:00PM.

For more information contact Suzanne Gill, Director, New Programs, at 604-637-3088 or sgill@genomebc.ca.

For full information on the program and application form visit www.genomebc.ca/genomics_programs/funding-programs.htm. ❖

US Wine Purchases Soar Despite Looming Recession

By Richard Woodard - Decanter.com April 7, 2008

The US wine market soared to an estimated \$30bn (£15bn) in 2007, as consumption of premium wine continued to grow despite the faltering economy. Over 300m nine-liter cases of domestic and imported wine were shipped into the US in 2007, a rise of 4% over 2006, according to the *Gomberg-Fredrikson Report*. At the same time, the market's value rose 8%, as consumers gravitated toward premium wines from home and abroad.

The increase further cements the position of the US as the world's biggest wine market by value. The nation is also poised to overtake France and Italy in volume terms – and may even have already done so, as official 2007 figures are not yet available for either country. 'Wine continues to enjoy a positive standing with the press, government and consumers. Many positive news reports on moderate wine consumption and health have also contributed to its positive image,' said wine industry consultant Jon Fredrikson.

'Though the economy is slowing, wine is gaining traction among American adult consumers, and it is likely that wine

consumption will continue to expand over the next decade.' The figures also signal the continuing slide of California's market share by volume, thanks to imports. In 1997, it was 74%, in 2006 62%, and in 2007, 61.3% - despite an increase of shipments of 2% by volume and 6% by value.

However, US wine exports (95% from California) increased 8.6% in value to \$951m, while volumes were up 12% to just over 50m cases. California Wine Institute president and CEO Bobby Koch said "strong consumer interest' was fuelling the increased consumption of the

Canada British Columbia Water Supply Expansion Program Update

The National Water Supply Expansion Program (NWSEP) will also continue in 2008/2009. The Government of Canada will provide technical and financial assistance for projects in British Columbia. The Province will provide in-kind support through technical and administrative assistance. For farmers and ranchers, eligible projects include all Tier One on-farm water infrastructure projects: individual on-farm water projects such as wells, dugouts, water storage systems, and supply pipelines. For these types of projects, Canada will contribute up to one-third of the eligible costs, to a maximum of \$5,000 per project.

All projects must be completed prior to March 31, 2009. The final application deadline is May 1, June 1 and September 1, 2008. The CBCWSEP ends on March 31, 2009.

To download an application form, for more detailed information on Tier 1 projects, and for information on Tier 2 and Tier 3 projects, go to the BC Ag Council website: www.bcac.bc.ca/agriculture_enviro_programs.htm, and follow the links to the *National Water Supply Expansion Program* link to the *Agriculture Canada Website*. ❖

Employment Standards Act Tip - Deductions

The only allowable deductions without written authorization from the worker are for:

1. Employment Insurance
2. Canada Pension Plan
3. Income tax
4. Those allowed under the *Temporary Foreign Worker Program* (SAWP and Low Skilled)

Deductions or required payments are not allowed for:

1. Breakage – accidental or on purpose
2. Shortage in till
3. Overpayments
4. Special clothing or uniforms

If your payroll computer malfunctions and pays a worker at a higher wage rate for an extended period of time you cannot deduct this overpayment from their wages. The higher wage rate has become a condition of employment. In order to change the wages, you must provide written notice.

Special clothing does not include WCB requirements. If your business requires special clothing, you can't ask for a deposit – it's considered a cost of doing business. In addition, you should provide compensation if the worker washes the clothing. ❖

Building a Health and Safety Program

By Carol Reid, FARSHA

Rome was not built in a day, either is a good bottle of wine nor a good health and safety program. Take away one thing from this article and act on it. It will be a step in the right direction.

What should the vineyard manager be doing when it comes to the safety program for a small vineyard?

