

**Contract**

UNL Extension Grape Cluster Research - #18-01-187

**Grant Amount**

\$1,133

**Contact**

Jim Hruskoci, UNL Extension Horticulturalist  
Grand Island, Nebraska

**Issue of Interest**

The University of Nebraska Extension in Grand Island identified a need for further research into commonly grown grape cultivars in Nebraska. The purpose of this particular project was to determine if grape and wine quality can be improved by early season selective cluster removal. This project also determined if other factors, such as total yield, cluster size, and grape size, were impacted by cluster removal.

**Approach to Problem**

A cluster removal study began in Nebraska in 2006 and continued through 2007. Dr. James Hruskoci, with advice from Dr. Paul Read, and the help of more than a dozen UNL Master Gardener volunteers, conducted research at the following locations for the corresponding cultivars: Miletta Vista Winery (DeChaunac and Frontenac), Cedar Hills Vineyard (DeChaunac and LaCrosse), and at Geo. Spencer Vineyards (Seyval). The research in 2006 involved one cluster removal during mid-June. Research in 2007 studied the effects of two cluster removal periods, one in May and a second in June. In 2006, 25 treatment vines per cultivar were utilized for a total of 100 samples per location. In 2007, 13 treatment vines per cultivar were used for a total of 78 samples per location.

**Goals/Achievement of Goals**

There were three primary objectives of this project. This project sought to address which cultivars respond to cluster removal and which has the highest potential for improving grape quality. Additionally, this project addressed what quality factors were improved by cluster removal. Finally, the research conducted determined if cluster thinning is an economically feasible practice for grape growers. The grant amount awarded from the Nebraska Grape and Winery Board of \$1,133 partially paid for lab supplies and analysis, report expense, and travel costs for project oversight and management.

**Results, Conclusions, Lessons Learned**

One of the two years to be undertaken in this project has been completed. As this was an ongoing project, it is too early to assess the achievement of this project's goals. The research was conducted at three central Nebraska vineyards on the corresponding cultivars: Geo. Spencer Vineyards (Seyval), Cedar Hills Vineyard (DeChaunac), and Miletta Vista Winery (DeChaunac and Frontenac). The second grape cluster of each shoot was removed on 14 selected vines of each of the cultivars in May and June. Fourteen vines of each cultivar were selected as the control wines in May in which no clusters were removed. Data entry and analysis were tabulated by Grand Island Extension personnel.

**Progress According to Outcome Measures**

Dr. Hruskuci is no longer with the University of Nebraska; therefore, more in depth conclusions and analyses, with regard to this project, are unlikely to be obtained. Furthermore, as this was an ongoing project there are few conclusive indicators to measure the success of the stated goals.