- ♦ Have monthly meetings with employees (OK so this does not have to be formal but should be recorded) pick a safety topic and bring it up over coffee or lunch.
- ♦ Ensure all workers especially new and young workers are instructed on any hazards or risks, who the first aid attendant is, where the first aid kit is kept, to report all injuries, and how to call for help in case of an emergency.
- ♦ Ensure only those authorized to drive, operate farm equipment.
- ♦ Perform regular vineyard safety inspections to ensure no hazards exist for workers, especially with each change in season or task.
- ♦ Ensure workers follow safe-work procedures, use supplied personal protective equipment, and understand how to use it.
- ♦ Your FARSHA representative can do a *Safety Program Review* to outline those areas of your program that needs additional focus or improvement.

Do you know what the first aid requirements for your vineyard are?

A *First Aid Needs Assessment* will confirm your requirements. A vineyard is typically considered a low risk workplace but remember if you have a winery attached to your business that this could move you to a moderate risk workplace.

Your level of first aid will depend on your distance from a hospital, the number of workers and the hazard rating. If you are a vineyard within 20 minutes of travel to a hospital and have between 11-50 workers on-site then you will require a Level I certificate for the attendant and a Level I first aid kit. For first aid levels, the number of workers at any one time is counted, not an average.

Your FARSHA representative can assist you with your *First Aid Needs Assessment* to ensure you have the proper coverage for your situation as there could be several variables.

The *Farm and Ranch Safety and Health Association* (FARSHA) has been promoting safety and health in British Columbia farms since 1993.

FARSHA provides commodity-specific practical tools free of charge to employers and workers in BC agriculture.

To have assistance with your safety program, first aid requirements or any safety questions, contact Carol Reid at 250-765-7025 or e-mail carol.reid@farsha.bc.ca. ❖

Sluggish and Stuck Alcoholic Fermentations Research Project

Hennie van Vuuren is leading this research from his laboratory at UBC.

If you have problems with sluggish or stuck alcoholic fermentation, contact Dr. van Vuuren at hjjv@interchange.ubc.ca or Tel: (604) 822-0418. They will come and take samples.

The Agriculture Career Focus Program

The *Agriculture Career Focus Program* offers employers an opportunity to receive a wage subsidy to hire skilled youth on a 4-10 month placement. Eligible interns must be post-secondary graduates, in agriculture. The *Agriculture Career Focus Program* is open to all businesses which are part of the economic sector represented by the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council.

Under this program, the *Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC)* will provide a 30% wage contribution to a maximum of \$12,000/intern for Canadian farm businesses hiring graduates for a minimum of four months or until March 31, 2009, whichever comes first. The program is available to Canadian businesses across the country conducting work in the primary agriculture sector, including businesses that directly provide service to the on-farm sector.

It is sponsored by CAHRC and Human Resources & Social Development Canada (HRSDC) to provide employment opportunities for Canadian youth that will foster long-term employability in the agriculture industry. It is designed to benefit both employers and new graduates. No subsidy is allowed to any participant who is a member of the immediate family of the employer or, if the employer is a corporation or unincorporated association, who is member of the immediate family of an officer or a director of the corporation.

Employer eligibility criteria and responsibilities

- Provide \$2 in wages for each \$1 of wage subsidy received
- Provide proof of wages paid, all pertinent information on the intern and reports required by CAHRC
- Ensure the intern (s) is aware and agrees to be part of a participant placement program, which includes the submission of information to HRSDC
- Provide safe working environment for the intern
- Provide a participant placement of a **minimum** of 4 months in length. (Intern may be hired anytime during May 1, 2008 to November 30, 2008)
- Must develop a formal learning plan for the intern (a personalized plan between an employer and an intern, designed to help set and meet work-related learning objectives. It is an agreement that needs to be developed before the start of a placement. More details are available from CAHRC)
- Have a nepotism policy in place in regards to the interns*;
- Inform potential interns of what participation in the program would entail, and retain agreement from interns
- Use non-subjective eligibility criteria to establish eligibility of interns based on the criteria listed above
- Provide placement opportunities for full-time work (i.e. at least 30 hours per week) for a minimum of 4 months

- Provide proof of employment, start date, contract with intern, full wage and benefits of intern to CAHRC
- Provide data to sponsor (CAHRC) as required

Application Process:

The following documents should be submitted to CAHRC:

- Intern(s) Resume
- Brief Company Biography
- HRSDC Employer Eligibility Form
- HRSDC Participant Information Form
- CAHRC Employment Information Form

(Note - all signed pages must be faxed to 613-745-0119. All other documentation may be submitted via e-mail).

Placements are limited—consideration will be given to the commodity sector and the regional location of the employer in the attribution of placements.

To obtain the forms or for more information visit www.cahrc-ccrha.ca or call 613-745-7457, ext. 5225
Email: mercier@cahrc-ccrha.ca. ❖

BC Agriculture Plan – Growing a Healthy Future for BC Communities

After two years of gathering information from around the province, Minister Bell released the Provincial Agriculture Plan last February.

The Plan will provide a foundation for future agricultural policy. The five main areas of the Plan are:

1. Producing local food in a changing world
2. Meeting environmental and climate challenges
3. Building innovative and profitable family-farm businesses
4. Building First Nations agriculture capacity
5. Bridging the urban/agriculture divide

The five areas are divided into 23 strategies that provide direction to agriculture that will sustain and facilitate growth and diversification of agriculture while increasing public awareness, understanding, and support for the farmers and ranchers that produce food for British Columbia. Val Roddick summarized “After all, we all have to eat to live”. Included in the Plan is one million dollars for three years to do work around food miles. There is also a four million dollar allocation for wildlife damage mitigation work. For more information on the Plan, please go to the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands’ website. ❖



BRITISH COLUMBIA
GRAPEGROWERS'
ASSOCIATION

News & Updates from the BC Grapegrowers' Association

The British Columbia Grapegrowers' Association held its annual grower day and AGM in mid-March. There were a number of keynote speakers with topics ranging from global wine trends & their impact on the BC wine industry to updates on current viticulture research of interest to grape growers. There was an excellent turnout and lots of opportunity to meet fellow growers.

The annual election of officers took place during the AGM. Gary Dean, a valuable representative to the Board and Chairman of the Labour & Farm Safety Committee chose not to seek re-election. A tip of the hat to Gary for his many hours of volunteer time devoted to the grape industry! Re-elected were Hans Buchler, Christine Coletta, Manfred Freese, Roger Hol, Ed Schiller, and Ed Thibault. Rod King was elected to fill the vacancy left by Gary. Manfred has been elected by the directors to continue as President, Christine as vice-president and Ed Thibault as Treasurer.

If you haven't sent in your membership yet for 2008, now's the time! Annual membership dues are \$150. The BCGA relies solely on memberships for its operating budget – the more memberships we have, the more work can be done and the greater our profile with other agricultural organizations and with all levels of government.

The development of a comprehensive and effective *Starling Control Program* is seen as critically important to growers. Last winter the BCGA asked grape growers in the Okanagan-Similkameen to financially support the program by contributing \$10/acre of grapes. This money will be used to enhance the trapping program. If you have not yet sent in your contribution it's not too late to drop your cheque in the mail.

Another important focus of the BCGA is labour issues. We encourage all growers who are accessing workers through the *Seasonal Agricultural* or the *Temporary Foreign Workers Programs* to let us know of your experiences and any problems encountered. It is through this information that we are better able to work with the Provincial and Federal Governments to change and improve these programs.

For more information on any of the above information or to learn more about
The British Columbia Grapegrowers' Association

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The purpose of the *BC Wine Grape Council* is to coordinate, facilitate, and fund research and education on viticulture and enology to broadly benefit the British Columbia wine grape industry and to represent growers on a variety of agriculture related issues. Its Mission Statement is to promote the development of a strong and viable wine grape industry that will result in the production of world class wines and that will enhance the economic and environmental benefits to British Columbia.